The Joy of Illusions – Martin Smolka's Music for DIE PUPPE (THE DOLL) by Ernst Lubitsch (1919)

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> *»You can call it whatever you like, but the tools I used are up to 100 years old.«*
> *Interview with Martin Smolka,* 9. November 2011

Despite being one of Ernst Lubitsch's early works, he considered the silent film comedy DIE PUPPE (THE DOLL, DE 1919) to be one of his most inspiring movies (Weinberg 1977, 264–265). Created in an era of many technical developments, Lubitsch managed to incorporate a wide range of optical tricks in his playful plot concerning an audacious and seemingly artificial young woman. In this way the film is representative for »modernist cultural ideas, […] with production techniques informed by Expressionist and Futurist film and Surrealist fantasy« (Cockburn 2006, 17) and serves furthermore as a constant reminder of the fun fair that was the birthplace of modern visual entertainment and illusions.

In 2010, the Czech composer Martin Smolka created a new score for an ensemble commissioned by the ARTE television company as part of its project to restore silent cinema films. Humorous optical illusions and an ambiguous critique of society now find their counterpart in this film's music. These are found not so much in the use of conventionally structured sound patterns of comedy, but in the fact that the musical score itself reveals the composition to

be an (alleged) illusion of formal coherence that unveils transgressive elements within orthodox musical settings.

Whilst this process of musical translation plays a basic role, the context of the performance is also of crucial importance.

Through careful selection of phonetic and conceptual possibilities (the auditory concept includes elements of fragmentation, popular music, industrial noises and repetitive sonic material whilst the ensemble KONTRASTE performed live in front of the screen for the premier), the composer doesn't just refer to the traditional double staging of film and music in silent cinema; yet he integrates the ensemble as an acoustic expansion of the visual framing, which is already prone to transcend the usual screen frontiers in Lubitsch's oeuvre.

In addition, the musicians are not only working as neutral performers but also as a very living and breathing body of sound, using their voice for ludicrous effects. Therefore they react to the comic relief of the movie in an exaggerated way by intentionally playing »poorly«, adding microtonal »commentary« or onomatopoetic transpositions.

As the following details will show, it is not only the artistic context between old pictures and new music but also the cinematic content of artificiality which is a key part in Smolka's musical form.

Plot summary

The young, shy and slightly misogynous Lancelot hires the puppet maker Hilarius to create a young woman he can marry. In so doing, he pretends to guarantee a rightful heir in order to alleviate the fears and worries of his uncle, the Baron of Chanterelle that the ruling house is in danger of dying out. He is supported by a group of greedy monks who are constantly speculating on benefiting from the customary, and in Lancelot's case as a nobleman, lucrative dowry for a wedding.

Unfortunately, the chosen doll is broken by the clumsy apprentice. For this reason, Hilarius's daughter Ossi, who served as a model for the puppet, secretly replaces THE DOLL with herself in order to hide the accident. After numerous implications caused by Ossi's rude behaviour and Lancelot's inability to see her genuine nature, the confusion so typical of comedy is resolved into happiness for each participant. Hilarius is ultimately reunited with his missing daughter, while she escapes the exploitation of her body that her father was fabricating. The monks receive the money that was promised to them and Lancelot finally overcomes his fear of women by realising Ossi's true identity, so the new couple remain together.

The living puppet

The puppet in the film can be traced back to Ophelia from E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Der Sandmann* (*The Sandman*), a short story first printed in 1817 in the book *Die Nachtstücke* (*The Night Pieces*) and published one year before Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus*. Both stories were embedded in the context of gothic fiction with a tragic ending and included themes related mainly to hubris and the desire to elevate oneself to the level of The Creator. Whereas this subject was dealt with on a philosophical level in literature ranging from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to Goethe's homunculus in *Faust*, artificial projections of the human body became a reality in the development of automated machines (and music automatons) at the end of the eighteenth century. The mechanical clock from the Early Middle Ages not only served as a blueprint for modern watchmakers who made timekeeping more and more precise, but also for creating human-like machines that were capable of imitating human movements.

Interestingly, the comparison between a political system and the filigree mechanism of watches served Friedrich Schiller in his *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (*On the Aesthetic Education of Man*) as a metaphor for social rules and stability (Weiss 1844, 8).

Early cinema welcomed the portrayal of robot-people as the interface between illusionary and real space. This may be the result of seeing the »semi-godlike frankensteinian« (Natalio 2015, 108) possibilities of a movie screen to create real life out of nothingness.

The machine-woman Maria in Fritz Lang's METROPOLIS (1927) has become particularly famous as the first cinematic presentation of the *Maschinenmensch* (German for robot) way before Philipp K. Dick's creation of the *Replicant*, whose female prototype Rachel does not know if she is a living being or a cyborg and therefore lives in perpetual doubt. The cognition of the female body as a symbol for the reproduction of life enhances the philosophical aspect of anthropomorphic identity because such gendering of the machine does have an influence on perception and conception of society standards. »By problematizing the roles that gender can play in the very conceptions of what counts as human or machine, gender constructions infuse technological innovations in various challenging ways« (Schwartzman 1999, 1). Before METROPOLIS, there were some cases to show male gendered robots. In the motion picture THE MASTER MYSTERY (USA 1919), an automaton guards an evil cartel. André Deed's L'UOMO MECCANICO (THE MECHANICAL MAN, IT 1921) contains a battle between robots.

Despite robots, there were also various earlier examples of artificial intelligence.

The living statue Galathea in Georges Méliès's PYGMALION & GALATEA (1898) may be the earliest extant copy showing an artificial human in cinema history (Frazer 1979, 87). In another Méliès film, ILLUSIONS FUNAMBULESQUES (EXTRAORDINARY ILLUSIONS, 1903), a mannequin comes to life after being touched by a wizard. The old Jewish myth of the *Golem* was put on screen in the year 1915 by Paul Wegener followed by two sequels (1917, 1920) and is considered (together with Wiener's THE CABINET

OF DR. CALIGARI) to be an important example of the birthplace of the horror genre.

Where cinema dealt with the subject of artificial life mostly with overpowering imagination borrowed from fantasy, science-fiction and horror, musical culture used Hoffmann's *Der Sandmann* as a blueprint for mostly humorous implications. The story inspired works such as Adolphe Adams's opera comique *La poupée de Nuremberg* (1852), Leo Delibe's ballet *Coppelia* (1870) and of course Jacques Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann* (1881). The latter one dealt with the topic on a far more psychological and melancholy way. So Kracauer pointed out: »… [it] was not that it went deeper than [earlier] operettas, but that it laid bare the dark foundations out of which the operettas had grown, and thus showed their depth« (*Orpheus in Paris* 263, quoted after: Diffrient 11). Another scenario that obviously owes much to Hoffman is, with its original title, *Im Puppenladen* (*In the doll Shop*) by Josef Bayer, which became the most overwhelmingly successful ballet *Die Puppenfee* (*The Fairy Doll*, 1888) of its time in Vienna and was in turn an inspiration for the opera comique *La boutique fantasque* by Rossini/Resphigi.

Eventually, Lubitsch's THE DOLL is based on a loose German translation of the operetta *La poupée* (1896) by Edmond Audran, which was created by A.E. Willner. In this operetta there is a major deviation from the Hoffmann plot, as well as from all matters concerning artificiality which we have discussed so far. It is no longer the anthropomorphic projection of an automaton which blinds or astonishes the romantic main character. By reversing the Hoffmann tale, in which the protagonist Nathaniel considers the doll Olympia to be a human,

Lancelot does not recognize his fiancée as the puppet maker's real daughter. Whereas Nathaniel appears to have found perfection in the artificial Olympia and an ideal counterpart and soulmate in Hoffmann's tale, Lancelot continues to seek artificiality to overcome the norms of society.

Even though the subject contains some satirical aspects for which Lubitsch was later famous, it also provides a perfect complement to the comic effect of masquerading. In this case, it is presented by the motif of a mirror image (the doppelganger) and is often to be seen in his films, such as DIE LUSTIGE WITWE (THE MERRY WIDOW, 1934) or DIE AUSTERNPRINZESSIN (THE OYSTER PRINCESS, 1919). Not surprisingly, all three works had their origin in the operetta culture.

Lubitsch Touch and Operettas

When it comes to comedy, it is amazing how often operettas served as a basis for Lubitsch's screenplays. While in the German years between 1915 and 1922 the movies DAS FIDELE GEFÄNGNIS (THE MERRY JAIL, 1917) DIE PUPPE (THE DOLL, 1919), DIE AUSTERNPRINZESSIN (THE OYSTER PRINCESS, 1919) and DIE BERGKATZE (THE WILD CAT, 1921) can be included in these operetta-based works, his American productions, from which his greatest success came, include three movies: OLD HEIDELBERG (1927), THE SMILING LIEUTENANT (1931), and THE MERRY WIDOW (1934). Apart from these, seven more sound movies after 1928 were musical productions (Huff 1947). Nowadays, the gradual transformation from the influence of European operettas to the witty

modern movie musical is considered to be a pioneering achievement by Lubitsch (Booklet: The Criterion Collection. Eclipse Series 8: Lubitsch Musicals).

As René Michaelsen stated, the elusive quality of Lubitsch comedies, later to be known as the *Lubitsch Touch*, may be a result of adapting the playfulness of the early Jacques Offenbach operettas with their allusions to sexual activities and biting criticism of society. These, to some extent, could be additionally called anti-illusionistic in their quality of renouncing the theatre of delusions (Michaelsen 2017). The staging is no longer envisaged as a realistic scenario, which can be seen in anachronisms or funny cross-cultural references (Michaelsen 2014, 162). Indeed, there are many cases in Lubitsch's films that explore the relationship between the real and the virtual. Unsurprisingly, especially musicals, with their sudden singing moments as a form of escapism, are a signifier of the blurring boundaries between these two levels.

However, Michaelsen's thoughts are guided by the observation of Karl Kraus's »Grimassen über Kultur und Bühne« (1909), where he discovered his fascination for Offenbach. Kraus vehemently contrasts the Offenbach operettas to contemporary ones by stating the latter ones as an excuse for dazzling and convenient fiction. As for his consideration the simple-unpretentious results from Offenbach's music are in fact a humorous parody of the heroic opera (Wagner), but also mocking Modern Society by ridiculing and reflecting a world of stupidity and weakness. The collisions of power and powerlessness of the mighty and the consequences of aristocratic and physical impotence deliver

most of the specific humorous implications that are characteristic of an operetta culture that turns moral values on their head.

While Lubitsch's early cinema has similar provocative qualities, he managed to sophistically redirect these off-colour or even obscene references in the narrative content through subtle nuances in his latter career. He took this measure most likely in anticipation of obedience and as a strategy of avoiding a conflict with the moral regulations of Hollywood's Hays Code 1934, which especially forbade depictions of clear sexual content. Interestingly though, by doing this Lubitsch turned »away from the lavishly opulent settings« (McBridge 2018, 271) and his cinematic oeuvre between THE DOLL and THE MERRY WIDOW mirrored the transformation from a self-referential operetta to a more convenient one.[1] The contradictory situation between tradition and escaping boundaries can also be identified in the dual requirement of Viennese operettas to satisfy the audience's needs without insulting the established order (Gromes 1967, 34). Choreographing the brief flirt with escaping society standards is fulfilled when the girl Zorika in Franz Lehár's operetta *Zigeunerliebe* (*Gypsy Love*, 1910) fulfils her intended purpose by marrying the less interesting Jonel. However, only since she learned in a dream how miserable her marriage to his passionate brother Jozsi would be. Such dream-like moments are literary illusions, but at the same time they prepare the spectator for a return to the ordinary world. In Lubitsch's famous light opera adaptation of Lehar's globally successful THE MERRY WIDOW (1943), the brief

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1   Especially the second generation of the operettas (mostly the Viennese operettas emphasized realism influenced by the Veristic operas. (Linhardt 2006; Glanz 2011, 496)

excursion to morally risky places and back again to normality is exemplified in a quotation of a former sentence by the womanizer Danilo. The end of the statement »Any man who could dance through life with hundreds of women and chooses to walk with one should be... hanged!« is transformed (in a prison!) by the intervening widow into »Any man who could dance through life with hundreds of women and chooses to walk with one should be... married!«

In THE DOLL, the situation is rather the reverse, as normality is the state which is to be avoided. Is the *Lubitsch Touch* then just the after-effect of former extravagance still holding allusive implications in the American years?

By intellectualising what shapes the *Lubitsch Touch*, we may lose its very character, which Lubitsch himself described as a childlike aura that would vanquish once it's unveiled (McBridge 2018, 4). And this characterisation fits also perfectly with the aura of an illusion, whose condition is often or even usually to be beyond our conscious perception. Given the inclusive form of the cinema dispositive, we recognize a spatial »distance« that is the perspective from which we observe the representation and the limit. There is always a perspective that compares the retention of the representation with the limit (and vice versa). Lubitsch plays with these patterns of correlation between illusion and perspective by destabilizing this inclusive form. Sabine Hake points to two important aspects of his films: »the emphasis on sexual difference and the active participation of the spectator.« (Hake 1992, 14) Consequently, the wit and the intellectual thought of Lubitsch comedies escapes even the on-screen/off-screen regularities and puts actors and spectators on the same footing. According to Elsaesser's analysis of MADAME DUBARRY (1919), the

German Lubitsch handles the cinema as both the Weimar art cinema *and* as the classical American cinema. Whereas American cinema was eager to create the illusion of a perfect *mise en scène* and thus provide a superior overview (for example as a formal marker of sexual difference), the Weimar productions caught the spectator in a »cross-fire of protagonists seeking to control on-screen space by occupying off-screen space«. (Elsaesser 2009, 217). The ongoing fluctuation between these poles ensures that the spectators' point of view is constantly being challenged.

Whatever the form of the *Lubitsch Touch* may be, it cannot be reduced to just the physical space between the actors on the stage/screen or a single period of Lubitsch's film opus. It transcends ethnic, gender, and sexual politics by folding together stage/screen, the public, the historical and ironically twisted distance to the current affairs of the plot, or the geographical distance to foreign or mythological places.

Since such diversification of genre that constitutes the joy in Lubitsch's film derived from European musical culture, the choice of Martin Smolka in his unorthodox, anachronistic yet modern attitude provides an exciting question of how his auditory adaptation will bridge the gap between the past and the present and master the films visual virtuosity.

Anachronism as Programme – Martin Smolka's Film Music

Since the mid-1990's the Franco-German television network ARTE does initiate and conceive restoration projects encompassing commissions for new scorings

composed by contemporary musicians. Especially the experimental and abstract cinema has emerged as a working priority suiting with the composers approaches (as like Bernd Thewe's music for RHYTHM 21 by Hans Richter; Iris ter Schiphorst's music for LA COQUILLE ET LE CLERGYMAN by Germaine Dulac; Cathy Milliken's music for L'INVITATION AU VOYAGE by Germaine Dulac:, Olga Neuwirth's music for DIE STADT OHNE JUDEN by Hans Karl Breslauer).

So did the Czech composer Martin Smolka create a new score for Hans Richter's surreal movie VORMITTAGSSPUK (GHOSTS BEFORE BREAKFAST, DE 1928) composed for the ensemble ascolta.

In a programme note written about his music for this film, Smolka took a very humble approach:

> This ability to love inventions like a child, to mobilize a pure naivety in oneself, to touch mystery playfully and with humour, and even to handle with unhappy facts (the guns and violence in this film!) without becoming unhappy – all that I tried to keep and underline with my music. (Smolka 2004)

The phenomenon of playful surrealism appears to be related to Lubitsch's own playground. Smolka's impartiality towards cinematic simplicity (not to be confused with technical simplicity) suits the subject of THE DOLL. Asked about his interest in the Lubitsch comedy, Smolka made a similar comment:

> It is a very playful movie involving a clever kind of humour. The plot is funny and includes surprising non-realistic elements.{…} The movie was the perfect playing field for myself and promised to include a large variety of craziness. (Smolka 2011)

This approach characterizes the composer's playful entry towards a host of musical traditions[2], and must not be misinterpreted as disrespect but as the result of a (ironically) self-certified musical inconsequence towards the heritage of different composition styles (Smolka 1999, 29).[3] This can lead to a very personal reflection of sound elements of the past, which is often shown by the interplay between two contrasting periods.

On his homepage, Smolka does divide his musical language into two contrasting styles: »Metaphorically speaking, Smolka's music oscillates round two poles: 1) Cracked, buoyant conviviality, music of a hobbling orchestration, symptomatic civilisation sounds, a folk or brass band playing, preferably, out of tune; 2) Melancholic memories, aching desire, the nostalgic echo of the sounds of Point 1«.

For instance, a new acoustic field was established in his work *Semplice for old and new instruments* (2006) by combining the expressive characteristics of historical and contemporary musical culture.

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2   Smolka was »influenced by post-Webernism, Minimalism, American experimental music and the Polish School« : See Smolka's Homepage:
    http://www.martinsmolka.com/en/index.html

3   »Ich selbst habe mit 21 Jahren einen ganzen Stapel Webernscher Studien geschrieben, man könnte sagen: reinen Webern. Wie ich heute mit diesen Impulsen umgehe, ist allerdings in vielfacher Weise transformiert, man könnte es inkonsequent und spielerisch nennen.«

By letting two forms collide in his *Lieder ohne Worte und Passacaglia* (1999), traditional forms like the fugue are viewed from a distance and placed out of tune using microtones. He uses the words »microtonal form of tuning« and »sound density« (Smolka 2012) to describe the compositional process of revealing the beauty of consonant harmonies, and hence doesn't regard microtonality as a modern closed system but as the deformation of a traditional one. Other examples for this approach can be heard in his *Remix, Redream, Relight* or *Blue Bells or Bell Blues*. It is therefore no surprise that he demanded in a manifesto to stop exploring new sounds and to focus on the strange sounds and the sounds of nature instead (Hiekel 2014, 18).

Focusing on the sounds of nature leads to another method of musical transmutation and can be heard in his *Rain, a window, roofs, chimneys, pigeons and so… and railway bridges, too* (1991/92) in a very illustrative way. The visual references in the title prove the intention of recreating the experience of known everyday noises. This kind of musical catch-up of a changing atmosphere is reminiscent of Charles Ives' *Central Park in the Dark* (1906) and his song *The New River* (1913), both dealing with the orderly scheme of nature being deformed by the rise of new environmental circumstances. A similar technique can be found in his composition *L' Orch pour l'orch* (1990). Smolka describes this auditory interpretation of noises, which is a method of turning concrete sounds into abstraction, as *sonic photographs*. This aesthetic is not necessarily strictly related to a narrative concept as the term »photographic« shows.

As Smolka states in the very opening quote of this study, his musical approach is as old as the movie itself and adds: »[…] I didn't look at history when writing the music«, which could be read as a denial of cultural connotations (Smolka 2011). Yet this only underscores the formal freedom and the vast possibilities of the musical structure which suits with the early age of cinema. It provides a perfect match for the hallmarks of fantasy and improvisation that characterize filmmakers such as Lubitsch, who wasn't able to have an experienced look on history either but rather created it through playful experiments by exploiting all the options available. This experimental grounding becomes the formal guiding principle for director and composer.

The Curtain Rises – The Opening Scene of THE DOLL

Lubitsch only needs eight shots (2 minutes and 32 seconds) to demonstrate the different ways in which early cinema was able to tell creative stories that dazzle the audience and show unusual environments. The same applies to Smolka's music.

The very first shot of the movie makes clear that we are about to enter an artificial world. Lubitsch himself appears on screen and establishes the normative order of a synthetic world. With a conjuror's virtuosity he creates the first scene as a miniature, and places the puppets of Lancelot and his nurse into the model home. Very soon, this order will be torn to shreds as the film goes on to demonstrate a permanent change between reality and deception. In the next shot, the living Lancelot tumbles down a hill. After splashing into a puddle he experiences the reality of moisture. A painted and cheekily laughing sun appears shining down on him and dries his clothes.

The game of generating and breaking expectations is explored in the ARTE version through Smolka's music even before the first picture of the film appears. A shrill and aggressive percussion interpolates the traditions of Chinese musical theatre with its stylized characteristics by using a Peking opera gong.[4]

4   Besides recreating the historical fascination for exoticism, the choice of a Chinese connotation is not at all accidental. Shadow play and puppet theatre is deeply rooted in Far Eastern culture. Even though the origins of this specific form of theatre are not clarified, numerous legends refer to different artificial creations of women to deceive mighty men (like generals on a war field) as an inspiration for this genre (Liu 1967, 129–130). The woman's body, depicted as a weakness of (mighty) men, seems to be an overall cultural phenomenon that is represented in this musical trend.

Opening image of THE DOLL reminiscent of Chinese puppet theatre,
(0:00:00–0:00:03)

A sudden change of musical character with a jazzy pizzicato in the double bass leads to the sphere of the variety show. Interestingly though, this is not an etymological contradiction. When translated, the word »*Zájù*«, which is the word for a more comic version of the Peking opera, literally means »variety show« (Crump 1980, 179).

This juxtaposition of diverse timbres mirrors the rather unusual line-up Smolka has chosen in his setting. In addition to brass, strings, percussion and electric guitar the ensemble contains instruments such as whistles, kazoo's, wooden rattle's or birds whose meaning for sound effects and special timbres validates the impact of alienating auditory fields barging into familiar soundscapes. As the later chapter »A Wedding as Refusal of Tradition ?« (see page 258) will

show, the ongoing progress of the score levels the acoustic fields until the point of indivisible amalgamation.

Thus, the whole first act starts within the confines of the virtual, vaudeville-like art sphere and fits into Smolka's musical creation of a polystylistic costume that has a strange exotic vibe and yet familiar qualities and already adapts the comedy of mistaken identities by foreshadowing Lancelot's inability towards Ossi to detect the familiar element in the alien one.

Lancelot – Auditory Snapshots of an Antihero

Before we take a closer look at this opening, we should examine the musical theme picturing Lancelot, who, although (or precisely because) seeking a machine as answer to all problems, is characterized in a similar manner like Charlie Chaplin as a victim of the so-called *machine age* (Stephens 2011).

Unlike his legendary grail-seeking namesake, the hero in Lubitsch's film is not equipped with a lot of courage. His insecurity and his childlike behaviour are constantly accompanied by two short and contrasting musical motifs, often followed by a percussion beat through the whole movie.

The first motif is rather short to put it mildly and much more simple. It involves a (mostly) upwards glissando. Contrary to the tonal certainty of the cadence-like fall of the following motif, it starts from nowhere and leads to nowhere.

Musical Example 1: Glissando-motif (guitar voice p. 1/m. 70),
© 2010 by Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden

Smolka makes sure this glissando chord cannot be located in any tonal place by starting it a quartertone below; it therefore represents Lancelot's fearful character towards the unknown path into which he is thrown.

The second motif is about as short as the first one and secures the uncertainty of the glissando with tonal grounding. It is a mostly whistled step of a minor third down (g–e). In this context, the whistling does establish a sphere of light-heartedness.

Both motifs complement each other to create a constant playful and witty effect where the combination of Lancelot's uncertainty and ease often results in a clumsy action leading consequently to the third motif of a percussion beat.
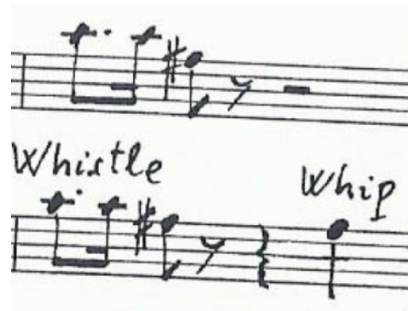
Musical Example 2: Whistling and percussion beat (guitar voice p. 130/m. 1141), © 2010 by Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden

Since the whistling has the charm of an everyday sound, it is of diegetic quality surrounding Lancelot's naïve character and refers in this case also literally to a world outside the frame by being produced by the ensemble members.[5]

The explanation for this motif to be not only funny but of hilarious effect is that it starts perpetuating in ongoing loops around Lancelot. In contrast to, for example, Morricone's popular usage of whistling, human voice and whips as bonds via the *musique concrete* in the Western context of corporal heroism, it is much more narrowed. It appears fragmented throughout the whole score with no real permutations. This repetitive non-development has a Becket-like tragicomic about it: nothing happens. The redundancy of overstretched sound modules is characterizing the ongoing dally challenges surrounding the overtaxed hero.

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5   The German expression for whistling, »pfeifen«, points to general environmental qualities and does not even distinguish between the sound of a locomotive, a bird or a walker, and thus uses the term as a sound-related, music-related or signal-related one.

The circling nature of this theme is enhanced by a tonal sequence a major second below.

Musical Example 3: Whistle-Theme sequenced (voice p. 1/m. 69),
© 2010 by Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden

In this presentation particularly, the theme reminds us of a musical example concerning another mythological figure of the Knights of the Grail: the leitmotif of the Parsifal bells in Richard Wagner's opera. Where Wagner uses a musical sequence as angelic echoing of mysticism symbolizing the resurrection and immortality, the repetition serves Smolka as the intensification of the vocal expression of humour. Since the repeating unit does not carry new content, the act of repeating itself with its non-functionality is of a ridiculous nature. Not only does the Smolka motif seem like a minimization and trivialization of the heroic theme, but it also represents Lancelot as an ordinary answer to bravery. By assuming this motif against this quotation, such a parallel suggests that Smolka identifies Lancelot with a historical lineage which he transcends through a unique synthesis of music and comedy. The signal effect of Wagner's clerical-authoritarian quartal harmony is reduced to a blithely and perky

whistled minor third and the rich overtone sound of the transcendent echoing bells is thus extinguished.

This comparison can also mean an ironic comment on the historical practice of compiling popular motifs for commercial purposes. At the very end of the movie, Tchaikovsky is quoted in a far less subtle way when an overly exaggerated quotation of the love motif of Tchaikovsky's *Eugen Onegin* appears. With its ironic quality, the music refuses to give in to a cheesy ending. At the same time it reminds us of the archetype of the young and bored aristocrat who was represented in Pushkin's parodying verse novel of the same name. So the reversion to normality as a satisfying ending is of an ambivalent musical nature.

Is it far-fetched to establish a noise equivalent to the glissando speaking of the high-frequency pitch sound that rises after each camera flash? But since Smolka himself used the term *sonic photographs,* his short musical modules can be described as auditory snapshots. Like the flash of a camera charges its energy for the next snap, the glissando in the Score for THE DOLL is a charging signal often anticipating the percussive noise which reflects and »pictures« the next clumsy act of Lancelot and copies his gesture. Smolka's performance instruction does underpin this practise: »There are movie actions which should be synchronized with actions of single players. Each of them is briefly named in the material (in a frame, over the system). It opens a possibility, that in these particular cases a player could react directly to the picture.« (Smolka: Player instructions). We can assume that the ensemble reacts to the movie action like a

camera, but does not depict the visuals on screen in favour of the auditory environments.

Overall, all three of these main elements that come along with his character (the whistling, the glissando and the percussive noise) seem to be the result of orthodox comedy music and are, in fact, abstract and simplistic toys of a musical construction set. This characterization could be applied to a box that reproduces music: the musical automaton. Since such automata were perfected in the eighteenth century, and musical performers were compared to them, the uncanny aspects of the mechanized musicians circling Lancelot suggest that the motifs are comical reflections on human subjectivity in music and its loss in mechanical reproduction.

What is striking is that the music that plays with self-identity in this sophisticated, artistic way still manages to function within the content-element of artificiality. One of the most obvious specifications of the musical parts as parts of machinery is the moment when Hilarius exposes his marionettes in front of Lancelot. While he manages to wind up and animate the machines, Lancelot's fear of the other gender is extended to the extreme when an aggressive march in the score serves to exaggerate the whistling motif by adding a referee's whistle, which is one amusing little instrumental allusion of marriage as a fitness room for physical training. Besides illustrating his prudish and misogynist point of view when the woman's body turns into a degenerate military mass product, this is also a reversion to gender stereotypes.

Filmic Example 1: 0:24:44

Filmic Example 2: 0:24:48

Now the tonal whistling is turned into a shrieking, stiff and repetitive march with ninth chord parallels and the minor third ambitus shrinks to 1½ quarter tones.

This objectification of the female body is indicative of a protagonist who no longer notices individuals, but frighteningly perfect moving decorations, just

like Kracauer used to critically describe dancing girls in musicals in his essay *Mass Ornament.* He equated such dancing performances with the aesthetics of working groups in the exploitation machinery of the Fordism/Taylorism (Kracauer 1963, 50–64).

Abstraction becomes concreteness

In the first scene, there is another appealing visual and musical moment that shows Lancelot's blindness towards the obvious. The aristocrat splashes into water and the ensemble performers instantly follow this happening by onomatopoeically shouting »PLUMS«. This shout bursts into the established pattern of *glissando – whistling – beat* and therefore surprises not only rhythmically, but also via the suddenness of a graphic phonetic clearness.

Musical Example 4: PLUMS (Score, p. 3/m. 45-47), © 2010 by Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden. Smolka's instruction for such voice usage: »The given word (e.g. »PLUMS«) should be spoken or rather called with full voice, clearly pronounced.« (Smolka: Player instructions)

After Lubitsch has built the artificial stage it remains clearly synthetic even when the real Lancelot and his nurse are walking through it in true scale. The pond in which the fearful protagonist will fall is not revealed as such until the moment he splashes into it. In fact, within this unnatural setting, the rectangular pond itself appears as an abstract geometric structure just like the movie screen in a cinema. The empty two-dimensional squared surface is filled with concrete imagery once it is set in motion. The moment Lancelot touches it the object becomes water and marks the sudden appearance of reality. As for the audience, the abrupt shrieking of »PLUMS« by the ensemble shows that the moment of physical humour and surprise can reach out of the surface of the movie into the space of the spectators. Since the whistling was still musically structured, the scream is unexpected. Although the musicians are visible and audible, the shouting is as sudden as the water on the screen. The discernibility of the ensemble is as a part of the cinematic presentation of the staging. This process blurs the distinction between the internal and the external, which constitutes the cinema and expands what Chion confines within barriers of on-screen and off-screen sound. Here, at the latest, the abstract form of non-diegetic musical dramatization becomes permeable in favour of a constant play with the artificial nature of the setting of both Lubitsch and Smolka. The acousmatic inhabits an area that is beyond the established frame.
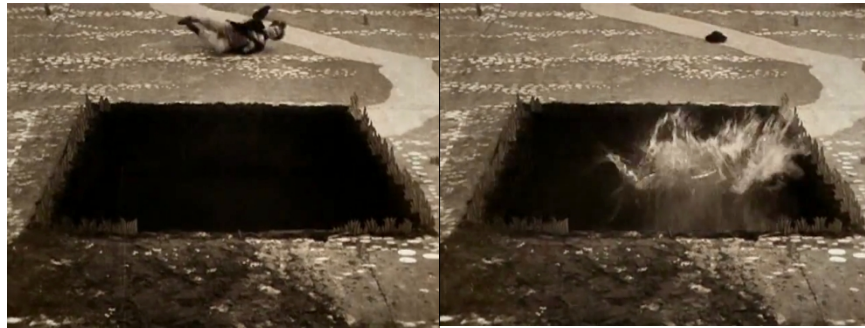
The pond reveals its identity. 0:01:44–0:01:45.

This scene foreshadows Lancelot's unawareness of Ossi's genuine identity
when he drops unerring into the dark world of the unknown.

At the pro-filmic level, several visual motifs also refer to an illustration of
meaning that appears in Lubitsch's world represented by artificial spaces
rendered by proverbial means and symbols: German sayings, for example, like
»Sich keine grauen Haare wachsen lassen« (avoiding the growth of grey hair as
a sign of worrying too much) (0:40:43) or »Jemandem rutscht das Herz in die
Hose« (your heart is dropping into your pants as a sign of fear) (0:20:42) are
then visualized on a concrete surface. This pictorial humour as a simplified
application of a particular phenomenological experience is viewed through a
sound accomplishment of refreshing naïve quality and youthful charm when
preverbal language is produced to emphasize sounds of childish astonishment
like »Jaaa, Oooch, Aaaach«. The variable degree of schematization in film and
music tends to evacuate the relation to a professional »reality« to stress the
constructed character of the filmic representation.

Filmic Example 5: 0:40:43; **Filmic Example 6**: 0:20:42

A Wedding as Refusal of Tradition?

The central scene in THE DOLL is the wedding between Lancelot and the false (yet genuine) Ossi. Since a wedding is the main goal for the happy ending in almost every operetta, it seems like a break from tradition when this symbolizes Lancelot's wish to shed responsibility. And yet appearances are kept up in the ceremony.

Smolka decides to underpin this with a minuet-like dance. Very soon it is clear that the whole minuet consists of small modules or, as we established before, auditory snapshots. But that is not the only feature; each module can be traced back to the Lancelot motifs, which are extended to a continuous ceremonial procedure. For example, the main flute motif is a dance-like variation of the

whistled third step. So, the structure of the minuet consists of the following 18 auditory snapshots (the various percussive strokes are summarized as one):
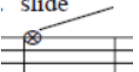
1 – Whistled motif, Flute-variation

2 – Cadential answer of snapshot 1 in the violin

3 – Cluster on the accordion

4-10 – Linguistic snapshots:

»*Mm*« ; »*Öch*« ; »*Ooh*« »*Jaa*« ; »*Ach*« ; »*Mmm*« ; »*Miauu*« ; »*Ö*«

11 – Twittering

12 – Glissando on the guitar

13 – Cluster on e-guitar

14 – Sighing motif on clarinet and flute

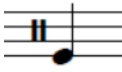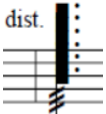15 – Glissando on violin

16 – Ornate figure on the violin and flute

17 – Different scales
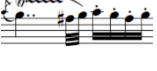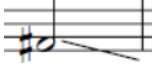
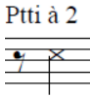18 – Various percussive strokes

The sheer variety of colour is produced by sounds of various bodies of instruments (demonstrated by a table, Music Example 5, page 19). Apart from the fact that this view on noises as musical material and the use of the instrumental bodies for creating them is genuinely modern, Smolka connects all snapshots together to form a dance chain.

After measure 92, the tempo is doubled and the 3/4 bar becomes 6/8. This moment is like a musical comment on typical speed-ups in comedy silent movies as the duration between the images is shortened. Likewise, it is not easy to hear all these musical modules and the levelling of timbres is now put to the extreme, but since the human mind recognizes patterns, the dance structure allows the composer to combine any sounds together, for we begin to believe that we're hearing the minuet.

This musical illusion elucidates the perception of society standards by illustrating tradition as an endless repetition of the same patterns. As Schiller stated, the price of societal order is the mechanization of human beings, and established rules and orders are assembled in the precision of clockworks. In his thoughts he is searching for a stabilizing aesthetic factor; a voice of reasoning between an archaic natural state and an organized rational state of society. In the score, the vast noises of sound and the well-tempered melody structures are balanced through a third component, the human voice. Only the words remain purely fragmented, and thus lack reasoning.

There is also another device that combines certain humorous aspects with the ruling stability of time: the cuckoo clock. It is no surprise that Smolka used the traditional cuckoo's call of the third downwards as a major motif in the movie. The audio elements of the cuckoo clock are also arranged as a combination of idiophone (bell, opening flap) and aerophone (cuckoo's call) elements.

	Aerophone	Idiophone	Chordophone	Membranophone	Electrophone
Melody	1 Whistled motif 16 Ornate figure 14 Sighing motif 	17 Slow scale 17 Percussive stroke Steel. 	2 Cadential answer 16 Ornate figure 		
Linguistic	**4-10** *Mm*; *Öch*; *Ooh*; *Jaa*; *Ach*; *Mmm*; *Miauu; Ö*				
Noise	3 Accordion cluster 14 Sighing motif 	17 Fast scale 18 Percussive stroke	12 Guitar glissando B ** slide 15	17 Percussive stroke G.c. 	13 Electric guitar-cluster dist. *ff*

	» 11 Twittering Bird	Bells 18 Percussive stroke Ptti à 2	Violin glissando		

Musical Example 5: All major auditory snapshots forming the wedding minuet. © 2010 by Breitkopf & Härtel, Wiesbaden

But even disregarding the obtained humorous effect, this minuet means more than just the anarchistic addition of sound. His design represents a litmus test for our own awareness of tradition. Contrary to Hoffman's Novel *The Sandman,* in which Nathaniel thinks he is looking into a real woman that is in fact a puppet, Lancelot does not see the organic nature of Ossi. At closer look we must admit, behind the artificially structured music, that there could be an organic and traditional grounding of a proven system that is somehow hidden from our ears. Since Smolka admitted to being nostalgic, this would be no surprise. Maybe the joy of being deceived by the narrative is mirrored in this very composition.

When taking a closer look, the wedding minuet reveals an A-B-A-C form that reflects the shape of a classical form of sonata. (Exposition: mm. 1–92, two motifs D major and diminished median F sharp minor; Development: mm. 93–123, acceleration of all motifs; Recapitulation: mm. 124–142; Coda: mm. 143–

166). From the usual dualism (a pastoral main theme (Snapshot 1), a melancholy dropping motif (Snapshot 14) to the principle of *durchbrochene Arbeit*, or »pierced work« in the development, which ultimately leads to the recapitulation and the calming in the coda (the cat's meow in the night closes the scene), one can assume that we are at least unconsciously reassured within a familiar internal balance. So the patterns are not laid out at random but within rules of continuity and coherence which complement the various fragments. The music reconnects with classical models and, at the same time, transcends them. Just as Lancelot at first refuses tradition yet – somehow indirectly – gives into it, so too does Smolka's stylistic bridge reconcile the new and the old. And it is up to each of us to determine if these traditional gestures are meant as diversions to obscure what is really happening or the other way around.

The Music, the Noise and the Fun – a Conclusion

Martin Smolka's approach integrates indeed a wide variety of sound manifestations. Many of them are not genuinely modern, as sound experiments in the early nickelodeons were common. Additional functionalities in the area of noise-based music were explored for example by Edmund Meisel in the 1920s with record-discs that carried abstracted every day sounds. He even used a quarter-tone piano. The symbiotic relationship between the rise of urbanity and noise-based music foreshadowed the talkie in Meisel's composition for Ruttmanns BERLIN – SYMPHONIE EINER GROSSSTADT (DE 1927).

To place Smolka's composition in the context of a humoristic approach, we may look at another early filmic example that deals with the meaningful differences between music and sound: MODERN TIMES by Charlie Chaplin. Created in 1937, the movie refrained from most of the sound film requirements that had influenced the cinema in previous years, except for the use of punctual sound effects. At the centre of the movie is Chaplin as a tramp who (like the movie itself) falls out of time and does not seem to fit into a world becoming more and more mechanized. Chaplin's explicit criticism of the use of human resources in an industrialized world climaxes in a scene in which the protagonist is not capable of distinguishing between a woman's body and a hydrant. The same goes for the nature of communication he is presenting. By understanding pantomime as a universal language, talking is mostly represented by the typical silent film use of text panels, whereas real voices are only heard filtered through distant radios and microphones, and have an unclear, impersonal quality. Therefore Chaplin's mastery of both satirical and lyrical reflections of machinery can be called consequent by avoiding melodic characterization to describe the impersonal modern era.

Due to the experimental nature of the usage of sound in this movie it is nowadays regarded as a hybrid between silent and talkie films. The situation becomes interesting when the original music for this film (written by Chaplin himself) in the director's own words should be regarded as romantic and not comical to avoid some collision course to the visual slapstick on screen.

Therefore, it is no longer the musical melody that is most relevant for the humour in the movie. Instead, the strongest comic effect on the auditory level

comes by using noises of gone-mad machinery to contrast with any sentimental mood the score is providing.

A logical step forward is taken by Jaques Tati in his film PLAYTIME (F 1967) 30 years later. Non-diegetic music works here only as a nostalgic symbol of a forgotten time. The noises of the futuristic city, but even the intradiegetic jazz bands and the frazzled dialogues are building the auditory material that Chion describes as faltering and punctual (Chion 2012, 46–47)[6] and it can somehow be seen as significant for the deadpan humour which is exemplified in the dehumanizing texture of this isolated and isolating setting of *Tativille.* Interestingly though, the simplest recognizable (pre)verbal expressions are pure noises of joy and astonishment, like we explored in Smolka's score (for example such as *Jaaaa* or *Oooh*).

David Lynch admitted Tati's funny use of sound inspired the dark humour of the elevator scene in his debut ERASERHEAD (1977), and even the musical numbers in Lars von Trier's DANCER IN THE DARK (2000), from which a light irony is often undeniable, are each based on looping concrete real sound patterns.

A more modern example in cinema history is Sophia Coppola's LOST IN TRANSLATION (2004), which deals more and more with a digitized world. The communication leak and the sound of Tokyo represent the forlornness of the protagonists. Music (especially melancholy pop-music represented most

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6   Chion is in fact referring to *Mon Oncle*, but in many ways PLAYTIME can be seen as improvement of this auditory environment.

prominently in the karaoke scene) is seemingly the only remaining way to communicate and conventional melodies don't form any comedy grounding at all.

Smolka does pick up the comedy effect of noises by translating them back to music material. Whereas Lubitsch is morphing real images into abstract forms within a distorted staging in black and white, while at the same time morphing metaphors into explicit pictures, Smolka transforms reality-based tunes into musical humour. This avant-garde design of the score enables a corporal presence of other-worldly and stylized images, which could not be mastered by historical comic-music pointing to vaudeville, like for example ragtime. The basis of it all is the modular design of the film music referring to mechanical means and to cinema as compound medium for the sake of creating illusions. This approach constantly challenges what is taken for granted. The repetition of the motifs provides with an additional humorous effect. By fragmenting the musical contextual relationships (although Smolka sets certain traditional connotations), one could say that the modularity evolved through the stylistic, »associative« language of Ernst Lubitsch.

At the same time, the staged situation during the live performance constantly plays with the spatial perception of the spectators and the interchange of the on-screen/off-screen situation, therefore creates a comic effect when changing between diegetic and non-diegetic meanings.

Particularly in the use of cross-cultural and methodical polystylism, the rescoring corresponds very well with the playful cinema personality of Lubitsch.

Lancelot and Ossi will try to live together. And we shall all look forward to the fruits of this unusual coupling that the coming years will bear. The same applies to the marriage of modern music and historical pictures.

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