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Historias locales, música global. Marcas sonoras en los últimos géneros del cine español.

Local Stories, Global Music. Sound trade marks in the latest genres of Spanish Cinema

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RESUMEN: En este artículo nos ocupamos del uso de la música en géneros cinematográficos en el contexto español. Nos centramos específicamente en dos tipologías muy características de la última década. En primer lugar, se da la existencia de una serie de comedias que ofrecen una segunda lectura a partir de los clichés musicales del género de aventuras, con el fin de utilizarlos como elementos paródicos. Como paradigma de este género, el compositor Roque Baños escribe al estilo del sinfonismo de Hollywood para las producciones menos "cool" del cine español. Por el contrario, acaso como complemento, la canción constituye un signo de identidad musical de las últimas expresiones del género realista. Estos ejemplos muestran que a los signos sonoros propios de cada género, estandarizados como convenciones musicales, tenemos que añadir las peculiaridades de cada país. Esto da lugar a significados que surgen de la

ABSTRACT: This article deals with the use of music in certain specific cinematic genres in the Spanish context. It focuses specifically on two typologies which are very characteristic of the last decade. First, it is possible to trace the existence of a number of comedies which offer second readings of the musical clichés of the adventure genre in order to use them as elements of parody. As a paradigm of this genre, the composer Roque Baños writes in Hollywood symphonic style for the least "cool" productions of Spanish cinema. In contrast, but complementing this, the theme song constitutes a musical trade mark for the latest expressions of the realist genre. These examples show that to the sound trade marks for each genre, standardized musical conventions, we need to add the peculiarities of each country. This gives rise to meanings that arise from the sum of genre clichés and local characteristics.

suma de clichés de género y características locales.

Key words: Music, Identity, Cinematic Genres, Spanish Cinema.

Palabras clave: música, identidad, géneros cinematográficos, cine español.

European research on communication must pay special attention to the role that music plays in audio-visual language. We cannot forget that audio-visual narrative in our days is built on the association of visual and sound, specially music. That music insists expressively and narratively on the line shown in the image. That is why both materials (iconic/concrete and sound/symbolic) increase each other in the same context.

In the last twenty years critical studies about music and image had given rise to a quite solid corpus that allows exchanges between academic studies and real practice. This retrospective view stresses the fundamental need of exchanges for the development of new research proposes in mass-media communication.

1. Music in the Communication Studies

In the contemporary moment, music lives its own paradoxes. For that reason, it is important to establish new frameworks for the study of music, that cannot be understood neither without the canons of postmodernity¹ nor with isolated studies.

In the last decades, we have known many researchers that, besides musicology or ethnomusicology, have studied music from aesthetics, sociologist or anthropological viewpoints, as well as cultural studies². In Spanish context, it is necessary to go one step forward and to propose new perspectives of analysis, taken from communication. Research from communication studies involves understanding music from its consumption in the media, which

¹ At this juncture we found the first paradox: postmodernity hardly admits the establishment of canons.

² See, i.e., TAGG, Philip, *Kojak. 50 Seconds of Television Music. Toward the Analysis of Affect in Popular Music*. Skriften fran Musikvetenskapliga Institutionen, Göteborg, 1979; GORBMAN, Claudia. *Unheard Melodies. Narrative Film Music*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1987; FLINN, Caryl. *Strains of Utopia. Gender, Nostalgia and Hollywood Film Music*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

inevitably leads to reflection on two aspects: first, the way in which the meanings of music reach the viewer, and secondly the way in which music is consumed.

We will argue our discussion by taking verification of a starting point: the audio-visualization of the musical fact, or the audio-visualizing music³, that is to say, the increasing use of music linked to visual media. As Walter Benjamin said, once we have entered the technical era, man needs it in order to approach the reality, although both cinema and audio-visual means will be always an interpretation of reality. For that reason, the images in television seem to be more real than the facts themselves if we lived them. In any case sound becomes the guarantor of visual truth because it supports the images, and the dimension of sound is truly what contributes to the symbolic degree that determines the credibility of the transmitted information⁴.

Moreover, the audio-visualization of music puts it closer to the popular and puts into question the boundaries between classical and popular. For example, film music, which we discuss in this article, uses musical styles traditionally associated with classical music but is embedded in popular media. It can seem a nonsense, but if Blacking wondered "How Musical is Man"⁵, we must also ask ourselves what defines classical in music. Whatever the answer is, nowadays including Elvis Costello, Frank Zappa, or Paul McCartney in a list of classical musicians wouldn't be surprising, whereas in the listing corresponding (pop)ular musicians Mozart, Bach, Verdi, Johann Strauss or G.B. Pergolesi would be included as well.

The sublimation of music, always fictitious, has turned a resource of the dominant classes, and music has become a value of cultural distinction, but music itself can still belong to the substratum of the popular. The new distinctions between classical and (pop)ular are in need of revision. The fast access to music, from any support and in any space-temporal dimension, might be considered, because thanks to the mechanical reproduction studied by Walter Benjamin⁶, music is able to be everywhere at once. The new spaces

³ RADIGALES, Jaume; FRAILE, Teresa, "La música en los estudios de comunicación audio-visual. Prospecciones y estado de la cuestión", *Trípodos*, nº19, 2006, pp. 99-112.

⁴ In order to deal with the study of audio-visualization of music, it is worth asking about the old dialogue between classical and popular SCARNECCHIA, Paolo. *Música popular y música culta*. Barcelona: Icaria editorial, 1998.

⁵ BLACKING, John. *How Musical is Man?* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973.

⁶ BENJAMIN, Walter. *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1983.

for music, some of them audio-visualized like the concert, connect with the mass culture and with the change in the idea of cultural distinction analyzed by Bourdieu⁷. For that reason, music becomes less and less analyzable using historical chronology whereas it becomes a social and aesthetic phenomenon that may be analysed by new formats and his reception⁸.

In these new formats, the music is issued by the line of vision and the line of vision is closely bound to the music, and they attend an additional fact in the daily association of image with music: nowadays the audio-visual fact is conceived as a unitary event, the duality image-music is already conceived as a congenital fact. The result is that in our present society, image already gives rise to music. Apart from cinema or television, audio-visual feedback is present in formats such as the musical video, electroacoustic music, computer programs that turn sound into image, video-art or the visual interpretations of concerts. Consequently, although historic musicology follows some clearly-defined methodological parameters, it is obvious that the study of the present music cannot be conceived outside the communication studies.

Since the consumption of music has changed, it is physically and internally conditioned, and as a result of that, the studies of music must change too. Indeed the consumption of music has been one of the first in experiencing the industrialization process, and in a certain way it has pushed other means towards the industrial transformation. Moreover, music is one of the points of reference for technical innovations, that's why many advances appear in the record industry. But above all, the study in the Communication Studies can also invite us to do a reflexion about the cinematic identity on music and genres.

2. *On Music and Genres*

Finding 'platonic realities' of movie genres is not an easy task. That is to say, it is difficult to come up with films that could fit perfectly into the mold of what we imagine is the pattern of a specific genre. It becomes even more complicated if we take into account the circularity implicit in the definition of a genre, according to which a certain type of film should be seen in order to define a genre. At the same time it is difficult to determine which films

7 BOURDIEU, Pierre. *La distinction*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1979.

8 This is, somehow, the hypothesis defended in COOK, Nicholas: *Music. A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 1998.

should be seen without having a preconceived idea of the characteristics that makes them similar and attributable to that genre.

Similarly, it is also impossible to establish inflexible musical models. Rather, what we identify as the music of a given genre is actually an ever-changing product, a continuous process, that depends on its context and on how it is used. With regard to the aim of this paper, and assuming the word “genre” to be a concept reached by consensus, it is true that, pragmatically speaking, the music of film genres is a category used at a practical level by composers, directors, and movie enthusiasts, as well as the recording industry. At the same time, certain musical clichés of genres can be identified, whether stylistic, melodic or instrumental, that have been used in the characterization of the different film typologies. Clichés generate stereotypes that can be read, aesthetically speaking, according to the old debates on music and its relationship with meanings and expressive standards. These stereotypes have changed throughout the history of film, and today they are being reshaped and adapted to different local contexts and to specific subgenres in each local industry. It is precisely this mixture that leads us to assert that certain musical procedures specific of a genre, can become national characteristics proper of the cinema of a given country.

In Spanish cinema, the use of music is an outstanding feature of the most recent period of the national film production. On the one hand, the use of the musical stereotypes traditionally related to the Spanish context (flamenco, Andalucism, etc.) started to decrease in the 90s due to Spain opening up to new ideas and the influence of foreign countries, and also as a rejection of the persistent association of these genres with the Franco culture, which had a reductionist nature based on a dictatorial control exerted over the Spanish film industry during the period 1939-76. On the other hand, new creative products linked to film music sprung up during the 90s, in particular specific subgenres that implicitly involved a relationship with music, and also spoke of contemporary Spain. That is to say, they established meanings of identity. This is the case of the contemporary musicals, the fictionalization of stories about musicians, the timid realism, the parody of the music *fan*, etc., films of a purely Spanish identity that illustrate new meanings that music can articulate.

In many circumstances Spanish cinema speaks of Spain today, but this representation should be understood within an industrial context where the signs associated with Spanishness are reformulated as part of the global discourse that these productions belong to. In the cultural products born within this transnational context, concepts once in conflict now coexist, such as unity and diversity, local or universal, national or European, urban or rural,

all of which are features present in film music. Because of this, we can speak of musical styles that were once seen as alien and are now inscribed naturally in products derived from a purely national industry.

3. *Roque Baños, the “American” composer*

Among the film genres from recent Spain, we will focus on two that are contrasting but also complementary, since they both articulate in their own way a specific reference to local contexts. These genres are good examples for reflection on the reception of music, and to investigate how music induces the production of meanings and the identification process reported by Anahid Kassabian⁹. As this author suggests, we will focus on a genre that provokes “assimilating identifications,” which are produced by the soundtrack composed specifically for the film, and on another genre that causes “affiliating identifications”, those external associations produced by songs.

First, we will look at the example of the composer Roque Baños and his way of treating music in comedy. This composer belongs to the new generation of Spanish cinema, from directors to technical personnel, that emerged during the 90s. In some way, Baños is emblematic of this group since he is one of the most successful and prolific musicians of his generation. One of the most important biographical aspects of Baños is his passage through the Berklee College of Music in Boston, a school he was able to attend thanks to a scholarship from the Ministry of Culture after he finished his composition studies at the Conservatorio de Madrid. While in Boston he was able to take courses on jazz and composition for film, something that proved a determining factor in his future career. Back in Spain, in 1997, he composed his first sound track for a feature film, *Carreteras Secundarias (Secondary Roads)* by Emilio Martínez Lázaro, and from then on he developed a meteoric career creating music for an average of four films a year.

With respect to his work, from the very beginning he shows a preference for film music since he is attracted to the development of themes and the extension of their possibilities, something that in popular classical music is sometimes exhausted by use. He is usually labeled as the musician who brought the ‘Berklee style’, and it is said that his music sounds ‘American’, due to his tendency towards a symphonic style. It is a style that closely tracks

⁹ KASSABIAN, Anahid. *Hearing Film. Tracking Identifications in Contemporary Hollywood Film Music*. NY & London: Routledge, 2001, p.7.

neo-symphonism, which took off in the United States around the mid-70s and at the beginning the 80s with key names of the Hollywood industry such as John Williams, James Horner or Hans Zimmer. All three inherited the tradition and legacy of 'classical' composers from the 30s and 40s, many of them of European origin, such as Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Max Steiner o Miklós Roszá. They established a trend that remained steady until the 60s, and which was revitalized a decade later thanks to the composers mentioned above, to whom Baños clearly owes a debt.

However, the Spanish composer denies this when he asserts that he did not develop his interest in wide textures in Boston, and that such an interest is just part of his composing personality¹⁰. He also states that, even though he likes symphonism, he is capable of composing in many other styles and with limited instrumentation. Either way, he has few problems in putting a grandiloquent theme to a film with few characters since he supports the concept of all embracing sound.

At the same time, he declares he has diverse influences, and he is, in fact, a very eclectic author: his favorite soundtrack is *E.T.* by John Williams (1982), but simultaneously, he is highly influenced by jazz, a genre he devoted himself to for some time. This Spanish composer is a man capable of absorbing all sorts of genre stereotypes, since one feature of film music that attracts him is the absence of the obsession for originality that is found in so-called highbrow music. He expresses this in his comments: "In movies you can do anything and no one will tell to your face that it's already been invented or done by someone before. What matters in films is whether the music works or not and not the fact that someone has already invented that style"¹¹.

In any event, Baños says he does not make any conscious reference to other composers, even though many critics concurred that in his first sound track he showed clear references to Bernard Herrmann's music. Coincidence or unconscious influence, as Roque Baños himself states, "it is almost impossible to make genre music, for a genre movie, that could be hundred percent original and does not remind you of anything else"¹².

Roque Baños' versatility has led him to engage in composition for the most diverse types of films. We should not forget that film genres are often

¹⁰ CUETO, Roberto, *El lenguaje invisible. Entrevistas con compositores del cine español*, Festival de Alcalá de Henares, Madrid, 2003, p.72.

¹¹ CUETO, Roberto, *op. cit.*, p.71.

¹² PADROL, Joan, *Conversaciones con músicos de cine*, Diputación de Badajoz, 2006, p.82.

related to a given musical style. This premise is applicable to the work Baños has done with many directors of his generation (Alex de la Iglesia, Daniel Monzón, Santiago Segura, Chema de la Peña), who share with him a common conception of movie, and with whom auditory and visual communication flows naturally. In this way, the post-romantic, neo-symphonic style in which Baños performs so well, is well-suited to the genres handled by these authors, who are aware of a 'cinephilia' acquired during their youth.

His filmography includes products of a fantastic, adventure or dramatic nature, which have required different musical-narrative solutions. Thus in his first feature film, *Carreteras secundarias* (*Secondary Roads*, Emilio Martínez-Lázaro, 1997), Baños pays tribute to Hollywood classical composers, drawing inspiration from the films of the 70s. In the film *El corazón del guerrero* (*Heart of the Warrior*, Daniel Monzón, 2000) he materializes one of his dreams by writing a musical score for an adventure film. He had always been fascinated by *Conan the Barbarian* and the entire Indiana Jones series with its music by John Williams. In *El corazón del guerrero*, both director and composer wanted genre music, adventure music as Baños calls it¹³, where metals and percussion prevail in two main themes, one for the bad guys, and a second, contrasting theme, of an epic character. This model takes us to another emblematic movie saga orchestrated by John Williams, *Star Wars*. In Baños' case (as in Williams'), all the music has been treated with the utmost seriousness, without ignoring post-modern resources like parodic appropriationism.

4. *Roque Baños and generic clichés applied to comedy*

An outstanding part of this author's production is made up by his music for comedies, where he exploits an ironic side. This is the case of *Torrente, el brazo tonto de la ley* (*Torrente, the Stupid Arm of the Law*, Santiago Segura, 1998), *Muertos de risa* (*Dying of Laughter*, Alex de la Iglesia, 1999), *La comunidad* (*The Community*, Alex de la Iglesia, 2000), *800 balas* (*800 Bullets*, Alex de la Iglesia, 2002), *Crimen ferpecto* (*Ferpect Crime*, Alex de la Iglesia, 2004), *El robo más grande jamás contado* (*The Biggest Robbery Never Told*, Daniel Monzón, 2002) or *Isi/Disi* (Chema de la Peña, 2004).

His technique in these films, and another of his personal film-music traits, consists of contrasting a Hollywood style symphonic music with the representation of popular characters and everyday situations that are placed in

¹³ PADROL, Joan, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

national settings. This technique of contrasting genre music and the localism present in the images is effective. He himself explains how in such cases he turns to the “American language for the purpose of parody: in the films *Torrente* or *La Comunidad*, the idea is to contrast the visual humor with these musical traditions”¹⁴. In most cases, the humorous element lies in characters and situations which are identified by the spectator as elements of obvious local origins.

Consequently, when asked whether he likes to oppose music to images he replies with a strong affirmative answer: “There are examples of American comedies with overwhelming music. With this, they manage to give a more serious character to what is being watched. Result: the spectator laughs a lot more when seeing the absurdity of the situations. What we are always discussing here, in my studio, with Alex [De la Iglesia], Santiago [Segura], and Chema [De La Peña] is that we always have to be serious. We have to get into the character’s body, put ourselves in his shoes”¹⁵.

Thus, in these cases the point of view of the music is placed on the side of the characters and fulfills an expressive role of identification with them; meanwhile the spectator perceives the comic aspect of the situation such that, simultaneously, the music reveals the true meaning of the image.

Around the genre of black comedy, Roque Baños has formed one of the most solid couples in Spanish film with Álex de la Iglesia. The first film they produced together was *Muertos de risa* (1999), and from then on De la Iglesia made Baños his head musician. De la Iglesia’s filmography is full of violence and black humor, therefore the composer explores a sardonic, cynical and burlesque musical facet, where what prevails is the view of the director, who sustains that music should always be taken seriously. Already in that first collaboration, an exaggerated, big orchestra music was used, based on the timbre of the piano, except for the credits where Baños relied on an octet. Following the director’s wish, this music approaches the referent of Nino Rota’s music in Fellini’s movies: it comes as no surprise that these Italian artists are often referred to when talking about composer-director couples; the same things is beginning to happen in contemporary Spanish film with De la Iglesia and Baños.

As in the Rota-Fellini case, the relation between these Spanish creators

¹⁴ CUETO, Roberto, *op. cit.*, p.72.

¹⁵ Interview at *Scoremagazine* http://www.scoremagazine.com/Entrevistas_det.php?Codigo=35 [Consulted on October 13th, 2010].

has been evolving throughout their joint collaboration, taking on an increasingly reflective character. After *La comunidad* (2000), the music of *800 balas* (2002) turned out to be more temperate, although the script repeatedly acknowledges certain genre stereotypes.

The film is set up at an abandoned town-stage in the province of Almería, where Sergio Leone and many others directed the famous ‘spaghetti westerns’ at the end of the 60s and during the mid-70s. *Baños* does not hide that the fact that he has taken as a referent Aaron Copland, one of his favorite composers, and someone who in his opinion is a source of inspiration for every musician who engages in the creation of music for westerns¹⁶. From this, we can deduce that one of the reasons for the repetition of musical stereotypes is the existence of a community of classical musical referents. Even though the director did not wish to introduce spaghetti western music in the film (for it would be too obvious and the results would be ridiculous) the music does explore musical clichés from genre cinema.

In other comedies, we find a similar composition style with certain peculiarities. For example, *El robo más grande jamás contado* (Daniel Monzón, 2002) utilizes *big band* music based on jazz but set in a fairy-tale like fantastic environment and in fragments where he uses orchestra and chorus more. The idea of using the same musical themes provides the expected cohesion, since these themes appear in diverse forms, with different notes but with a similar design and the same tonality. This film is full of allusions to the music written by Henry Mancini for Blake Edwards’ comedies. There are also allusions to Lalo Schiffrin’s music, as well as references to the intrigue comedies from the 60s¹⁷.

Torrente, el brazo tonto de la ley (*Torrente, the Stupid Arm of the Law*, Santiago Segura, 1998) and *Torrente 2. Misión en Marbella* (*Torrente 2. Mission in Marbella*, 2002) are two of the most obvious examples of opposing common, seedy characters to a Hollywood-style symphonic music. Both films are completed by songs that reinforce a more local side. Among these we can mention the songs performed by the Spanish folk artist El Fary: ‘Apatrullando la ciudad’ y ‘El torito guapo’, in the first film; as well as ‘Semos diferentes’ by Joaquín Sabina and ‘¡Qué tendrá Marbella!’ by Navajita Plateá, in the second one. This is often diegetic music which adds an environment of sound that helps to de-

¹⁶ PADROL, Joan, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

¹⁷ CUETO, Roberto, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

pict the no less seedy main character, a cop separated from the force who keeps patrolling on his own. But the incidental music is typical of the adventure genre, similar to that of *Conan the Barbarian* (John Milius, 1981, music by Basil Poledouris), and the main melodic theme is characteristic of a victorious hero. The screen, however, reveals a considerably more pathetic fiction. This is how Baños defines the result of this opposition: “Introducing symphonic music, in the purest sense of the term, as if it were Horner or Zimmer, produces an amazing result: in the character’s presentation, before you see him, the music anticipates a Stallone or a Schwarzenegger. But what you end up seeing is a greasy and repulsive guy. [...] look at *Torrente 2*, which is like a seedy version of *Miami Vice*. It has that James Bond tone, but what you see is that overly tacky atmosphere of Marbella”¹⁸.

In the same way, the incidental music of the film *Isi/Disi* (Chema de la Peña, 2004) confirms, at all times, the hilarious tone used to write this production. The narrative recounts the adventures of Isi and Disi (Spanish imitation of AC/DC), two heavy metal fans from the neighborhood of Leganés in Madrid. The composition is, in itself, a catalogue of musical stereotypes associated with specific situations of films: a sensual music with sax is related to a *striptease* scene, a reference to ‘oriental’ music is typical of martial art films, ‘Alleluia’ from *The Messiah* by Händel is used when the character is finally accepted by his lover, the melody ‘Kalinka’ is associated with Russia, a theme from Luigi Boccherini is related to a grand banquet, a march rhythm and metals emphasizes the decision of the ‘hero’ in a tough situation, melancholic melodies played with chords (Samuel Barber’s *Adagio* popularized by the cinematic context of *Platoon* by Oliver Stone) are destined for sad moments (which contrasts ridiculously with the location of the scenes in the suburbs or the university), *mickeymousing* accompanying steps, choruses similar to the fantastic atmospheres of Danny Elfman’s compositions for Tim Burton’s films in a Madrid dusk, ‘superheroes’ music with horn melodies and orchestration analogous to Williams’ themes for *Indiana Jones* or *Star Wars* sagas, and so on.

In some instances, musical jokes are even more evident. In such cases, the author exploits the common auto-referencing of a whole generation of directors, composers and spectators acquainted with a long cinema tradition. In *La Comunidad* or *El robo más grande jamás contado* the sound gag is activated making references to well-known melodic motifs from other films that remain

¹⁸ CUETO, Roberto, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.

in the social imaginary as the great moments of film music. In *La comunidad* there is a direct quote to Darth Vader's theme in *The Empire Strikes Back* (Irving Kushner, 1982, music by John Williams), while in *El robo más grande jamás contado* a big gangster appears behind a shower curtain showing the outline of his genitals, an image backed by a clear reference to the violins used in the shower sequence of Hitchcock's *Psycho* with music by Herrmann¹⁹.

5. Realism and "theme song"

Setting incidental music aside, pre-existing music also plays a genre role in some instances. More so if we consider the ability of songs to shape identity discourses, given that they acquire multiple meanings linked to social identities.

The genre of social realism has created a musical trade mark consisting of a song that refers to the film subject matter. While the incidental music follows standardized parameters shared by other genres, the song is linked to the elaboration of signs of identity. These films deal with social issues, and very often they introduce and deal with topics associated with specific identities (women, gays, etc.) or with social problems (prostitution, immigration and loneliness). We can find this model in Spanish films like *Princesas* (*Princesses*, Fernando León, 2006), which deals with the issues of prostitution and immigration, and popularized the song 'Calle' by Manu Chao. Other examples are the film *Sólo mía* (*Mine Alone*, Javier Balaguer, 2001) featuring the song by the same name performed by Clara Montes, and that refers to violence against women; and the film *Cachorro* (*Bear Cub*, Miguel Albaladejo, 2004), which makes 'Hombres' by Fangoria its *theme song*, and presents a story line developed out of the theme of homosexuality.

Usually, the emblematic song of the movie appears only as background music or in the credits, such that the musical theme, interpreted by famous pop artists, acts simultaneously as a call, as a description of atmospheres and characters, and as an anchor for the identity discourse²⁰. But, besides, in all

¹⁹ CUETO, Roberto, *op. cit.*, p.75; PADROL, Joan, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

²⁰ The cinematic origins of this practice should be traced back to the beginnings of talkies, in musical movies like *The Love Parade* (1929), by Lubitsch. The music of this film was published in a number of vinyls, piano reductions and even Pianola rolls that would just increase the social presence of this film. This habit became accentuated at the end of the 50s, for example, the film *Three Coins in a Fountain* (Jean Negulesco, 1954) had a prologue sang by Frank Sinatra who did not appear in the film, not even as an actor, and whose performing was not official.

these Spanish examples there is a clear union of the songs with the local context. Manu Chao, brand of multiculturalism, in *Princesas* sings in Spanish over the images of Madrid. In *Sólo mía*, the performer is Clara Montes, whose music is linked to flamenco. And the main theme of *Cachorro* is played by Alaska, one of the top stars of the Madrid Movida.

A special example appears in *Solas* (*Alone*, Benito Zambrano, 1999), with the main theme or *theme song* 'Woman', performed by Neneh Cherry. In this case, this famous song takes up special attributes associated with the narrative. The film relates the life of two lower class women from a southern Spanish city, and the daily difficulties that they, mother and daughter, have to overcome as women within a chauvinist, unjust world where economical problems add to the humiliation they suffer. In the credits and the trailer, the song (originally in English) is tainted with the veneer of the Spanish context through the translation of the lyrics into Spanish, and the introduction of the Spanish guitar. The theme, taken from the album *Man*, is accompanied by the famous Tomatito at the guitar, which grants a folk character with global dimensions. In addition, the theme is linked to the film through the content of the song, which not only refers to gender repression, but also indirectly illustrates other conflicts implicit in the film, like the lack of understanding between generations, or solitude in all its aspects (moral solitude, but also the loneliness of old people, embodied in one of the film characters). In this instance, popular music in the form of a song has an expressive function because it speaks of feelings derived from situations of this kind, and at the same time constitutes a signifying device in that it alludes to a specific social problem.

Another example, closely related to the above, appears in the above-mentioned *800 balas* (Alex de la Iglesia, 2002). The theme for the credits is a version of the well-known *Il buono, il brutto, il cattivo* (Sergio Leone, 1966, music by Ennio Morricone) recorded in the 60s by the flamenco duet Los Amaya. Though the film story unfolds in the Spanish province of Almería, where so many westerns were shot, the flamenco style of the song returns to its place of origin. In this way, both themes, 'Woman' and the version of *Il buono, il brutto, il cattivo*, act as the leading feature of the film, inserting it into the national context.

However, the song and the popularity of its interpreter guaranteed the promotion of the film through an essential medium of that time: the radio. After that and up to the present day, there have been a great number of films using a similar market strategy: *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (the song, "Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head"), *Bram Stoker's Dracula* ("Love Song for a Vampire"), and a long list.

6. Conclusions

These examples of 'Spanish-style' comedies as well as the social realism show how the narrative contexts are essential to configure the meanings derived from the musical stereotypes of a film genre. In the first case, the standards of film music are employed as an appropriating element with parodic purposes, since they are superimposed on the contemporary Spanish context. In the comedies shown, the Spanishness lies in the clash of international musical practices with exaggerated Hispanics scenarios, as well as in the shock of this incidental music with songs referring to the collective knowledge of the Spanish audience. Although, as explained above, in contemporary Spanish cinema Spanish musical stereotypes has decreased, traditional narratives of the Spanish comedy have been perpetuated and even increased, continuing the long tradition of picturesqueness comedy. The proof that the choice of a non-local music is deliberate, is that Roque Baños himself composed soundtracks for Carlos Saura's films in more traditionally Hispanic musical styles such as reminiscent flamenco or Sephardic music.

In the second case, the song constitutes a declaration of intentions when it comes to depicting local environments. In these cases, the narrative deals with social problems of any Western society, but the music is a clear anchor to very specific scenarios. Again, the interaction of music with the narrative shows the coexistence of local and global, so characteristic of many of the European film as well as Spanish. Thus, these examples demonstrate the idea of audio-visualization alluded to in the beginning, since the interpretation of the double condition global - local, cannot be extracted from the meanings of music or narrative separately, but from the interaction of both. At the same time, the distinction between classical and popular music is not useful to analyze the use of all this music in these films.

Both products are creations of contemporary times, a period of constant reflection on national consciousness and on the reformulation of nationalities within cultural products. We should be well aware of the transnational context in order to understand how the existing generic clichés are reinvented and enhanced with new auto-referring meaning, that depend on the different national industries. Thus, the *difference* is the feature that provides a global character capable of transcending boundaries. Summing up, the peculiarity of musical stereotypes in current Spanish cinema is found in its use, in the way in which music is integrated into various film genres to formulate new meanings.

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