

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
WHEN JAZZ MEETS CINEMA

WARNER BROS. SUPREME TRIUMPH

# AL JOLSON

"THE  
JAZZ SINGER"



WITH  
MAY MCAVOY  
WARNER OLAND  
Cantor Rosenblatt

*Based upon the play by Samson Raphaelson as produced on the spoken stage by Lewis & Gordon and Sam H. Harris  
Scenario by Al Cohn*

DIRECTED BY ALAN CROSLAND

A WARNER BROS. PRODUCTION



CENTRO STUDI  
OPERA OMNIA  
*Luigi Boccherini*



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
**WHEN JAZZ MEETS CINEMA**

Organized by

**Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini, Lucca**

under the Auspices of

**Comune di Lovere**

**Lovere, Auditorium di Villa Milesi**

**5-7 May 2017**



**SCHOLARLY COMMITTEE:**

EMILIO AUDISSINO (University of Southampton)

ROBERTO ILLIANO (Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini)

FULVIA MORABITO (Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini)

MASSIMILIANO SALA (Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini)

EMILE WENNEKES (Utrecht University)



**KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:**

EMILIO AUDISSINO (University of Southampton)

GIAMPIERO CANE (Università di Bologna)

EMILE WENNEKES (Utrecht University)

## FRIDAY 5 MAY

### 9.30-10.00: Registration and Welcome

#### Opening

10.00-10.15

- GIOVANNI GUIZZETTI (Sindaco di Love)
- MASSIMILIANO SALA (Vicepresidente Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini)

#### Scoring Silent Films

10.30-11.50

(Chair: **Emile Wennekes**, Utrecht University)

- PHILIP JOHNSTON (Australian Institute of Music, Surry Hills NSW): *Jazzin' The Silents: Jazz and Improvised Music in Contemporary Scores for Silent Film*
- FRANCESCO FINOCCHIARO (Universität Wien) – LEO IZZO (Università di Bologna): *«Metropolis» di Fritz Lang: la città del futuro nell'età del jazz*

### 12.00-13.00 – Keynote Speaker 1

- EMILE WENNEKES (Utrecht University): *Solidified Solos on Screen: The Ambivalent Relation between Jazz and Film*



13.00 Lunch



### 15.30-16.30 – Keynote Speaker 2

- GIAMPIERO CANE (Università di Bologna): *Due guerre, un ascensore e il jazz*

#### Declinations, Aesthetics and Semiotics (I)

17.00-18.30

(Chair: **Massimiliano Sala**, Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini)

- LUCA STOLL (University of Oxford): *Cinema: A Privileged Way of Reacquiring Cultural Intimacy With Jazz Standards*

- ADAM BIGGS (Bath Spa University): *Jazz as Individual Expression: An Analysis of «The Fabulous Baker Boys» Soundtrack*
- IAN SMITH (London): *Jazz: The Third Auteur of Pinter-Losey's «The Servant»*



## SATURDAY 6 MAY

### Narratives

10.00-11.00

(Chair: **Emilio Audissino**, University of Southampton)

- MARCEL BOUVRIE (Utrecht University): *The Narrative of the Synergetic Musical Diegesis in «Whiplash» (2014)*

11.30-12.30

- YULIJA KOVALENKO (Kharkov State Academy of Culture, Ukraine): *The Influence of Jazz on Dramatic Narrative in Films*
- ARMANDO IANNIELLO (Università degli Studi di Pavia/Cremona): *Tra Umiliani e Trovajoli: Nino Rota e la musica Jazz per «Boccaccio 70»*



13.00 Lunch



### 15.00-16.00 – Keynote Speaker 3

- EMILIO AUDISSINO (University of Southampton): *Jazz, Hollywood Cinema, and John Williams*

### Declinations, Aesthetics and Semiotics (II)

16.30-18.00

(Chair: **Roberto Illiano**, Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini)

- ROBERTO CALABRETTO (Università di Udine): *La musica jazz nel cinema di Michelangelo Antonioni*

- MARIDA RIZZUTI (Università IULM, Milano): *From Polish Shtetl to Hollywood: Klezmer's Heritage in Jazz and Sounding Cinema*
- SAFA CANALP (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin): *Echoes of «Twin Peaks»: Emergence and Development of Dark Jazz*



## SUNDAY 7 MAY

### Social, Cultural and Political Issues

10.00-11.00

(Chair: **Emile Wennekes**, Utrecht University)

- JULIO ARCE (Universidad Complutense de Madrid): *From Chotis to Charlestón. Jazz and Silent Film in Spain in the 1920s*
- CELSA ALONSO GONZÁLEZ (Universidad de Oviedo): *Jazz, Cinema and Republic in Spain until the Civil War*

11.30-12.30

- SERGEY ZASORIN (Moscow State Pedagogical University): *The Difficult Path of Jazz to Soviet Cinema: Arts under Ideological Pressure*
- RANDALL CHERRY (ISEG, Paris): *Class and Race: "Ethel Waters and the Search for Racial Redemption"*



13.00 Lunch

## Keynote Speakers

### EMILIO AUDISSINO (University of Southampton): **Jazz, Hollywood Cinema, and John Williams**

Composer John Williams is best known for such large-scale symphonic works as *Star Wars*, *Superman*, the *Indiana Jones* series and the likes. Yet, his musical roots are also (and strongly) in jazz. In his formative years he had the opportunity to be in touch with some of the finest performers – his father was the percussionist in the Raymond Scott Quintette. In the 1950s, while studying ‘legitimate’ piano music at the Juilliard School in New York, he tickled the ivories in the city’s jazz clubs. In the early 1960s, while working in Hollywood as a pianist and an orchestrator, he arranged albums for Mahalia Jackson and Vic Damone. When Williams firmly established himself as a film composer the mid-1960s, he brought in his jazz background as a perhaps less noticeable but yet fundamental component of his style. After a quick introduction about the relation between cinema and jazz in Hollywood history in order to contextualise Williams’s film career, the lecture focusses on the Williams film scores in which jazz episodes emerge from beneath the otherwise symphonic texture – for example, ‘Cantina Band’ in *Star Wars* (1977), ‘Swing, Swing, Swing’ in *1941* (1979), ‘The Knight Bus’ in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004) – and on film scores in which jazz is central to the film’s narrative: for example, *Catch Me if You Can* (2002) and *The Terminal* (2004). To close the lecture, a few remarks are offered on the jazz influences on Williams’s concert music, namely the second movement of his 1994 *Concerto for Cello* (‘Blues’) and the four-movement piano work *Conversations* (2013), in which Williams imagines historic jazz pianists engaged in a musical conversation. In both his film works and in his concert works, Williams has proven to be not only extremely proficient in evoking the past and present musical styles of specific composers, but also in evoking the idiosyncratic manners and musicality of specific performers.

### GIAMPIERO CANE (Università di Bologna): **Due guerre, un ascensore e il jazz**

Di come il jazz si sia avviato al successo negli States parla un modesto film di Alfred Lubin, *New Orleans*, del 1947. All’epoca, nei club dei cultori più spericolati non si parla credo che di Gillespie, Parker, Powell; per gli appassionati i nomi sono quelli di Basie, Ellington, Benny Goodman, Hawkins; il nome di New Orleans è quello di un mito del passato e, anzi stanno per nascere le band del revival e questo film ci spaccia, pur come storia romanzata, quella seconda metà del secondo decennio del secolo a New Orleans, raccontandoci l’inizio di una diaspora che senz’altro avvenne, ma che era nelle cose, nel successo della musica vivace e del *dance crazy* che negli anni Trenta già trionfava nelle città del nord, di una diaspora che sarebbe l’effetto di un divieto di fare musica a Storyville per salvaguardare dalla corruzione i volontari che dal porto sarebbero salpati per la Prima guerra mondiale. L’ingresso degli USA nel conflitto scatenato da Hitler e dalla sua Germania avrà l’effetto di far crescere la presenza del jazz in Europa e nel nostro Estremo Oriente. In Francia il seme musicale aveva attecchito già all’epoca dei transatlantici e, come nel cinema con Georges Sadoul, così nel jazz, con Hugues Panassié, la critica francese imporrà un suo primato sistematico, quasi cartesiano a fenomeni che erano ancora in attesa della necessaria sistemazione. Si potranno, è ovvio, criticare i risultati, in parte

almeno, ma non i lavori per mettere ordine, per sistemare. Dopo la guerra il successo del jazz è consolidato e quello del cinema è da un po' fuori discussione. Gli incontri tra le immagini di questo e i suoni di quello si fanno piuttosto frequenti anche se quel che si unisce nelle pellicole, gesti di musicisti e i loro suoni, non necessariamente va oltre la ricerca dello spettacolo. Anche in televisione, dove la serie di *The Sound of Jazz* promuoverà anche ancor giovani musicisti, non avrà scopi conoscitivi, fini d'approfondimento. La musica sarà facilmente una colonna sonora dell'epoca, le immagini un reportage involontario sui costumi, ma il successo di *Ascenseur pour l'échafaud* è di Louis Malle e di Miles Davis allo stesso titolo. È il film nel quale l'incontro tra jazz e cinema pare affatto naturale. È del 1957 e ha nutrito profondamente l'idea dell'improvvisazione, anche se sembra che nella circostanza la narrazione fosse inventata, o leggendaria. A fianco sono nate biografie, belle e brutte, veritiere e non; un documentario come *Jazz in un giorno d'estate*, sul festival di Newport (nel quale appare anche Armstrong, preso al volo dagli organizzatori quando seppero che sarebbe stato lì per recitare e suonare in *High Society*), film su festival, come quello di Amico sulla rassegna del 1965 a Bologna, le melanconie di Avati, noiosette, quel che spunta qua e là sull'ineffabile Monk, o l'incredibile presa di possesso della scena da parte di Albert Ayler, durante le cerimonie funebri per Coltran, tutto ci porta a vedere una tranquilla integrazione legata ai progetti tra i due mondi. Sta di fatto che, mentre il cinema può appropriarsi dell'allegria, il jazz non ci riesce se non per qualche accenno ereditato dalla cultura latino americana, Rollins per esempio. E sta di fatto che mentre i musicisti possono sempre far finta di improvvisare e qualche volta improvvisare sul serio, il cinema scivola troppo facilmente nel caos quando vi ci si prova, a esempio con *Blues di mezzanotte*, del 1961, di John Cassavetes.

**EMILE WENNEKES (Utrecht University): Solidified Solos on Screen: The Ambivalent Relation between Jazz and Film**

Somewhere halfway through the film *La La Land*, jazz pianist Sebastian (Ryan Goslin) argues «You have to see it, you have to see what's at stake». Although jazz is topicalized in this film-musical, he might not be directly referring to a cinematic jazz performance. Yet, on-screen, seeing and hearing jazz simultaneously provides new insights «about the music itself, about the way it is performed, and about the way it is *represented*» (*Watching Jazz*, OUP 2016, p. 2).<sup>\*</sup> In my presentation, I will further elaborate on this three-part statement, while discussing *capita selecta* from 'cinematic jazz history' to illustrate what has been 'at stake' over the years as jazz converged with cinema. In the twenties and thirties of the last century, representatives from the jazz scene as well as the filmic medium were seeking a more prestigious cultural status, emancipating as agents from low-brow entertainment toward officers of high-brow eminence. In his first appearances on screen, Duke Ellington not only presented sophisticated soundtracks employing Modernist collage techniques by incorporating quotes from the classical music canon, he also joined forces with avant-garde film makers, turning his musical subjects into astute assemblages. I will argue that, by then, many jazz soundtracks offered rich referential sources that are widely underestimated by unquestionably qualifying them as sheer 'source' or 'diegetic' music. Even when diegetically performed, cinematic jazz performances (both with and without lyrics) furnished filmic sequences with suggestive subtexts, inspiring



camera operation and narrative set-up. The other way around, the cinematic circumstances of the performance may accommodate a more comprehensive understanding of the content and context(s) of the featured pieces. Comparable to conventional symphonic scores, jazz references are sometimes farcical, sometimes gloomy. Jazz excerpts frequently provide narrative counterpoint, incongruent with the depicted scene, thusly creating ambivalent audio-visual conditions. Occasionally, the whole filmic sequence is an extrapolation of the music's content. In my *tour d'horizon*, these and other issues will be addressed in relation to how the musical substance induced the film editing, the camera's point of view or the sound arrangement. In their emancipatory vocation, jazz soundtracks tend to be no less crafty than their Hollywood-inspired, orchestral counter scores. Yet, how to deal with that one distinctive, salient disposition of jazz –improvisation – with regard to jazz on screen? In concert registrations of live performances, the cameraman may periodically have to improvise similarly to the soloist on stage, however, in narrative features and musical shorts, the improvisation is indispensably solidified. In early screen formats, this condition challenged lip and finger synch within well-established musical forms. Antagonistically, in later, fully improvised soundtracks, the ad-lib character of jazz challenged the craftsmanship of split second editing. Join me in seeing and hearing what's 'at stake' when jazz meets cinema.

\* *Watching Jazz: Encounters with Jazz Performance on Screen*, edited by Björn Heile, Peter Elsdon, Jenny Doctor, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016.

## Participants

### Scoring Silent Films

**PHILIP JOHNSTON (Australian Institute of Music, Surry Hills NSW): Jazzin' The Silents: Jazz and Improvised Music in Contemporary Scores for Silent Film**

The vernacular jazz language first entered film scoring in the 1950s with the work of Silver Age composers Alex North, Leith Stevens, Elmer Bernstein, and Henry Mancini, and of jazz composers Duke Ellington, John Lewis and Miles Davis. It has continued to evolve, and to shed its original associations with poverty, sex, drugs and working class settings – as well as from its early role as diegetic music – traversing the stylistic range from trad jazz to the avant-garde. Current films such as *Birdman* (2014), *Whiplash* (2014) and *La La Land* (2016) continue to demonstrate the relevance of jazz to film scoring. But the paradox inherent in the use of jazz in film music has always been that jazz is essentially an improvisational form, and film music requires meticulous correlation between sound and image. However, the proliferation of contemporary scores for silent film has opened the doors to the use of improvised music in film scoring. Contemporary silent film scores by musician/composers as diverse as Bill Frisell, Don Byron, John Zorn, Tom Cora and Ken Vandermark have featured improvised music as the foundation for much or all of their scores. The large amount of score time, the freedom from the oversight of a living director, and the influence of 60s independent cinema and multimedia/happenings, have provided a vehicle in which scores that make significant use of improvisation have reflected an approach that takes maximum advantage of the spontaneity and group creativity of improvised music as part of a kinetic live performance event. Jazz/

film music composer Phillip Johnston uses examples from both his own silent film scores and those of others to illustrate some ways in which jazz improvisation and improvised music can function effectively as tools for the contemporary silent film score composer.

**FRANCESCO FINOCCHIARO (Universität Wien) – LEO IZZO (Università di Bologna):**

**«Metropolis» di Fritz Lang: la città del futuro nell'età del jazz**

La partitura di Gottfried Huppertz per il film *Metropolis* di Fritz Lang (Ufa 1927) si distingue, fra le musiche cinematografiche degli anni Venti, per l'impiego di tecniche compositive sofisticate e di indubbia matrice wagneriana. Huppertz introduce armonie complesse, fa uso del cromatismo e dell'enarmonia, impiega accordi e scale per toni interi; ha inoltre il dono di una spiccata cantabilità melodica e se ne serve per elaborare una fitta rete di *Leitmotive*, che costituiscono il tessuto connettivo della partitura. Nel vocabolario musicale dispiegato dal compositore figurano tuttavia, non senza sorpresa, anche vere e proprie musiche da ballo: queste ricorrono per lo più in corrispondenza delle scene ambientate nello Yoshiwara, il locale notturno di *Metropolis*, e tendono a costituire dei numeri scenico-musicali a sé stanti. In queste per lo più inedite scene musicali – la cui forza espressiva si coglie dunque appieno solo grazie al restauro del film condotto nel 2010 dalla Deutsche Kinemathek di Berlino – Huppertz si rifà a elementi della musica da ballo alla moda, dai ritmi sincopati, alle armonie jazzistiche, alla sonorità del sax, sullo sfondo di una scansione ritmica costante nella tipica figurazione del fox-trot. Nella partitura di *Metropolis*, prodotto esemplare di un vero e proprio wagnerismo cinematografico, il jazz dello Yoshiwara rappresenta un *unicum*. Le scene che ne vedono l'impiego restituiscono un'idea completamente nuova della musica di Huppertz, che appare ora senz'altro più ricca e composita. Esse sollevano tuttavia anche stimolanti interrogativi di carattere estetico e compositivo. Perché l'introduzione di ritmi e armonie jazzistiche nel tessuto di una musica sinfonica di gusto wagneriano? E ancora: quale nesso audiovisivo lega la musica da ballo afroamericana alla narrazione filmica, in una musica d'accompagnamento come quella in oggetto, caratterizzata da un capillare rapporto gestuale e illustrativo nei confronti della banda visiva? A un'attenta analisi, l'uso del jazz si rivela del tutto coerente con gli intenti della narrazione. In *Metropolis*, una visione distopica ispirata al tema della meccanizzazione dell'esistenza umana al servizio del capitale, il jazz diviene correlato musicale dell'irrazionale, simbolo dello smodato e del trasgressivo, cifra sonora di una situazione di ambiguità sessuale, di promiscuità razziale, di corruzione dei valori morali. Le sonorità e i ritmi della musica afroamericana si caricano, insomma, di una ben determinata valenza simbolica che trova infinite risonanze nell'universo culturale dell'Europa degli anni Venti.

**Declinations, Aesthetics and Semiotics (1)**

**LUCA STOLL (University of Oxford): Cinema: A Privileged Way of Reacquiring Cultural Intimacy With Jazz Standards**

During the golden era of songwriting that produced the Great American Songbook, a jazz musician interpreting a Broadway standard would have been aware of a rich cultural context associated to it. Nowadays this context is hard to come by since Broadway shows of that era are rarely repeated. However, many such standards were written for (or used in) Hollywood

movies, still readily available. Learning a song directly from the movie it was written for (as opposed to learning it from the *Real Book*) provides the jazz interpreter with invaluable information, not only musical (the songs are performed in a 'straight' way, rhythmically, melodically and harmonically closer to the printed source than a jazz version) but also cultural. The lyrics of the song and its dramatic context, the plot of the movie and the issues it treats, the atmosphere of the scene and the aura of the actress/actor that sings it add significantly to the richness of the rapport between the song and the jazz performer. My paper looks at scenes from movies featuring songs that became jazz standards ('Mimi' and 'Isn't It Romantic?' in *Love Me Tonight*, 'The Way You Look Tonight' in *Swing Time*, 'Yesterdays' and 'Smoke Gets in Your Eyes' in *Roberta*) and compares them with recordings by Coleman Hawkins to investigate what his versions retained and what they changed from the original music and from the film's ambience. These comparisons suggest fascinating intertextual connections between jazz and cinema. Beyond the technical, emotional, and atmospheric equivalences and discrepancies they reveal, arises the question of the semiotic meaning of each song and the impossibility of its migration into an instrumental context - or rather of its possible transmutation into something else when performed as 'pure music' without the added layer of signification provided by words, images, plot and action.

**ADAM BIGGS (Bath Spa University): Jazz as Individual Expression: An Analysis of «The Fabulous Baker Boys» Soundtrack**

*The Fabulous Baker Boys* (1989) by Kloves is a fictional account of a frustrated sibling piano duo who, in order to liven up their act, hire a singer. As well as a portrayal of sibling rivalry, the film is a study of the working jazz musician and the suppression and expression of individual identity. The film's soundtrack, arranged, composed and performed by jazz pianist Dave Grusin, uses jazz standards and original thematic compositions that work as «ambi-diegetic cinemusical moments» (Holbrook, 2012) which provide improvisatory contexts for the main character's emerging individuality and his relationships with the other characters. This article identifies those compositions and using transcriptions, analyses the score in detail, revealing the melodic, harmonic, structural and improvisatory devices Grusin uses to convey the authority of a jazz 'standard', particularly by drawing on the work of Bill Evans and Miles Davis; and shows that these improvisational structures enable and act as a form of expression for the main character and his emerging individuality. The film takes its premise from *The Fabulous Dorseys* (1947) by Green, the biopic of the swing-era bandleaders the Dorsey Brothers, allowing this article to also consider the historical context of the film and the question of authenticity in both films, particularly through the parallel use of Art Tatum/Bill Evans as signifiers of 'real jazz' and Duke Ellington as a site of articulation.

**IAN SMITH (London): Jazz: The Third Auteur of Pinter-Losey's «The Servant»**

*The Servant* (1963) was the first, and arguably the greatest, of three feature film collaborations between Joseph Losey (director) and Harold Pinter (screenwriter). It is acknowledged as a landmark: in British cinema, British Modernism, and the relationship between British cinema and politics. The film features a full score composed by John Dankworth, the British jazz

saxophonist and composer, and makes prominent dramatic use of Dankworth's original song, 'All Gone', with lyrics by Pinter. The majority of instrumentation is for strings and cor anglais (English horn). But the music remains unmistakably jazz-derived, in its use of motivic and harmonic material. The argument of this paper will go beyond Dankworth's score to argue that key tropes and devices of jazz become central to the film's distinctive and influential aesthetic. Jazz, therefore, through its profound influence on Pinter and Losey, becomes the 'third auteur' of *The Servant* (and thus a significant influence on the progressive European cinema of the 1960s). For 'All Gone', Pinter dismayed Dankworth by providing (and politely refusing to revise) a set of lyrics that are as austere, and morbid as the film's core. 'Oh well, he's not Cole Porter', shrugged the composer. The song is magnificent, but the greater influence of jazz comes on the film is in Pinter and Losey's use of motifs, structure, repetition and silence. For Pinter and Losey, jazz was not only an inspiration but a key stylistic influence. *The Servant*, therefore, shows jazz playing a central creative role in a major cinematic triumph, and sheds important light on jazz's place in the wider cultural and aesthetic debates of the time. This paper will examine specific tropes of jazz (including substitution, elipsis/aporia, 'dissonance' and suspension) and argue that these tropes not merely influenced the mood of Pinter and Losey's work but became dynamic parts of their aesthetic.

### Narratives

#### MARCEL BOUVRIE (Utrecht University): The Narrative of the Synergetic Musical Diegesis in «Whiplash» (2014)

Despite several attempts of deconstruction, the dichotomy of *diegetic* music (existing inside the story space) and *non-diegetic* music (only perceptible by the audience) is still very present in the field of film music studies today. By inventing new concepts, scholars grasped cases that are situated in between the rigid division. Two examples are (1) situations where music comes from a character's thoughts, called *meta-diegetic* (Gorbman, 1987) and (2) music that begins non-diegetic and becomes diegetic (or vice versa), called *trans-diegetic* (Hunter, 2000). Although these are valuable concepts to localize film music, little research exists on how these diegetic dimensions interact with each other in order to support or contribute to the narrative. In my paper I demonstrate how this interaction works as a potent narrative vehicle in the jazz-feature film *Whiplash* (2014). By doing audio-visual analysis I propose a synergy between the predominantly featured diegetic jazz music and the non-, meta- and trans-diegetic music. There are two cases where this relation provides a meaningful understanding of the film's narrative. First, the 'double-time swing rhythm' runs as a pivotal motif throughout the film. It represents Andrew's (the protagonist) most difficult drumming challenge and is frequently heard in the diegetic realm. When this rhythm is non-, meta- or trans-diegetic, it is superimposed with an unsettling atmospheric sound based on manipulated big band instruments. This signals Andrew's relation to music that becomes more and more troublesome as well as his slow mental decline. Second, the film's main theme provides a non-diegetic underscore of Andrew's poignant introspective moments. However, it appears diegetically when Fletcher (the antagonist) plays a fairly intimate rendition of it in a jazz club after being fired from the conservatory. This defies the expectation that the theme is linked to Andrew and in turn represents Fletcher's betraying personality. Instances where Fletcher

deceives the audience's and Andrew's expectations are frequent throughout the film. The scene in the jazz club is the onset of Fletcher's ultimate betrayal at the finale of the film, and the fact that he 'steals' the theme connected to Andrew can be seen as a musical omen to this. These two examples proof how the synergy between music in the different diegetic realms can be a valuable contribution to a film's narrative.

### **YULIYA KOVALENKO (Kharkov State Academy of Culture, Ukraine): The Influence of Jazz on Dramatic Narrative in Films**

Jazz is a special form of musical art and a type of culture, one of the characteristics of which is openness to interact with other creative phenomena. Certainly, Jazz and Films have always been in a close connection throughout the history since the early forms. There are a lot of movies having jazz as its background music, which obviously tell us about life of a famous person or unknown jazz musicians, while others employ jazzy forms as a component of film composition and script. In both cases jazz style affects the genre of the film (biopic or musical), its architectonics, atmosphere, time and a visual expressive structure. It is necessary to mention the movies that experience an impact of jazzy language in dramatic narrative. In other words, it is a fact that jazz music is becoming dramatic, and the film story acquires the jazz style of narration. Drama films with a complex dramatic structure serve as a vivid example of such interplay. As it is known, the first popularity came to jazz in cinema with Noir movies. The narrative feature of these films is the unpredictability of the development of a dramatic situation, which is similar to the aleatory episodes of jazz improvisation. Similarly, as jazz improvisation is free but based on a strict preparation, the equally planned actions by the film characters acquire spontaneity. The ultimate form of interaction with the improvisation of jazz is the so-called 'jazz cinema', based on the communication of characters. These are rather contemplative films than action films. It is visible that jazz is open for active exchange with any movie form rethinking it in the original creative way. The common trope of the jazz and films is the temporary nature that allows them to be in a fruitful dialogue.

### **ARMANDO IANNIELLO (Università degli Studi di Pavia/Cremona): Tra Umiliani e Trovajoli: Nino Rota e la musica Jazz per «Boccaccio 70»**

*Boccaccio '70* è un film per certi aspetti particolare. La sceneggiatura prevede una divisione dell'intera pellicola in quattro episodi diretti ognuno da un regista diverso. Il flusso narrativo, che spazia dall'ordinario al surreale, è accompagnato da contributi musicali firmati da tre dei compositori più noti nel panorama cinematografico italiano: Piero Umiliani e Armando Trovajoli, provenienti dall'ambiente jazzistico italiano, e Nino Rota, compositore di formazione prettamente colta ma noto al pubblico specialmente grazie alle sue musiche per film. Rota si pone tra due musicisti che hanno portato, fino a quel momento, modi diversi di intendere il jazz, sia dal punto di vista performativo che compositivo. Umiliani incarna e mantiene nel tempo la figura del jazzista *tout court*, soprattutto durante gli anni sessanta in cui c'è da fare i conti con l'avanzare della musica beat inglese. Trovajoli invece, dopo aver diretto l'orchestra jazz della RAI dalla seconda metà degli anni Cinquanta, si discosta, seppur non totalmente, dalle sperimentazioni jazzistiche per dedicarsi alle musiche per film e alle commedie musicali.

L'intervento si focalizzerà sull'impiego della musica jazz come strumento della narrazione cinematografica, approfondendo il trattamento riservato da Rota alla musica per i due atti centrali del film, *Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio* e *Il lavoro*. La funzione audiovisiva delle musiche di Rota sarà confrontata con quella adoperata dai jazzisti Umiliani e Trovajoli rispettivamente per *Renzo e Luciana* e *La Riffa*, posti come primo e ultimo atto della pellicola. La possibilità di studiare il materiale presente nel fondo Nino Rota conservato presso l'Istituto per la Musica della Fondazione Giorgio Cini ci permette di ricostruire le fasi genetiche del processo compositivo. Con una certa sicurezza si può affermare che il punto di partenza siano gli appunti verbali annotati su un block-notes dai quali si osserva l'estrema precisione con cui Rota analizzava le sequenze e, talvolta su indicazione dei registi, segnava già quali caratteristiche dovesse avere la musica impiegata in una data sequenza. Dalla ricerca e lo studio filologico dei testimoni verranno analizzate eventuali concordanze e discrepanze che possono sussistere nella scrittura per film compiuta da due musicisti di formazione jazzistica, Umiliani e Trovajoli, e uno di formazione colta, Rota.

### **Declinations, Aesthetics and Semiotics (II)**

**ROBERTO CALABRETTO (Università di Udine): La musica jazz nel cinema di Michelangelo Antonioni**

Questo intervento è dedicato alla presenza di formule e stilemi jazzistici nella filmografia di Michelangelo Antonioni. L'atteggiamento con cui il regista si è servito di questa musica è di rilevante importanza. Nel cinema italiano degli anni '50, infatti, grazie alla presenza di compositori come Piero Piccioni, Armando Trovajoli, Piero Umiliani, Giorgio Gaslini e Roberto Nicolosi la musica jazz aveva più volte fatto capolino in celebri e fortunate pellicole di acclamati registi assumendo la funzione di commento delle vicende narrate, talvolta in contrasto con situazioni musicali di derivazione 'leggera' e popolare o ancor più sinfonica. La musica jazz si era caricata di una precisa semantizzazione prestandosi a caratterizzare alcuni aspetti della modernità nata dai mutamenti a cui la società italiana allora era andata incontro. Era così divenuta sintomo del malessere se non dell'angoscia esistenziale e, allo stesso tempo, manifestazione della ribellione sociale. Antonioni è stato più di tutti, forse, il regista del cinema italiano ad amare la musica jazz, portandola ad essere il comun denominatore della sue colonne sonore. Parlando della propria collaborazione per *Blow-up* (1966), anche Herbie Hancock ha detto che Antonioni era un grande fan di questa musica. «Disse che voleva musica jazz nel film perché era quello il genere che gli piaceva. Gli chiesi quali fossero i suoi musicisti preferiti, e rispose che il prediletto era il sassofonista Albert Ayler. Rimasi sbalordito! Conosceva Albert Ayler? Poi cominciò a parlare di tutti gli altri che gli piacevano: Miles, Dizzy Gillespie, i miei lavori con Tony Williams. Conosceva Jack DeJohnette, Joe Henderson. Pensai: "Wow, è fantastico!"». Date queste premesse, confermate dalla ricchissima collezione di dischi presenti nella sua discoteca, Antonioni più volte ha parlato di questa musica nella veste del critico oppure nei suoi racconti da cui poi sono nate anche le sue sceneggiature cinematografiche. In un'intervista egli ha detto che il suo stesso modo di girare un film si riflette nella musica jazz in quanto la sceneggiatura è semplicemente una traccia su cui improvvisare come accade in una performance jazzistica. Sapientemente mediati dalla mano di Giovanni Fusco, stilemi e

formule jazz appaiono sin dai primissimi documentari, a partire da *N. U.* (1948) in cui questa musica poeticamente descrive i momenti della giornata degli spazzini della capitale, per giungere al primo film, *Cronaca di un amore* (1950), in cui un languido blues scandisce gli incontri dei protagonisti. Singolari le parole del regista quando, all'interno di un'intervista in cui annunciava l'uscita dell'*Avventura* (1960), dichiarava: «Per questo film vorrei una piccolissima orchestra: un clarino, un sassofono, e qualcosa che somiglia a una batteria. Come tipo di musica: un jazz. Ma non proprio jazz. Immagino come avrebbero scritto un pezzo di jazz nell'ellenismo, se allora il jazz ci fosse stato». Parole che rivelano un'evidente, per quanto inconsapevole, affinità con le parole di Alfredo Casella che al jazz aveva pensato nei medesimi termini. Ma è nella *Notte* (1961) che il jazz di Gaslini s'impone come il vero e proprio baricentro della colonna sonora del film e, in particolar modo, della sua seconda parte dove «lontana, si sente la musica jazz: discreta e fredda», divenendo l'adeguato commento al clima che aleggia nella festa dell'alta borghesia milanese. Del tutto singolari le modalità con cui la colonna sonora del film è stata registrata, come ci è stato riferito dallo stesso Gaslini nel corso di una piacevolissima e interessantissima conversazione. Sarà poi la volta di *Blow up* (1966) che vede il debutto di un giovanissimo Herbie Hancock la cui musica, assecondando le intenzioni antonioniane, diviene la cifra espressiva privilegiata per creare le atmosfere della swinging London degli anni Sessanta. Il ricco caleidoscopio di situazioni in cui la musica jazz, sapientemente declinata e finalizzata alla specificità di ogni singola pellicola, affolla la filmografia antonioniana rappresenta un unicum nella storia del cinema italiano dei primi anni del secondo dopoguerra quando i registi si servivano di questa musica secondo gli scontati e logori stereotipi sopraccitati. Da questo punto di vista, il cinema di Antonioni rappresenta un privilegiato oggetto d'indagine.

**MARIDA RIZZUTI (Università IULM, Milano): From Polish Shtetl to Hollywood: Klezmer's Heritage in Jazz and Sounding Cinema**

In late Twenties/early Thirties, the so-called Yiddish Theater District in New York's Lower East Side, as well as Hollywood, have been the heart of an artistic ferment, a remarkable dynamism and technological progress: in 1927 *The Jazz Singer* launched the sounding film's era. With this proposal I intend to approach the links, the connections and the collaborations of the composers – who worked for Yiddish Theater in New York in the Twenties – with film productions in Hollywood, during the Thirties and Forties. The Yiddish Theater District represented a laboratory for composers and lyricists, like the Gershwin brothers, Irving Berlin, Abe Ellstein, hence building cultural and musical knowledge, that has subsequently been transmitted to Broadway and Hollywood creative praxis. The links between Yiddish Theater and Broadway are tight: some Yiddish songs have been translated into English, becoming popular jazz standards, such as the song *Bei Mir Bistu Shein* (1932) by Jacob Jacobs (lyricist) and Sholom Secunda (composer), that in 1937 became well-known thanks to the Andrew Sisters' recording, interpreted by Benny Goodman and Ella Fitzgerald among others. I intend to show how the musical styles of the Yiddish Theater have been adopted in the Yiddish film, and how, through this, they merged into the mainstream sounding film: the characteristic elements of klezmer begun thereby to combine with jazz. It was not only the mere mention or the musical characterization, but the assimilation and reworking of musical structures, of

harmonic textures. As exemplary case I mention the film *Yiddle with His Fiddle* (1936) with the actress-author Molly Picon and music by Abe Ellstein. This film is important because it came ten years later than *The Jazz Singer*, because it is one of the most important films for Yiddish cinema, and, above all, because it is one of the first films that established a particular musical connection between klezmer music and jazz. How did the composers coming from the Yiddish theater world use their artistic skills in the early experiences of sound film, through their involvement in Broadway? How far have they decided to combine klezmer music – primary musical language of origin – with jazz – emerging musical language – in the sound film – an expressive language still yet to be defined?

### **SAFA CANALP (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin): Echoes of ‘Twin Peaks’: Emergence and Development of Dark Jazz**

Since *Twin Peaks* aired on ABC in the beginning of the 1990s, beside the critical and national acclaim it has reached in the US, it has managed to capture an international cult following. In the meantime, the soundtracks of the TV series and the following feature film, which were produced by David Lynch and Angelo Badalamenti and composed by the latter, have experienced a similar reception process. Apart from the Grammy Award which was won by Badalamenti in 1991, the music of this idiosyncratic universe has separately attracted a somewhat distinctive attention among the fans. However, this attention would not stay limited within the confines of *appreciation* for some enthusiasts who would intend to carry their interest to the level of *appropriation*, and in the next period, echoes of *Twin Peaks* would begin to be heard in Europe as a new music sub-genre which would semi-popularly be known as *dark jazz*. This paper aims to understand the influence of a TV production on the emergence and development of a new musical phenomenon. Approaching the issue with *relational musicological* concerns, the paper proposes to look at a specific journey that jazz has taken thanks to one of its encounters with the screen. This is a journey that can be considered not only as border-crossing, but also as passing through different *taste spheres*. Moreover, the paper reasons about possible methods for further research on dark jazz. Considering the fact that 2017 is the year in which a whole book dedicated to *Twin Peaks*’ music is published by Bloomsbury through its 33 1/3 series and the TV series makes a come-back, I believe this is an appropriate time to foster a scholarly discussion on musics that are considered as post-*Twin Peaks* in many aspects.

### **Social, Cultural and Political Issues**

### **JULIO ARCE (Universidad Complutense de Madrid): From Chotis to Charlestón. Jazz and Silent Film in Spain in the 1920s**

In 1921 the film *La verbena de la Paloma* was released in Madrid, a national production directed by José Buchs and based on the zarzuela with the same title. The adaptation of this work was so successful that encouraged the local cinematographic industry deployment and triggered the based on zarzuela film fever; later on it was re-released with the title *La verbena de la Paloma, o del schotis al charlestón* (1927). It was basically the same film with new scenes: the traditional ‘verbena’ (a very peculiar outdoor popular party in Spanish religious celebrations) where the last scenes of the film took place was replaced by a ‘dancing’ in which the Negro Holman jazz band



can be contemplated, an American musician settled in Madrid and who acted in ballrooms of the city. Not only Richard Abel but also Rick Altman agree in underlining the importance of music in silent period. In the particular case of Spain, the last century 20s were dominated in cinematographic field by musical play adaptations. The zarzuela and jazz combination was not surprising given that the genre, since its beginnings in the middle of XIX century, had become a container and a spreading platform for musical news coming from the rest of Europe and America. The goal of my communication is to analyse the social and cultural jazz significance within the cinematographic productions. I depart from several studies about national cinema and national modernisation made by Jo Labanyi, Eva Woods, Javier Benet and Marsha Kinder. I also take part in Bruce Johnson ideas, who declares that silent film images may be useful to get a better comprehension of early popular music issues and beat the idea of conceptualisation of music simply as sound, which leads us to redefine the role of gesture in musical practice.

### **CELSA ALONSO GONZÁLEZ (Universidad de Oviedo): Jazz, Cinema and Republic in Spain until the Civil War**

The arrival of the jazz to Spain during the Great War contributed to modify some forms of leisure in the process of modernization of the country, significantly variety shows. In the roaring twenties, jazz rhythms penetrated in Spanish musical theatre (even in traditional zarzuela), becoming very popular, as a transgressor agent leading the social satire and acting as a symbol of a new culture of the body. Jazz was not just to listen, enjoy and dance, it was also to watch. That's why jazz also became powerful in Spanish Republican cinema. Spanish cinema in the thirties was commercial and not just propagandistic. Films aimed to be profitable, continuing the popular genres of the previous decade, including adaptations of zarzuelas and folkloric musicals. However, comedies and musical comedies with an American taste were very successful, articulating discourses of modernity and cosmopolitanism with a lot of jazz besides Spanish songs. *El negro que tenía el alma blanca* (1934), a drama turned into a musical directed by Benito Perojo with music by Daniel Montorio, is a milestone dealing with jazz music. *Abajo los hombres* (José María Castellví, 1935) was inspired in an opereta by Pierre Clarel, while *Rumbo al Cairo* (Perojo, 1935) and *El bailarín y el trabajador* (Luis Marquina, 1936) were two modern musical comedies with jazz music written by Jacinto Guerrero and Francisco Alonso respectively. Guerrero, Alonso and Montorio were popular and excellent zarzuela musicians that became film composers in a context of a hard debate on the contents of a National Cinema, in which consensus was not reached, due to the dialectic between tradition and modernity, conservatism and transgression, folklore and cosmopolitanism. I will analyze the presence of jazz music in Republican cinema and its connotations of modernity, leisure and gentle transgression, coexisting without problems with the Spanish tradition, creating productions of great originality.

### **SERGEY ZASORIN (Moscow State Pedagogical University): The Difficult Path of Jazz to Soviet Cinema: Arts under Ideological Pressure**

Contradictive official attitudes to jazz in the USSR combined limitation and ostracism due to its 'Western bourgeois origin' with involuntary permission of it as a part of 'socialist public

entertainment'. Jazz was never officially accepted in the Soviet era, but it enjoyed popularity with the public all the same. Jazz sprang up in the USSR in early 1920s, that was revealed by the comedy musical *We Are from Jazz* by K. Shakhnazarov (1984). The film reproduced the complicated access of jazz to Soviet public, when the style was ideologically blocked as representing US capitalism. Jazz started gaining wide popularity in the 1930s, in connection with the musical *The Happy Guys* by G. Alexandrov (1934). The music by I. Dunayevsky became incredibly popular. Charismatic actor and crooner L. Utyosov jointly with trumpet player Y. Skomorovsky and brilliant actress L. Orlova formed an original style of 'theatre jazz'. The sheer fact that the comedy was allowed onto the big screen seems amazing – so out of tune was it with Soviet ideology based on the Socialist Realism-dominated cinema context. However, Stalin regime realized that the modern cinema could not attract the spectators by only ideological hits. Musical comedy became another leading genre performing the functions of mass culture in those years. Meanwhile authorities displayed quite ambiguous attitude towards jazz: Soviet jazzmen, as a rule, were not banned, though jazz as such was severely criticized in the context of overall rejection of Western culture on the whole. The first post-Second World War years turned out to be the crucial point in the fate of Soviet jazz. It could not be hid from Soviet cinema public because of legendary American musicals in Soviet film distribution, like *Sun Valley Serenade* (1944), or *His Butler's Sister* (1945). But with the start of the Cold War and fighting cosmopolitanism campaign in late 1940s, jazz performing groups involved with dissident western music usually faced persecution. Within anti-jazz counter-propaganda the full-length cartoon *Someone Else's Voice* (1949) led Soviet children to the conclusion that American jazz was unnatural and evil. Liberalization stopped repressions of musicians, yet disparagements went on. The transition from 'Stalin Frost' to 'Khrushchev Thaw' of mid-1950s with its effect on youth sub-culture was recently depicted in Russian musical *Hipsters* by V. Todorovsky (2008). Because of ideological threat jazz disappeared from Soviet films for three decades. Elements of jazz were integrated into variety music. Since early 1960s Soviet jazz reemerged both in concert performance and films.

**RANDALL CHERRY (ISEG, Paris): Class and Race: "Ethel Waters and the Search for Racial Redemption"**


During her nearly 60 – year career as a blues and jazz singer and actress, Ethel Waters (1896-1977) was adulated as a 'Race Hero' for her unforgettable performances, first, on the black vaudeville circuit, later, at legendary black theaters in New York such as the Lafayette and the Apollo, and eventually as a path-blazing star on Broadway, in Hollywood and on television. She came to be considered at one point or another 'the greatest artist of her race and of her generation', and 'the first black superstar'. And, especially at her peak, during the 1920s and 1930s, she seemed to embody the black artist's hope for the future. Harlem Renaissance writer Dorothy West stated, for instance, that Waters was very probably the greatest living interpreter of popular ballads, while noting that the singer had opened new directions for future Negro stars 'if they are good enough to climb into white revues'. And Negro Renaissance poet Langston Hughes noted in his memoirs that Waters had marked the age of the 'New Negro' with songs such as her spirited vaudeville blues 'Go Back Where You

Stayed Last Night'. Yet, over time Waters's reputation and historic accomplishments have been plagued precisely by questions surrounding the 'inauthenticity' or 'diluted blackness' of her artistry, thereby shrouding her work in arguments that often have more to do with politics than the quality of her art. In short, as this paper will contend, Waters has become the victim of changing attitudes about race and ethnicity. As regards her music, some have criticized Waters' supposedly 'whitened' pop style, pointing to her light, clear voice and sophisticated, theatrical approach, which especially set her apart from her earthier blues-singing sisters. Still other critics have complained that Waters was forced to make a career out of being black while singing racially tagged songs such as 'Cabin in the Sky' or 'Harlem on My Mind'. Other observers, though respectful of Waters' actual achievements and aware of the obstacles – both personal and societal – she overcame in breaking into mainstream entertainment, fell into the trap of viewing her as a racial martyr. Notably, James Baldwin, writing in *The Devil Finds Work* (1976), depicted Waters, along with Paul Robeson, as a prime example of a 'misused' black film star who could presumably have done far more than America's racial climate ever allowed. As this paper argues, views on Waters's songs and indeed on her entire career, have, invariably, failed to give any real consideration of how Waters boldly confronted racial issues – not only in terms of lyrics but also in terms of Waters's subtle but misunderstood cinematic performances. Indeed, it is in feature films like *On with the Show* (1929), *Bubbling Over* (1934) and *Cabin in the Sky* (1943) that she brought irony and rebellious social comment to stereotyped, if not ostensibly racist, texts or contexts.

WARNER BROS. SUPREME TRIUMPH

# AL JOLSON

"THE  
JAZZ SINGER"

An illustration of Al Jolson and May McAvoy. Al Jolson is on the right, wearing a brown suit and a red tie, sitting at a piano and looking towards May McAvoy. May McAvoy is on the left, wearing a light blue dress, sitting on a chair and looking back at him. The background is a dark green wall.

WITH  
MAY MCAVOY  
WARNER OLAND  
Cantor Rosenblatt

*Based upon the play by Samson Raphaelson as produced on the spoken stage by Lewis & Gordon and Sam H. Harris  
Scenario by Al Cohn*

DIRECTED BY ALAN CROSLAND



A WARNER BROS. PRODUCTION

