

DISPLACING THE VOICE: POPULAR MUSIC IN SPANISH CINEMA

“This ain't our song anymore:" The *Verano Azul* Soundtrack as a Dividing Line between Two Generations.” Cebrián, Mercedes. University of Pennsylvania.

This study is an in-depth examination of the soundtrack, both diegetic and non-diegetic, of the Spanish TV series *Verano Azul*, produced and broadcasted during the Spanish Transition to democracy on TVE (Televisión Española) in 1981. I propose to read this TV series as an allegory of the hegemonic discourse that both the government and the collectives interested in the democratization of Spain between 1976 and 1982 wanted to convey. This discourse regarding individual and collective freedom was present in Spanish public television and had an impact on the practices and mentalities that prevailed in the then recent democratic process.

I will also argue that the music in this TV series works as a metaphor within this allegory, by drawing a dividing line between two generations: the children and *tweenagers* (members of the starring gang and their parents, who grew up under Francoism). Only two adults, who play a role of “alternative parents”—an old sailor and a young widow who is a painter—are mediators between these two worlds, and provide the children with the only cultural references in which they are truly interested. In addition, both the soundtrack and the appearance of a (fictional) pop star in one of the episodes (and the commotion he causes in the village) are very relevant tools to address the question of the gradual influence of Anglo-American pop culture in Spain from the 70's onward.

“Songs and Stars: performing musical scenes in Late Francoism.” Martínez, Silvia. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

This proposal stems from an ongoing research on the borders and confrontations between the “songwriting” and the “melodic song” (both understood as scenes) in the Spain of the 1960's.

The initial hypothesis is that songwriting, as a compositional and performative model, is greatly influenced by the way in which the “Nova Canço” (New Song) picked up elements from the French “chanson”. The francophone model of the “chanson” in the 1950's included very different kinds of aural models. Their authors and performers shared features on a continuum that ranged from the traditional melodic song performance (orchestra, crooners...) to the more austere staging of political singer-songwriter. This latter model is the one selected by the Catalan activists to create songs that were intended to revitalize the use of the Catalan language (and to fight the weakened Franco dictatorship). Thus, what in France was a range of possibilities in terms of sound and performance, in Spain turned into two irreconcilable factions. Depending on the political and social attitude, there was the strongly committed

side (Setze Jutges, Paco Ibañez, etc.) and the supposed hedonistic side, apolitical and commercial (Julio Iglesias, Camilo Sesto, Raphael, etc.).

As many scholars recently pointed out (Alonso 2010, Wheeler 2013, Party 2013), the musical scene of those days was far more complex and the musical cinema of the time is a perfect arena to analyze the musical situation of that time. Focusing not only on the political aspect but also on the musical and sound aspects of the films that were released to promote some young singing stars, we can find some keys to better understand musical categories related to song creation and consumption that are still valid nowadays.

“Songs of a Revolution: Martín Patino’s *Libre te quiero* (2012).” Estrada, Isabel. The City College of New York, CUNY.

This presentation will offer both a synchronic and a diachronic analysis of the renowned director Martín Patino’s most recent documentary, *Libre te quiero* (2012). The film must be understood in the context of Martín Patino’s politically engaged career, beginning in the mid-1970s, as well as the documentary production focused on the occupation of Puerta del Sol on May 15th, 2011, the so-called 15M. Music, revolution, and affect are the threads that will illuminate my examination.

Martín Patino appropriates the eponymous title of the song recorded by Amancio Prada in 1979, which is a musical version of a poem by Agustín García Calvo. Both García Calvo and Prada are associated with the fight for freedom of the Spanish Transition to democracy in the mid-seventies. The documentary celebrates liberty through the music performed by protesters. While younger documentarians take an ideological stance by creating a narrative via voice over (*15M, Excelente. Revulsivo.Importante* by Stéphane Grueso, 2012, for instance), Martín Patino places his camera among the protesters, recording the way their frustration with the sociopolitical status quo is channeled through music. In *Canciones para después de una guerra* (1976), Martín Patino had already utilized popular music to create a portrait of daily life in post-war Spain. In *Libre te quiero* music becomes part and parcel of his diegesis. My analysis will use the volume *Sound, Music, Affect: Theorizing Sonic Experience*, by Biddle and Thompsom, to assist in the understanding of the affective networks of meaning created by Martín Patino.

“El niño de la voz de oro: Joselito’s Singing Voice as Fetishized Commodity in *El pequeño ruiseñor* (Antonio del Amo, 1956).” Hogan, Erin K. University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

Joselito (José Jiménez Fernández), star of 1950s and 1960s child musical films in Spain, was the creation and discovery of director Antonio del Amo and screenwriter Antonio Guzmán Merino. Joselito stands out in the *cine con niño* as the child performer most explicitly associated with the voice: “the boy with the voice of gold.”

Although the star system's commercial exploitation of the child performer is not a novelty, the consideration of del Amo's communist beginnings, in conjunction with the film's unapologetic—while not uncritical—display of the altar boy's immense vocal talent as a commodity fetishized in the hands of the sexton, first exposes del Amo's own economic necessity and then calls into question whether del Amo's work with Joselito was in fact a drastic departure from his leftist politics, or a "parenthesis" in his career (Pavlović, Perriam, and Triana-Toribio 322). Del Amo, a communist documentary filmmaker persecuted during the Spanish Civil War, expresses remorse in interviews for his cinema's concordance with the ideals of Franco's National Catholic Spain.

In *El pequeño ruiseñor* (1956), the economic use of Joselito's golden voice for wedding and baptism performances links religious fetishism and commodity fetishism to the voice object. Mladen Dolar's work on the voice in film and Louise J. Kaplan's Marxist study on cultures of fetishism inform my reading of the little nightingale's debut.

“Cuban Musical Sounds in Recent Spanish Cinema.” D’Lugo, Marvin. Clark University.

Both Fernando Trueba's *Calle 54* (2000) and Benito Zambrano's *Habana Blues* (2006) mobilize Cuban music as a strategy to reposition Spanish cinema for an expanded Hispanic transnational audiences. Moving beyond the mere commercial exploitation of popular musical intertexts to attract a broader Spanish-language audience, both films instead focus on a common cultural narrative involving the ways that Cuban music has transcended its geopolitical limits to stabilize not an audience, but a cultural community without borders. Despite essential differences between the two films, both interpolate Cuban music within a broadly-defined contemporary Spanish cultural imaginary.

Cuba's transnational musical status was forged in the early 20th century through sound recordings, radio and eventually film, converging to produce a dense form of auditory intermediality. More than simply the transference of elements from one medium to another, both filmmakers understand the intermediality of Cuban music as the transformation of music into a cultural commodity, circulating across geographic, social and political borders to produce new meanings and cultural realignments.

Trueba's documentary updates Cuban jazz of the 1940s through a series of staged performances linked by means of his authorial narrative. Zambrano depicts a more immediate contemporary generational through a plot involving a Havana Rock band torn between vying Spanish and U.S. commercial interests. Both films, in fact, explore the political and cultural underpinnings of Cuban music's intermedial dynamic as it ironically folds back on contemporary Spanish cultural identity to signify modernity for Spaniards.

**“The Habanera as Sung by Douglas Sirk, Sara Montiel, Toni Verdaguer and Juan José Bigas Luna.”
Bakhtiarova, Galina. Western Connecticut State University.**

Ever since Georges Bizet recycled a song composed by the Basque Sebastián Iradier for the entry aria of his unconventional gypsy heroine in the opera *Carmen*, the habanera, a languid melody in two four time, has been associated with Spain and with overseas exoticism. This paper will explore its cinematic reincarnations from Detlef Sierck’s *La Habanera* (1937) to Juan José Bigas Luna’s *La teta y la luna* (1994).

In 1937, shortly before fleeing Nazi Germany for Hollywood, the German film director Detlef Sierck, later known in the United States as Douglas Sirk, chose the exotic melody of the habanera as a narrative device for his feature film *La Habanera*. The outlandish Spanish coloring associated with this mysterious musical rhythm served as an excellent vehicle for Zarah Leander, a Swedish actress with a not so-perfect German accent who became a major star of the Nazi propaganda machine.

Sara Montiel’s struggling singer La Bella Lola in the eponymous film directed by Alfonso Balcázar (1962) relived the story of Alexandre Dumas fils’s *La Dame aux Camélias* in the ambiance of old Madrid to the melody of the seductive habanera. In 1991, Tony Verdaguer showed the demise of ruthless Catalan *negreros* in his epic *Habanera 1820*. By that time, many in Catalonia believed that nostalgic songs evoking mulatto women left behind in the tropics were a sign of cultural identity equivalent to the sardana, a revered national dance. Arguably, for this reason, Juan José Bigas Luna chose to satirize the habanera among other accepted emblems of cultural identity in his iconoclastic *La teta y la luna* (1994).

**“Ghostly resonance: Sound, memory, and matter in *Las olas* and *Dies d’agost*.” Whittaker, Tom.
University of Liverpool.**

The recent films *Las olas* (Alberto Morais, 2011) and *Dies d’agost* (Marc Recha, 2006) are haunted by sound. Of the recent flurry of films to turn on the theme of historical memory, *Las olas* and *Dies d’agost* stand out as distinctive in their particular sensitivity to sound design, and their shared concern with the act of listening. Sonorous memories of the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath echo and pulsate throughout both films, thereby illuminating both meanings of the word ‘resonate’. While to resonate means to produce a deep and reverberating sound, the verb is used more figuratively to evoke or suggest memories or emotions. Like sound, memory is similarly evanescent and unstable; both are prone to mutating, shifting shape and fading through time. As such, sound compellingly articulates the films’ concern with the very instability of memory, exposing its manifold gaps and discontinuities. In exploring Derrida’s *Specters of Marx* through the disciplines of sound studies, archaeology and human geography, I show how sound can have a significantly spectral presence in film. As this paper shows, in both *Las olas* and *Dies d’agost*, the protagonists are haunted by spectral echoes of the war that propel their movement forwards into an untimely present. Sound, I argue, serves to disrupt and unsettle the temporality of the films, revealing a traumatic time that is ‘out of joint’ with both its past, present and future. While these films are bereft of dialogue and

punctuated with pauses, I show that they are anything but silent. For their echoes and resonances both resist and exceed discourse, thereby displacing the voice to articulate the traumatic memories which language cannot.

“Sonic Metaphors in Postwar Spanish Fascist Films: Anomalies in the Music of an Anomalous Film, *Rojo y Negro*.” Albo, F. Javier. Georgia State University.

The years following the victory of General Franco in the Civil War (1936- 39) saw a surge of elaborate, costly (and generally weak) propagandistic films, often produced and distributed in Germany and Italy. The final goal of those films was almost invariably the justification of the coup against the democratically elected republican government, by means of portraying the suffering of families and individuals under the stress of communist and anarchist militiamen before and during the war. Their soundtracks often combined orchestral music with popular songs and anthems that audiences would easily identify as pertaining to the victorious forces. The case of *Rojo y Negro* (Carlos Arévalo, 1942), a stunning example of avant-garde expressionistic cinema, is an anomaly. Despite a positive reception by critics and audiences, the film was banned a few days after the premiere, and copies were destroyed; likely, the crudity of the scenes and the realism of the plot (the female protagonist, an emancipated, brave Falangist, is taken to jail, raped, and executed) proved to be too obscene for the church and the government—including Franco himself, who had watched the film in private. This paper will analyze a particular aspect of the soundtrack, composed by the author of the infamous fascist anthem “*Cara al sol*,” Juan Tellería—who had survived the war in Madrid by pretending to be an anarchist and working in republican propaganda films. In the soundtrack of *Rojo y Negro*, unlike most fascist films at the time, Tellería included fragments of leftist songs and anthems, proscribed at the time. I will demonstrate that such musical resonances of a tragic, recent past had an important role in the exclusion of the film by the Franco government.

“Sound Memories in *El Calentito*: Recreating *La Movida*” Marcela, Garcés T. Sienna College

The film *El Calentito* (Chus Gutiérrez, 2005) constructs several perspectives on sound and memory. It makes use of music and footage from *La Movida*, while simultaneously seeking to recreate this underground scene with a fictitious female punk band called “*Las Siux*,” making it another recent cultural product concerned with the memory of *La Movida*. The film becomes more believable by weaving in songs from the *Movida* era, actuality footage from performances by the duo Almodóvar/McNamara, and King Juan Carlos’s speech following the February 23, 1981 coup d’état attempt. These images and sounds from the past evoke popular memory in Spain, thus providing sonic memories for viewers of the film.

The use (and abuse) of sound in the film is grounded in the do-it-yourself character of the Spanish punk movement, when anyone could become a star. This is exemplified when Las Siux belt out one of their best songs, in which they admit to their own sonic failures: “bailamos fatal, cantamos peor que mal, y no sabemos afilar.” Since the women trumpet the fact that they dance and sing horribly, and admit that they sing out of tune, they exhibit an awareness of their camp sensibility, where artifice reigns and gestures and sounds are replete with double meanings. Lastly, the music in the film reminds us that during this time, music was often not valued for its sonic qualities, but for the profit record companies could make from naïve bands like Las Siux, thus manifesting the commodification of sound.