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## MUSIC AS WORD: FILM MUSIC – *SUPERLIBRETTO?*

**Abstract:** The aim of his paper is to prove that film music can be understood as authentic narrative force: film music as word / discourse and its *superlibretto* status. *Superlibretto* is the status of music in a film which *is constructing* its own (aural) reality and is *narrating, speaking* its own text which creates a wholesome film meaning. The existence of *superlibretto* is substantiated by fundamental theoretic concepts of film music and practically proven by analyses of examples taken from the opus of Serbian film composer Zoran Simjanović.

**Keywords:** *superlibretto*, music as word, film music, narration, narrative agent

The relation between music and words at first glance indicates the interrelations of music and written words, i.e. music and literature. Such a coupling of the two phenomena has continually existed during the history of civilization. If one follows their connection since the antique times, one may notice that in the early days of European art, music and poetry were equal.<sup>1</sup> The more recent history has also brought numerous ways of connecting music and written words, such as opera or Lied.

However, this is just the first level of multiple relations that may also include some less obvious or visible forms of pairing or even equating music and words. With the appearance of contemporary media (film, radio, television, the Internet), and in the era dominated by media culture, it becomes necessary to theorize these fields, even more so since certain media domains have acquired the status of art (such as radiophony, Internet art, video art, etc.).

<sup>1</sup> This made one of the foundations for the expression of Hellenic culture (Višić 1997).

Music makes a compulsory, integral part of the media space. It has several functions (spatial, temporal, dramatic, structural, connotative, denotative...), and often it takes over the role of the narrator, or the word itself. The aim of this article is to prove that film music can be understood as an authentic narrative force: i.e. film music as word / discourse and its *superlibretto* status.

The term *superlibretto* has been borrowed from Italian. In its basic meaning, a *superlibretto* is a booklet attached to a CD, containing information on the performance and the musical piece itself, thus facilitating the process of listening to music. This term, of course, has not been introduced into the film music vocabulary in the literal sense, but in its implicated, metaphoric meaning, since “the seventh art” presumes a carefully established relationship of interdependence between music and the moving image, which can be experienced only under rigid conditions defined by a strict music / image synchronization. *Superlibretto* is therefore a metaphor which enables us to name a specific work that music does in a film: having in mind the meaning from the beginning (CD booklet), it assumes certain arbitrariness – since the metaphor includes additional sense or surplus of meaning, and it overcomes the original / conventional meaning (Šuvaković 2005: 367, 372). However, not all film music automatically implies a *superlibretto*. *Superlibretto* is a *narrative agent* (Kalinak 1992: 30), not an *application*, as Michel Chion suggests (Chion 1985); it is the music which stimulates movement, not music that *follows, describes* or *imitates* a picture (or narration). The difference lies in distinguishing description from narration (Turković 2004: 3–12). *Superlibretto* is the status of music in a film which *is constructing* its own (aural) reality and affecting the image, *narrating, speaking* its own text which creates a wholesome film meaning together and in an equal manner with texts of other aspects of a film system.

The existence and work of *superlibretto* will be shown and explained through basic theoretical postulates of film music / sound, in examples from the composer Zoran Simjanović's film music. Since the scores of the films that I will use as examples to demonstrate how the *superlibretto* works have not been preserved, I will speak of *superlibretto* based on what is heard in the given film as well as on suggestions given to us by the composer himself.

The attitude concerning the existence of *superlibretto* was firstly confirmed by Theodor Adorno and Hanns Eisler (even though they do not use the term *superlibretto*), who emphasized the music's function as an impetus (not its "applied" or "decor" status), and emphasized the rhythm provided to a film by music, i.e. the fact that music in a film enabled the motion of film images, and had an aesthetic effect of stimulating movement and not its doubling (Adorno and Eisler 1994: 78–79). (Film) rhythm will be determined with Theo van Leeuwen's definition:

"Rhythm always involves cycles, cycles which consist of an alternation between successive sensations of accentedness and non-accentedness, and these cycles repeat themselves with time intervals perceived as equal" (Leeuwen 1985: 217).

He described this more precisely as *perceptual isochrony*<sup>2</sup>. According to Dušan Stojanović, film rhythm is the closest to *polyphony* / *multivoice* situation, where an even pulsation is used by another structure which is exhibited simultaneously. By means of its variability in relation to the first structure it gives the listener / viewer the recognition of it as a "modulation of lengths and interchanging of various accents making up this structure" (Stojanović 1986: 143).

In the film opus of Zoran Simjanović there is a significant number of cases where music not only functions in *analogy* with the rest of the *polyphonic* situation of the film system by showing "common characteristics, those who stand out in the first in order to enable perceiving the second" (Stojanović 1986: 142), but music also gets the entire scenes going and adds rhythm to them. The title number in the film *National Class* (*Nacionalna klasa*, directed by Goran Marković, 1979), performs the function of *superlibretto* – it is motoric, working as "a rhythmic embryo" (Chion 1995: 26), directly giving rhythm to the whole film, except for certain pauses brought by two sub-themes of slower tempo, which also provide tempo (although a slower one in this case), to the

<sup>2</sup> Zorislava Vasiljević observed the following in her study *Theory of rhythm*: "rhythmic strokes, more famous under the name of rhythmic pulsation, are connected with rhythmic movement in nature which oscillates between the state of tension and the state of inaction" (Vasiljević 1985: 63).

scenes of narcotic meditations of the protagonist Floyd's companion Simke, or Floyd's sentimental discrepancies. One may observe that the musical rhythm leads the whole soundtrack, "and often images themselves" (Gorbman 1987: 127). Gorbman measures the length of a given frame by its coinciding with music and not by absolute time (seconds); in that sense she uses Jaubert's notion of "the inner rhythm of the image", which means providing narrative information through rhythm (Gorbman 1987: 132). In the film *The Marathon Family* (*Maratonci trče počasni krug*, directed by Slobodan Šijan, 1981), music establishes the life rhythm and civil status of five generations of Topalović family (the style of this Simjanović's score is aimed to *speak* of the pre-war atmosphere in Belgrade), as well as of this family's undertaker business (the theme envisioned as funeral march, especially emphasized by brass wind instruments). As the possibility of a simultaneous existence of five generations of male descendants in a single family is hard to believe<sup>3</sup>, as well as the nebulous logic of their actions, the music is to mediate in the realization of *hyperreal* sound representation of the plot, which can make the audience "transcend the limitations of the cinematic medium and believe the conceit presented before them" (Milicevic 1995). In both cases (*National Class* and *The Marathon Family*), we could speak of *superlibretto* working as *narrative agent* as Kathryn Kalinak refers to music in such a status (Kalinak 1992: 30)<sup>4</sup>.

One may notice that there also exist modes differing from the aforementioned rule given by Dušan Stojanović (Stojanović 1986: 143). Music / *superlibretto* from the film *Virgina* (*Virđžina*, directed by Srđan Karanović, 1991), presents such an example. Its task is to *take rhythm away*. That is, the *rubato* melody played on the pipe should slow down the movement, even halt it, since it does not only represent the position of a girl in a man's role, but also the environment and the space of a national identity in which she lives, where the petrified patriarchal attitudes are dominant and resisting change (see Milosavljević 2000: 228–230). The abovementioned examples

<sup>3</sup> Or even six, if we count the great-great-grandfather's father Pantelija, who died (at an unknown age) at the very beginning of the film.

<sup>4</sup> The term *narrative agent* means that the atmosphere of emotions, characterization, views, even the plot itself is constructed in the film within a complex visual and aural interaction where music is an important component.

suggest that music can also *add value* to the image: they invite us to question Floyd's macho identity; music secures the affections of the viewer / listener for the protagonists of *The Marathon Family*, who are otherwise completely negative characters; and, the intentionally emphasized monotony of music speaks of Virginia's (im)possibility of choice. Such a situation refers to one of Michel Chion's key concepts, the *audiovisual contract*, which is based on an introspective rationalization of acoustic perception. Mutual effects of the acoustic and the visual do not originate from a natural agreement of the two phenomena, but they owe their united effect to a specific "contract", where (narrative) meaning of music / sound "adds value" (*la valeur ajoutée*) to image (Chion 2005: 8–9).

A turn in defining film music in relation to dramatic narration as well, and not only to the picture, was accomplished by Claudia Gorbman. In her paper "Narrative Film Music" (Gorbman 1980: 183–203), and then in her study *Unheard Melodies* (Gorbman 1987), she systematizes the interpretative practice until then, introducing the theory of narration into it. By using one of key terms in film theory, *diegesis*, she constructed the terms *diegetic* and *nondiegetic* music, which refer to the sound / music scene: the first one would, approximately be equivalent to *source music*, and the second one to *background* score. Her theoretic assumptions answer the questions on the position and importance of this film subsystem: film music does have the power to operate as a narrative force because music in film narration can create a *point of experience* (not a *point of view*) for the viewer / listener (Gorbman 1987: 2).<sup>5</sup> What Gorbman considers important is that music is the only element of film discourse to occur often in both *diegetic* and *nondiegetic* contexts, and to transcend the border between them (Gorbman 1987: 22). She noticed that it was possible that *metadiegetic* music existed apart from *diegetic* (music that allegedly emanates from a source within the narrative) and *nondiegetic* (music which makes a narrative intrusion into diegesis). In

<sup>5</sup> Claudia Gorbman also defined film music theme as a music element repeating itself during the piece; as such, it absorbs narrative associations as well, and they, on the other hand, permeate every new thematic statement, which shows the *superlibretto* status of music, music as word, music that can *speak of*, not only *follow* the plot.

that sense, she recalls the three narration levels suggested by Gerard Genette which also refer to *diegetic*, *extradiegetic* (Gorbman changed this level of narration into *nondiegetic*) and *metadiegetic*. If music is a part of narrative, it would be logical to presume that it can function as *metadiegetic*, and that the viewer / listener has the privilege to read “musical thoughts” of the characters on screen (Gorbman 1987: 22–23). Furthermore, it is the key condition to understand an event as “subjective perception of the reality” (Milicevic 1995). Different from *diegetic* and *nondiegetic* music in film, which can possess the *superlibretto* status, but they do not have to, *metadiegetic* music practically without exception functions as word, as *superlibretto*.

*Superlibretto* as *metadiegetic* music, as represented by Gorbman, is also an occurrence that can be met in film music of Zoran Simjanović. In Srđan Karanović’s films *Fragrance of Wild Flowers* (*Miris poljskog cveća*, 1977) and *Loving Glances* (*Sjaj u očima*, 2003), there are a few examples for the *metadiegetic* status of music. Precisely, Ivan’s understanding of city life “estranged by the trivialities of daily life” (*Fragrance of Wild Flowers*), and idealization of rural environment brought by the title theme, *speaks* of subjective perception of reality by the main character. That is, the protagonist Labud’s romance with a young hairdresser Vida (*Loving Glances*), and his subsequent memories of their relationship, present examples similar to those approved by Gorbman: music “injects an idea as a conditioning element of reminiscence into the new situation. It thus appears as realization and representation of what was just thought of by the character on the stage” (Gorbman 1987: 28).

The notion of film music as *superlibretto* can be broadened here towards a field which Mladen Milicevic called *oneiric* work of music in a film (Milicevic 1995). Considering *Unheard Melodies* by Claudia Gorbman, he noticed that the American theorist was the first one to use the category of *metadiegetic* in her taxonomy of film sound / music, as the sound and/or music imagined or even hallucinated by the film characters. What Milicevic criticized is a strict classification of film sound / music (he called it absolute and complicated) which *parallels* or *counterpoints* the image; of sound which is synchronous or asynchronous in relation to image; of sound which

is realistic or unrealistic; that is, literal or non-literal, which he considered to be an impossible endeavor on the path towards the core meaning of film music<sup>6</sup>. That is the reason why Milicevic considered it important for Gorbman to introduce the term *metadiegetic*: Gorbman thus opened up the whole new analytical world of subjective and non-normative film sound (Milicevic 1995). Milicevic retained focus on the spaces of *metadiegetic* sound by perceiving its new sub-category, *oneiric* sound. He borrowed this term from Vlada Petrić, who used *oneiric* to describe the cinematographic achievements where one can observe various sorts of altered states of consciousness, although Petrić's *oneiric* refers to the visual film plan (Petrić 1999: 13–25). Petrić's use of *oneiric*, so-called “Fellini's veil”, has explicit musical attributes; it refers to the phenomenon of associative means of veils producing *visual cantilena* and *vibrations of white traces* on the screen; these are experienced as *optical music*<sup>7</sup>. One may add that, since an image can have an acoustic association, thus music, i.e. *superlibretto*, can summon optical sensations. How could we otherwise explain that we *see* (but actually *hear*) the heroes of the film *The Tour* (*Turneja* directed by Goran Marković, 2008) as contemporary Harlequin, Colombine, Beppo? This is only possible because such their status was *spoken of* by Simjanović's music. It is conceived in the style of simple renaissance song (akin to what enamoured Beppo would sing to unfaithful Colombine), even interpreted on old instruments, in an atmosphere completely opposing the tragic wartime events. Hence it is not illogical to ask oneself if the actors looking for a side job have really lost their way into territory where war is raging, or it is just a *dream*.

Milicevic noticed that there was a significant difference between the perception of *oneiric* on the visual plan and perception of aural *oneiric* experience, but common elements existed as well, “represented by a departure

<sup>6</sup> In other words, difficulties in which such film theories fall lie in their demands for final result, instead of looking for a solution in contextual relations, which, in the end, defines them more as simplified classifications than a way to understand the entire film system and the role of music in it.

<sup>7</sup> This situation refers to the “harem sequence” from Fellini's film *8 1/2*, and the use of veils for *oneiric* effects, that is why Vlada Petrić decided to name this apparition “Fellini's veil”.

from the normative perception of reality” (Milicevic 1995). What matters is that *metadiegetic* work of sound / music becomes a way in which reality is shown to film characters in extreme states of mind, which are created by various kinds of mental stimuli or other outer or inner reasons. Thus Milicevic even more precisely defines the *oneiric* subspecies as “character’s departure from reality”, in contrast to a basic form of *metadiegetic* sound / music which is a “subjective perception of reality by the character” (Milicevic 1995). He further notices that the terms borrowed from the theories of sleep and dreams – *hypnagogic* and *hypnapompic* – can be applied for the departure of sound / music into the *oneiric / metadiegetic*. The first term represents the state of falling asleep or departure from reality, while the second term denotes the state of awakening or return into reality. In the film system, as Milicevic noted, the first situation is far more common, as it makes “a complex, but very efficient use of film sound creating *oneiric* mood for *metadiegetic soundscape*” (Milicevic 1995).

An explicit example for the role of *superlibretto* as an *oneiric soundscape* can be found in music / *superlibretto* from *Loving Glances*. In this film Zoran Simjanović had the task to create an atmosphere which would add meaning to the director’s basic idea: the construction of a *dream* within a *dream / film*. The film simulates the effects of a dream which replaces the actual fulfillment of wishes; as Nevena Daković remarked, he does it extremely successfully when “the system of (social) repression threatens with an eruption of the subconscious – the suppressed, unsatisfied and forbidden wishes. Ideology thus addresses the *subconscious* promising *the impossible*:

“wish gratification through the symbolic fulfillment and allowed fulfillment of wishes by means of film codes and performing practices which are perceived with a denial of differences and acceptance of the illusion” (Daković 2000/2001: 10).

Director Srđan Karanović intentionally puts the viewer “outside the scene” of the simulation of a dream. The viewer should perceive both the *dream* and its effect on the social system with an aim to deny the means of ideology. The key role in this process is given to music which must provide



the non-acceptance of illusion. Zoran Simjanović opted for a monothematic score (the theme comes from the pop music genre, it is easily divided into shorter segments measured according to scene duration), and he solved the distinction between *dream / film* and *dream within a dream / film* by means of a relation between its *diegetic* and *nondiegetic* status, which departs into and returns from the sound *oneirism* within the *metadiegetic* field. Dreams / hallucinations of “real” heroes are represented by *nondiegetic* music which departs into *oneiric* space: their deceased and departed parents, sisters, friends, lovers receive separate variations of the central theme which becomes sentimentally posh (standard pop-band for Vida), rustic (*quasi* improvisation on a fife for Teacher), traditional “classical” strings albeit with an electric piano solo – for Mother), nationally colored sound (the theme impregnated with Slovene folklore for Igor). *Oneiric* music denotes internal relations of the deceased / departed, mostly by colliding their variations thus achieving a tragicomic effect of a world hallucinated / dreamed by the main characters. The mere *acousmatic* (see Chion 1999: 18), i.e. aural apparitions of the deceased / departed – *oneiric* presence of Mother, Vida, Agnes, Igor – can influence the behavior of “real” heroes, Labud Prodanović or Romana<sup>8</sup>. On the other hand, when they are not dreaming, the “real” characters (Romana, Labud, Vida – who exists both as a real character and a dreamed / hallucinated variation – Tigress, Music Lover, etc.) function without the “support” of music. Occasionally it “joins” them in its *diegetic* status, through numbers / songs (blues, cha-cha-cha, pop with a singer – musicians are joined by Music Lover – as well as backing vocalists), presented by vocal-instrumental group Back Pain (Bol u ledima). The band members (Zoran Simjanović himself plays the keyboard) do not act solely as musicians; they are also supporting characters in the film, and participate in the activities of the Happy Millennium dating and matchmaking agency. Although this does not imply *oneiric* music status, it still shows that the *superlibretto* creator and performers can literally become alive on the film screen. Music brings the final resolution and reveals the impossibility of the main characters’ (original) wishes to come true. The directly / synchronously

<sup>8</sup> *Acousmatic* is, according to Michel Chion, what lives through its aural body.

recorded sound of the dance number (during the party organised by the Happy Millennium agency) is interrupted and replaced with the music of the theme in original, background form. This is also where the *dream* is interrupted: the *diegetic* version of the *Loving Glances* theme departs into *nondiegetic* status – there we have *hypnapompic oneiric* sound / music – in the “coupling” of UNHCR plastic refugee bags of Romana and Labud on one of Belgrade tram tracks.

The example of Simjanović’s *superlibretto* for the film *Loving Glances* suggests something that has not been completely defined in Gorbman’s and Milicevic’s texts. Namely, it should be emphasized that film sound / music can possess a dual status, simultaneously belonging or non-belonging to *diegesis* does not deny the possibility of entering into *metadiegetic / oneiric* status<sup>9</sup>. In that sense, one may cite another example of Simjanović’s *superlibretto* with a dual function. In the film *Petrija’s Wreath* (*Petrijin venac*, directed by Srđan Karanović, 1981), in the scenes where her deceased “call upon” the main heroine, Karanović structured the audiovisual whole which would not exist as such without the presence of music: *superlibretto* acts as *narrative agent*, which takes the viewers into the entire *metadiegetic / oneiric* film situation but also ends such a state of Petrija’s; therefore Zoran Simjanović’s *superlibretto* operates both in *hypnagogic* and *hypnapompic* ways. The music is heard simultaneously as *nondiegetic* (for it does not belong to the world of *diegesis*) and *metadiegetic / oneiric* (for it belongs to the field of subjective reality perception, that is, it draws the character away from reality).

Michel Chion wrote about the dual status of sound / music in his study *Sound in Film* (Chion 1985: 42–45). That is, when he made the division onto (*son / sound*) *in, off* and *hors / out, champ / field*, he also noticed the borderline areas. His sound *tri-circle* implies three lines of which the third one is the most mysterious, *frontière* (borderline) *off / hors champ*; at the same time, it is the most dynamic line. Petrija’s “encounters” with her deceased loved ones happen exactly in the space of Chion’s “most mysterious” aural borderline, since it is:

<sup>9</sup> Of course, the only virtually impossible combination is the simultaneous possession of *diegetic* and *nondiegetic* status, although I acknowledge the issue of *audio dissolve*, which represents a borderline case.

“less tangible and visible for the listener / viewer (...); it is a place where even the most challenging changes can be surmounted, it is the most profound field (...). Such a borderline exists (...) but its clear limits have not been discovered – therefore it is the one to communicate with the world of absence (while the image is in the present tense), with the world beyond, which might even be the world of the dead...” (Chion 1985: 43–44).

Without Simjanović’s music in *Variola vera* (directed by Goran Marković, 1982), the film would probably have not achieved the effect of an otherworldly presence. The pipe, which is not only a musical sign but also represents the presence of a deadly disease (coming from the East), is heard as *nondiegetic*, but also as an *hors-champ* sound – since we constantly have in our minds the music that we heard at the beginning of the film, somewhere in the East. As the plot unravels, the viewers have the impression that this instrument, although not explicitly visible, is somewhere near us. The end of the film confirms this, when the infected pipe re-enters the viewer’s visual field, and although it is silent at the hands of a young researcher, it keeps resounding as a threat, even after we have left the movie theater, as a visual representative of Simjanović’s *superlibretto*.

In order to understand how *superlibretto* functions, one must consider the important occurrence from the *realm of anempathy / au royaume d’anempathie* (Chion: 1985)<sup>10</sup>. The space of the Michel Chion’s aural realm governed by an *indifferent beauty (la belle indifférente)*<sup>11</sup>, refers to music which flows in an openly indifferent way, in relation to given emotional situations of high intensity. But “such indifference, often marked by an intervention of a [sound / music] mechanism (pianola, music box, etc.), is far from distracting, preventing a feeling; on the contrary, the music empowers it, giving everything a different meaning” (Chion 1985: 128–129). Such an emotion does not facilitate a direct identification with the feelings of film protagonists; music – *superlibretto* – brings “an individual drama surrounded by the indifference

<sup>10</sup> The term by Michel Chion, explained in detail in his study *Sound in film*.

<sup>11</sup> The term *la belle indifférente* is a witty tailoring / parody of the name of a composition by Eric Satie from 1920.

of the world” (Chion 1985: 123), into the viewer’s / listener’s sight<sup>12</sup>. One can find as example of *la belle indifférente* in Simjanović’s scores for the films *Loving Glances* and *Something In Between* (*Nešto između*, directed by Srđan Karanović, 1983). Not only the basic form of the main musical theme from *Loving Glances*, but also its *metadiegetic* / *oneiric* variations, have been presented as joyous segments (of pop genre); in that way, they are obviously insensitive to the troubled position of young refugees in Belgrade in the nineties. The theme occurs simultaneously with Labud washing his hair in a city fountain (for Labud does not have a bathroom), and dressing up in “smart” clothes, which he keeps in a secluded dustbin (as he has no wardrobe either), hence it reinforces the sense of his stalemate situation. The initial version of the *functional* theme (Ђурић 2010: 20)<sup>13</sup>, in the film *Something In Between*, which I am going to call the “barrel organ theme”, as it is orchestrated in a way that resembles a barrel organ. It gives sound to the turning of Marko’s zoetrope (Marko, being one of the two main male characters). Its “circus” material is presented repetitively, mechanically and in a seemingly indifferent relation with the introductory events in the plot. The indifference of this “circus” music for the rest of the film is equally ostensible. The music of Marko’s zoetrope, which could evoke his nonchalance and insensitivity in emotional relationships when heard for the first time, actually reveals in a refined way that this character from the film *Something In Between* skillfully hides his tumultuous inner life. Similarly, the same music heard just before the film ends – this time coming from his watch – anticipates his own death and provides an unbearable feeling that the tragedy cannot be avoided.

Chion also emphasizes the necessity to differentiate between *anempathetic music* and the music of *didactic counterpoint*. Unlike the *anempathetic music*, the music of *didactic counterpoint* brings a *complementary* feeling (or

<sup>12</sup> In that sense Chion offers the example of the film *Third Man* (director Carol Reed, composer Anton Karas, 1949).

<sup>13</sup> A *functional* theme could approximately be defined as a form involving a characteristic melodic (or harmonic) line, suitable for extensive reshaping and adaptation (most often) to the progression of the film narrative as a whole, depending on needs: fragmentation, changes of major and minor modes, timbre, meter, rhythm, etc. Indeed, in contemporary cinematography, it is in films for which Simjanović has written music: *Loving Glances*, *Something In-Between*, *The Scent of Wild Flowers*, etc.

mood), often a contradictory one, thus enriching the film meaning. While the *anempathetic music* reflects the “use of emotions, it functions directly, deeply, in an archaic way...” (Chion 1985: 124), the narrative refreshment brought by the music of *didactic counterpoint* lies not in the use of emotions, but in an attempt to inspire the listener / viewer to understand, read or interpret the suggested idea. This division seems problematic because it is rather difficult to give structure to the relation between music and the rest of the film system by removing emotions (which would be an ideal case of music of *didactic counterpoint*), or, on the other hand, to abolish rational reading and interpreting of the given musical text (which would be regulated by an *anempathetic* musical situation). However, if we searched for a *superlibretto* by Zoran Simjanović which could serve as an example of *didactic counterpoint* music deprived of *anempathetic* action, it would be his music for the films *Do You Remember Dolly Bell* (*Sjećaš li se Doli Bel*, directed by Emir Kusturica, 1981) and *Tango Argentino* (directed by Goran Paskaljević, 1992). In both cases, *superlibretto* is reflected in *diegetic* numbers borrowed from popular music genres. In Kusturica’s film, it is a pop number: the song “On the blue sandy beach” (“Na morskome plavom žalu”), although a bright, almost idyllic love song, interpreted in the manner of *didactic counterpoint*, should be understood as a story of lack of love in the life of a young man from Sarajevo, whose family circumstances and especially his first traumatic emotional and sexual experience are far from the atmosphere conveyed by the song played by his band. At the same time, this situation speaks of *superlibretto* as *supra-reality* since it emphasizes the psychological and social elements often more strongly than the dialogue itself (see Prendergast 1992). The number “Tango Argentino” from the eponymous film functions in a similar way (both as a *didactical counterpoint* and *supra-reality*), modelled after the tango dance, popular in the period between two world wars, when the protagonist Julio lived his tumultuous youth. Although the tango evokes the times long gone, it is again an easy, sweet and sentimental musical image, in *didactic counterpoint* with what happens to the elderly singer in reality (he lives in utter poverty, he is forced to work in his old age; his son usurps his flat by declaring him demented and putting him into a care home). There are examples of *Masmediology in the Balkans*

(*Masmediologija na Balkanu* directed by Vuk Babić, 1990), with a plot based on Branislav Nušić's comedy *Dr*, but transferred to the period a few decades later, merges colliding music styles in a funny way, in order to ridicule the “jet set” of the communist regime. Furthermore, musical numbers from the film *Plum Juice* (*Sok od šljiva*, directed by Branko Baletić, 1981) could have been written by countless “specialists” for the folk music genre, but the director hired Zoran Simjanović for a reason. A few “folk(y) songs” were thus created, which seemingly fit perfectly into the “style” but, at the same time, they ruthlessly ridicule both the creators and consumers of such music. On the other hand, Simjanović's *superlibretto* from the film *Plum Juice* acts in a prophetic way: it warns us of the invasion of “folk(y) music” which would go on to extinguish art music from Serbia, and of vulgar quasi-national repertory: the vulgarization reaching even further into the past of Serbian music literacy (see Васиљевић 2000). Simjanović's “prophecy” which unfortunately came true and folk music played a part in the ascent of nationalisms in the decades that followed, as elaborated in Stef Jansen's *Antinacionalism* (Jansen 2005).

Although not so obviously as in films *Tango Argentino* and *Plum Juice*, music in the film *Special Education* (*Specijalno vaspitanje*, directed by Goran Marković, 1977) operates within the realm of *didactic counterpoint*. A pop number performed on the synthesizer matches the urban environment of the young generation in 1970s. However, its nonchalance (even naivety) opposes the existential strait of lads who live in a “special” institution, and Simjanović's *superlibretto* again realizes a *supra-reality*, a condition wherein the elements of literary naturalism are perceptually altered and the audience can have the “insight into different aspects of behavior and motivation which is not possible under the aegis of naturalism” (Prendergast 1992). *Superlibretto* from the film *Time of Miracles* (*Vreme čuda*, directed by Goran Paskaljević, 1990), reveals, in return, that the protagonists really function in the aural / music surroundings that belong to them. Zoran Simjanović's score reveals the geographic and religious context of events: on the one hand, we can hear a theme in a pseudo-Orthodox mixed choir (because the voices are intentionally deformed by electronic effect). On the other hand, as a “reconciliation” we can hear a “hybrid” shape, choir voices joined with beats of drums. However, in

whichever form it is heard, the music which should reflect tradition and spiritual commitment of film protagonists stands in *didactic counterpoint* with the eradication of aforementioned values which was performed in Yugoslavia in the years that followed the World War Two and Tito's communist overturn. It is similar to the title theme from the film *Tito and I* (*Tito i ja*, directed by Goran Marković, 1992). A lively folk song from Zagorje ("Zagorje is beautiful and green" / "Lepe ti je Zagorje zeleno"), given in a "Carribbean" arrangement is a *double image* of a film situation in which it is inserted, as it *speaks* of "a heightened sense of reality enacted through the brazenly artificial" (Knapp 2006: 13), but also stands in *didactic counterpoint* with the oppressive reality of Yugoslav life in the 1950s.

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Narration or the *speech* of music in a film reveals the action of *music as words*, where music establishes its own meanings and becomes a specific supranarrative, a *superlibretto*. Music as words – *superlibretto* – was explained by means of examples taken from the opus of Serbian composer Zoran Simjanović, whose music often conveys meaning, therefore also altering the perception and reception of the entire film within which it functions. The path to *superlibretto* has been opened by theories and terms linked to authentic narration / action of music in film, including: its aesthetic effect of stimulating movement (Adorno / Eisler); music as *rhythmic embryo*, *acousmatic* sound / music, music as *la belle indifférente*, music as *added value*, *didactic counterpoint*, *anempathetic music* (Chion); *metadiegetic* music (Gorbman); *oneiric soundscape* and *hyperreal aural representation* (Milicevic); *supra-reality* (Prendergast); *narrative agent* (Kalinak); *optical music* (Petrić). These theories which refer, directly or indirectly, to the narrative role of film music, testify of the necessity to introduce the new term – *superlibretto* – to describe the *speech* of music, *music as words*.



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Марија Тупић

МУЗИКА КАО РЕЧ: ФИЛМСКА МУЗИКА – *SUPERLIBRETTO*?

(Резиме)

Намера овог текста јесте доказивање постојања *superlibretta* као специфичног и рафинираног наративног дејства филмске музике, где *реч* којом *говори* музика доприноси укупности филмског значења. Није, међутим, сва филмска музика аутоматски и *superlibretto*. *Superlibretto* је *наративни агенс* а не *апликација* – разлика се односи на поље диференцијације описа и наратије. То није музика која *прати*, *описује* или *подражава* слику (или наратију), *већ* музика која у филму конструише сопствену (звучну) слику и *приповеда*, *говори* сопствени текст, који заједно и равноправно са текстом осталих аспеката филмског језика твори целовито кинематографско остварење. Пут ка *superlibrettu*-у отворен је темељним теоријским поставкама и појмовима који се односе на специфичан рад звука/музике у филму: естетски ефекат *стимулације покрета* (Теодор Адорно / Ханс Ајслер); музика као *ритмички ембрион*, *акузматични звук/музика*, музика у улози *la belle indifférente*, музика као *додата вредност*, *дидактички контрапункт*, *анемпатична музика* (Мишел Шион); *метадијегетичка музика* (Клаудија Горбман); *супрареалност* (Рој Прендергаст); *онирички звучни приказ* и *хиперреална звучна репрезентација* (Младен Милићевић), *наративни агенс* (Кетрин Калинак); такође и теорије које долазе из домена слике али су истовремено применљиве на звук/музику, попут *оптичке музике* (Влада Петрић). Постојање и рад *superlibrett-a* демонстрирани су и аргументовани на примерима из српске кинематографске праксе, кроз опус Зорана Симјановића, чија је музика неретко одређивала значење, а тиме и перцепцију и рецепцију филмског језика у оквиру којег функционише.