

Film Music Histories and Ethnographies: New Perspectives on Italian Cinema of the Long 1960s

Guest Editorial

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There is no doubt that the 1960s represent an exceptional period in Italian film history. Peter Bondanella labeled the decade from 1958 to 1968 “the Golden Age of Italian cinema, for in no other single period was its artistic quality, its international prestige, or its economic strength so consistently high.”¹ Indeed, as David Forgacs and Stephen Gundle put it, this was “the only time [. . .] when [. . .] a surge in Italian production was accompanied by a sharp decline in U.S. film production and export.”² At any rate, as Gian Piero Brunetta remarked, the films made in that period “were memorable for their quantity and quality, their experimentation and innovation, their continuity and renewal of traditional cinema models, and their powerful expansion of Italian cinematography in the world market.”³

Two historical ruptures bookending the decade characterize this period: the economic boom, also labeled the “economic miracle,” and the movement of 1968. The development of these two phenomena justifies our choice of the label “the long 1960s.” In the case of the economic miracle, which is usually regarded as encompassing the years 1958–1963,⁴ one could in fact consider it, as does Silvio Lanaro, “a quite tangible yet not clamorous acceleration of an expansive process that had started in 1951–52.”⁵ Accordingly, Forgacs and Gundle have explicitly challenged the idea of “a unique ‘great transformation’ that served to divide an old, ‘traditional’ or peasant society from a ‘modern’ society of mass consumption.”⁶ As for the second rupture, Paul Ginsborg stressed that “the Italian protest movement”—which took its label from the events of May 1968 in France—“was the most profound and long-lasting in Europe,” unwinding over the

1 Peter Bondanella, *Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present*, new expanded edition (New York: Continuum, 1990), 142.

2 David Forgacs and Stephen Gundle, *Mass Culture and Italian Society from Fascism to the Cold War* (Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007), 126.

3 Gian Piero Brunetta, *The History of Italian Cinema: A Guide to Italian Film from Its Origin to the Twenty-first Century*, trans. Jeremy Parzen (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), 171.

4 See Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics 1943–1988* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 210–53.

5 Silvio Lanaro, *Storia dell'Italia repubblicana* (Venice: Marsilio, 1992), 239 (authors' translation).

6 Forgacs and Gundle, *Mass Culture and Italian Society*, 4.

tormented “era of collective action (1968–1973)”;⁷ this phase, characterized by economic recession and the emergence of black and red terrorism alongside workers’ and students’ protests, gave rise to the “years of lead,” culminating in the kidnapping and assassination of former prime minister Aldo Moro by the Brigate Rosse in 1978. For these reasons the Italian “1960s” can be justifiably regarded as encompassing a number of extra years at either end of the actual decade when considering their long-term socio-historical premises, processes, and consequences.

In this incredibly dense historical period, the ongoing transformation of the Italian media system was informed by patterns of change against the backdrop of a substantial continuity with the 1950s. Public television (RAI) started in 1954 with the constitution of a first broadcasting channel (*programma nazionale*). In 1961 a second channel (*secondo programma*) was added to create a configuration that remained unchanged until the second half of the 1970s, and which would alter dramatically only in the 1980s, when the first nationwide commercial television broadcaster emerged as a serious competitor of the public service at a national level.⁸ As in other western European countries (e.g., France and Germany), the state radio broadcasts entered a phase of unprecedented sophistication in the mid-1950s, thanks to an impressive array of intellectuals and personalities from music, literature, and theater who gathered to creatively contribute to the production of radio dramas, entertainment and edutainment formats, musical programs, and so forth.⁹ Not by chance, these years coincided with the foundation of the Studio di Fonologia Musicale by Luciano Berio and Bruno Maderna (1955–56) at the headquarters of the RAI in Milan.¹⁰ The record industry had been importing capital, personnel, and technologies from across the Atlantic since the late 1940s, mainly thanks to the Marshall Plan. By the early 1950s RCA had established its Italian branch in Rome;¹¹ in 1958, the year the international standard ‘Nel blu, dipinto

di blu’ was released,¹² the structure of the Italian discographic market underwent a significant shake-up: Nanni Ricordi, a former employee of RCA Victor in New York (distantly related to the founder of Casa Ricordi, Italy’s most famous music publishing firm), established Dischi Ricordi; meanwhile, Ladislao Sugar, the patron of Sugar Music, gained control of the CGD (Compagnia Generale del Disco, founded in 1948). This strengthened the domestic production of popular music records and musical films (*musicarelli*) targeted at a young audience, with the consequence being a dramatic transformation of the national media scene.¹³

The birth of a (young) mass audience coincided with a burst in film production and circulation.¹⁴ Crucial to this development were the massive externalization of Hollywood productions to Cinecittà throughout the 1950s and the contemporary crisis of the Studio System, earning Rome the picturesque label “Hollywood on the Tiber” (*Hollywood sul Tevere*) as the main center of film production in Europe and the second in the western world.¹⁵

Coinciding with this blossoming of the Italian film industry, auteur cinema established itself as the leading paradigm for structuring both film production and the market, and for shaping the critical guidelines of Italian cinema as a cultural capital internationally. A singular convergence of cultural and commercial instances took place in this respect. Never again in the history of Italian cinema would the categories of “art” and “entertainment” converge as in that period from 1960—the year of *La Dolce Vita* (dir. Federico Fellini) and *Rocco and His Brothers* (*Rocco e i suoi fratelli*, dir. Luchino Visconti)—to 1963—the year of *8½* (dir. Fellini) and *The Leopard* (*Il Gattopardo*, dir. Visconti). With the exception of *The Leopard*, the financial failure of which in fact marked an abrupt halt in the rise of high-budget auteur cinema,¹⁶ the other three films enjoyed outstanding box-office success, alongside a number of other “art” films that reached a remarkably

12 Internationally known as ‘Volare’. Domenico Modugno, ‘Nel blu, dipinto di blu’/‘Strada ‘nfosa’, 45 rpm, Fonit, 1958.

13 See Paolo Prato, *La musica italiana: Una storia sociale dall’Unità a oggi* (Rome: Donzelli, 2010), 255–316. Massimo Locatelli, “The Birth of Pop: The Soundscapes of the Early Sixties in Italian Cinema and Television,” *Quaderns* 9 (2014): 51–8.

14 See Mariagrazia Fanchi, “La trasformazione del consumo cinematografico,” in *Storia del cinema italiano. Vol. 10: 1960–1964*, ed. G. De Vincenti (Venice: Marsilio, 2001), 314–27. See also Mariagrazia Fanchi and Elena Mosconi (eds.), *Spettatori: Forme di consumo e pubblici del cinema italiano 1930–1960* (Venice: Marsilio, 2002).

15 See Barbara Corsi, *Con qualche dollaro in meno: Storia economica del cinema italiano* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 2001), 61–70.

16 The company Titanus suffered a tremendous backlash due to *The Leopard*’s poor revenues, and producer Goffredo Lombardo was consequently forced to abandon his enterprise of launching an Italian New Wave: that is, a strand of auteur cinema promoting filmmakers such as Vittorio De Seta, Ugo Gregoretti, and Elio Petri, among others. See Emiliano Morreale, *Cinema d’autore degli anni Sessanta* (Milan: Il Castoro, 2011), 15.

7 Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*, 298.

8 The media group Fininvest was founded by tycoon Silvio Berlusconi in 1978. It initially developed as a country-wide network of local TV stations that shared similar programming policies. Between 1980 and 1984 Fininvest created three private national stations which undermined and circumvented RAI’s state monopoly.

9 See Angela Ida De Benedictis, *Radiodramma e arte radiofonica: Storia e funzioni della musica per radio in Italia* (Turin: EdT/De Sono, 2004).

10 See Maria Maddalena Novati and John Dack (eds.), *The Studio di Fonologia: A Musical Journey 1954–1983 (Update 2008–2012)* (Milan: Ricordi, 2012).

11 See Ennio Melis, *Storia dell’RCA: La grande pentola* (Lavagna: Zona, 2016). Ilario Meandri, “Giuseppe Antonino Biondo e la fondazione dell’International Recording,” *Musica/Tecnologia* 8–9 (2014–2015), 19–38.

wide audience.¹⁷ This unique phenomenon led Vittorio Spinazzola to coin the expression *superspettacolo d'autore*, which may be translated as “auteurist blockbuster.”¹⁸ Without pondering this overlapping of cultural legitimation and popularity, it would be hard to comprehend how auteur cinema has until recently served almost as a synecdoche for referring to 1960s Italian culture as a whole. Coined after the French *cinéma d'auteur*, the label *cinema d'autore* was used to identify a stratified and malleable cadre of film directors who were understood to exert a substantive control over every aspect of filmmaking, hence on film's aesthetic outcome. Besides affecting other media and forms of cultural production (for instance, the term *canzone d'autore* was famously shaped after it),¹⁹ this label became a cultural brand of Italian-ness all over the western world and beyond.

As an ideological paradigm, the notion of *cinema d'autore* has deeply affected our understanding of Italian film music. The main narrative of Italian film music history has been characterized, not without reason, by the idea that, beginning in the 1960s, some film composers eventually succeeded in becoming authors themselves, in the sense of key artistic collaborators with the directors, and a key link in the very concept of film as an artwork. According to this narrative, the golden age of Italian cinema would coincide with the peak of film music auteurism: that is, with the apex of Nino Rota's career and the launch of Ennio Morricone in the film industry. These two admittedly major figures—whose production alone covers the entire history of sound film in Italy²⁰—have come to represent a compulsory, if somewhat cumbersome prism through which any discourse on Italian film music history gets started.²¹ At the basis

of this critical framework were the internationally celebrated professional partnerships (and personal friendships) between Sergio Leone and Morricone on the one hand, and Fellini and Rota on the other. These two paradigmatic pairs, complemented by other long-term collaborations of Rota (with Visconti) and Morricone (with Pier Paolo Pasolini, Elio Petri, Gillo Pontecorvo, and Giuseppe Tornatore, among others), have become the backbone of a historiographical canon of Italian film music that was extended to encompass other “minor” partnerships, such as Michelangelo Antonioni and Giovanni Fusco, Vittorio De Sica and Alessandro Cicognini, Roberto and Renzo Rossellini, Pietro Germi and Carlo Rustichelli, Francesco Rosi and Piero Piccioni, and Marco Bellocchio and Nicola Piovani, to name only a few. While this list shows that stable collaborations between directors and composers were indeed a characteristic feature of Italian cinema, it obviously cannot but produce a partial understanding of the complex trends underlying film musicianship in the long 1960s—if anything because it drastically narrows down the multiplicity of musicians and practices involved in the overwhelmingly vast scenario of *non-auteur* cinema.²²

Whatever emphasis one may put on auteur film, one cannot overlook the fact that a variety of socio-economic, political, and cultural dynamics gave an extraordinary impulse to a range of partly autochthonous, partly imported adaptations of popular genres in the long 1960s, such as *commedia all'italiana*, Spaghetti Western, *musicarello*, horror, *giallo*, *peplum*, erotic film, *mondo* movies, and so on; to this, one may add that this favorable climate allowed non-mainstream milieux such as underground film and documentary to blossom. Music was a key element in all these genres. The same production that today appeals to a vast niche of music collectors and movie geeks internationally—also thanks to the global influence of directors such as Quentin Tarantino, David O. Russell, and Robert Rodriguez in the past two decades—directs our attention toward a largely unexplored research field, one in which film music has

17 Among these one must at least cite Michelangelo Antonioni's trilogy: *L'Avventura* (1960), *La Notte* (1961), and *L'Eclisse* (1962).

18 Vittorio Spinazzola, *Cinema e pubblico: Lo spettacolo filmico in Italia, 1945–1965* (Milan: Bompiani, 1974), 238, 241. The term's translation is taken from Angelo Restivo, *The Cinema of Economic Miracles: Visuality and Modernization in the Italian Art Film* (Durham/London: Duke University Press, 2002), 40.

19 Jacopo Tomatis, “A Portrait of the Author as an Artist: Ideology, Authenticity, and Stylization in the *Canzone d'Autore*,” in *Made in Italy: Studies in Popular Music*, ed. Franco Fabbri and Goffredo Plastino (New York/London: Routledge, 2014), 87–99 (88).

20 Rota's earliest film score, for *Treno popolare* (dir. Raffaello Matarazzo), dates back to 1933, although it took Rota another nine years before he scored his second film (*Giorno di nozze*, dir. Matarazzo, 1942). Morricone's latest film score was for *The Correspondence* (*La corrispondenza*, dir. Giuseppe Tornatore, 2016).

21 Sergio Miceli's seminal book *La musica nel film: Arte e artigianato* ([Fiesole: Discanto, 1982], 249ff.), published three years after Rota's death (1979), inaugurated this trend by featuring a thorough analysis of Rota's contribution to Fellini's cinema and a lengthy conversation with Ennio Morricone. Ennio Simeon's referential volume *Per un pugno di note* ([Milan: Rugginenti, 1995], 216–34) presents a cursory overview of Italian film music from the silent era to neorealism followed by the analysis of Rota's main scores for Fellini, before devoting almost equal room to Morricone's most famous soundtracks. A similar scheme is replicated by Mervyn Cooke in

his *A History of Film Music* ([Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008], 365–76).

22 This may also be one reason why, despite the abundance of monographic insights on Rota and Morricone, a thorough historiographical take on film music in Italy is yet to be written. The closest approximation to a history of Italian film music is the “Italy” section in Sergio Miceli, *Film Music: History, Aesthetic-Analysis, Typologies*, trans. and ed. Marco Alunno and Braunwin Sheldrick (Lucca: LIM/Milan: Ricordi, 2013), 219–304. Miceli more recently discussed the existence of an Italian “school” of film music in Sergio Miceli, “Y-a-t-il encore une école italienne de la musique de film?,” in *Musiques de films: Nouveaux enjeux. Rencontre sensible entre deux arts*, ed. Séverine Abhervé, N.T. Binh, and José Moure (Brussels: Les Impressions Nouvelles, 2014), 15–33.

benefited commercial cinema and at the same time has exploited films as platforms to gain an almost self-standing status in popular culture.²³

Our special double issue embraces this very complexity from the standpoint of music and sound. A sonic-musical approach to Italian cinema indeed suggests fluid and rather unstable aggregations of themes which transverse disparate films, notwithstanding their differing cultural prestige or circulation. First of all, in dealing with Italian film music of the long 1960s we must take account of its radical multifariousness, which paralleled, yet did not systematically replicate, cinema's fragmentation into genres: orchestral scoring, electronic music, jazz (or jazz-inflected music), popular music (both in the tradition of Italian popular song and Anglo-American-inflected beat and rock'n'roll), opera, marching bands, and folk music are often conflated in film dramaturgies of this period. Secondly, investigating music and sound in film forces us to acknowledge the key role of sound post-production practice, which underwent profound transformations during the long 1960s. The reciprocal relationships of each component of the soundtrack (dialogue, music, and sound) thus demand consideration in the context of the shifts that affected film production processes and technologies in those years.²⁴ In other words, music and its emergent meanings cannot be comprehended in isolation from the overall film soundscape (the dramaturgical whole of dialogue, sound, and music) as conceived by filmmakers and composers, processed by post-production facilities, and experienced by the spectators (also as listeners).

At the same time, however, in critically reviewing the specialized competences and professional figures involved in the technical processing of the soundtrack one comes to recognize a certain degree of autonomy governing musical and sound choices, relative to other aspects of film production. The basic fact that composers and sound post-production facilities served a multitude of auteur, commercial,

documentary, and experimental films enables us to spot trends in the use of music and sonic resources that do not necessarily find their counterparts in the compartmentalization of film genres. One example could help make this clear. It would seem obvious, from a film appreciation perspective, to keep "auteur" films such as *Il Generale Della Rovere* (dir. Rossellini, 1959), *L'Avventura* (dir. Antonioni, 1960), or *The Last Judgment (Il giudizio universale)* (dir. De Sica, 1961) separate from commercial "B movies" such as *The Day the Sky Exploded (La morte viene dallo spazio)* (dir. Paul Heusch, 1958), *Hercules (Le fatiche di Ercole)* (dir. Pietro Francisci, 1958), or *Hercules and the Captive Women (Ercole alla conquista di Atlantide)* (dir. Vittorio Cottafavi, 1961); similarly, these would rarely be mentioned in the same context as a high-budget (by Italian standards) Hollywood co-production such as *Barabbas* (dir. Richard Fleischer, 1961),²⁵ nor a corporate film such as the ENI-sponsored documentary *Italy Is Not a Poor Country (L'Italia non è un paese povero)* (dir. Joris Ivens, 1960). Still, in embracing a sonic-musical angle as a starting point, we cannot help but notice that all the above-mentioned films display common traits in terms of what one might define as an "experimental" attitude to sound. This observation is further substantiated by the fact that all these titles were post-synchronized at the same facility—the Fonolux, a branch of the illustrious company Lux Film, established in 1957 in Rome with the aim of importing, readapting, and challenging contemporary Hollywood sound standards.²⁶ Lastly, an ethnographic-historical approach reveals that the Fonolux was a micro-environment where sound engineers, technicians, mixers, and Foley artists, alongside directors, composers, and producers, interacted on a regular basis; and it reveals that these interactions, being obviously informed by the hierarchical organization of a professional environment, were nonetheless more fluid and unpredictable in comparison to the structured industrial environment of Hollywood studios.

Sound and musical aesthetics in films are often produced by a dialectics of combined factors, such as the technological state of the art versus its upgrading; professional routine, deliberate, or

23 Taking Morricone's music for Leone's Westerns as a case study, Jeff Smith commented that "Morricone's scores were part of a larger trend in late sixties cinema toward inverting the normal hierarchy of image and sound." Jeff Smith, *The Sounds of Commerce: Marketing Popular Film Music* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 148. Among Italian film composers in the late 1960s spread an awareness that film music had become a discographic genre in and of itself, with its recognizable and marketable "Italian sound." In this respect, it may not be a coincidence that Morricone, together with Luis Bacalov, Piero Piccioni, and Armando Trovajoli, founded their own recording studio in Rome in 1969, the Orthophonic Studio. See Ennio Morricone and Alessandro De Rosa, *Ennio Morricone: In His Own Words*, trans. Maurizio Corbella (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 101.

24 For an approach to Italian film centered on production dynamics, see the special double issue "Music, Sound and Production Processes of Italian Cinema," ed. Maurizio Corbella and Ilario Meandri, in *Musica/Tecnologia* 8–9 (2014–15), <http://www.fupress.net/index.php/mt/issue/view/1134>.

25 *Barabbas* was one of the spearheads of the *Hollywood sul Tevere* period. It was co-produced by Columbia Pictures and Dino De Laurentiis International. On the experimental features of Mario Nascimbene's score for this film, see Stephen C. Meyers, *Epic Sound: Music in Postwar Hollywood Biblical Films* (Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2015), 190–209.

26 For an archive-based overview of the Fonolux's equipment, see Maurizio Corbella and Ilario Meandri, "Principali strumenti in uso nel processo di incisione musicale e di post-produzione sonora," *Musica/Tecnologia* 8–9 (2014–15), 181–203.

contingent “outside-the-box” choices by music and sound people versus the (in)ability of directors and producers to see through the implications of certain uses of sound. As sound post-production in Italy was rapidly transforming at the turn of the 1960s, the spaces and the gray areas in between these concurring agencies left room for variably original interpretations and solutions. Related to this aspect is the cultural idiosyncrasy as regards sound and music in contemporary film discourse. As Antonella Sisto has documented in her thorough cultural-historical account of film sound in Italian cinema, a persistent habit of relegating sound (and music) to a marginal, heavily standardized aspect of film production had affected Italian cinema since the beginning of the sound era.²⁷ Conversely, there is anecdotal evidence of Italian filmmakers and producers regarding music as an “esoteric” discipline,²⁸ with which composers have repeatedly concurred by emphasizing the “fantastic,” “magical,” or “mysterious” power of music’s contribution to film.²⁹ Something along these lines happened with sound professions: as Ilario Meandri notes in his article in this issue, the craft of the *rumorista* (Foley artist), handed down through generations via family ties, was surrounded by an aura of initiation. Thus, a scholarly take on these matters can fruitfully “desacralize” these figures by historicizing them as cultural mediators, who worked with a certain amount of unchallenged creative autonomy in the “occult” domain of “sound alchemy,” to the advantage of film directors and producers.

27 Sisto’s notes about neorealism’s indifference toward matters of sound aesthetics are especially noteworthy. Antonella Sisto, *Film Sound in Italy: Listening to the Screen* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2014), 79-112.

28 The adjective “magic” recurs in descriptions of Rota’s demeanor, especially in reference to his work next to Fellini at the Moviola. The composer’s trance-like play with oblivion and remembrance when composing for films has even been regarded as an exegetic category for the exploration of Rota’s film music aesthetics of (self-)borrowing and pastiche. See Giovanni Morelli, “Mackie? Messer? Nino Rota e la quarta persona singolare dell’io lirico,” in *Storia del candore: Studi in memoria di Nino Rota nel ventesimo della scomparsa*, ed. Giovanni Morelli (Florence: Olschki, 2001), 355-429.

29 Cicognini, who scored De Sica’s neorealist films, maintained that “the presence of music, even when it is not discursive but is limited to a few isolated sounds, always produces a magical sensation of unreality. [. . .] Where reality drifts apart, the world of fantasy draws near; and music is indeed the language of fantasy.” Alessandro Cicognini, “La musica d’atmosfera nel film storico e nel film neorealista,” in *Musica e film*, ed. S.G. Biamonte (Rome: Edizioni dell’Ateneo, 1959), 165-9 (165-6) (authors’ translation). Ennio Morricone has extensively reflected on the “mystery” underpinning his approach to film scoring: “The blend between music and images is always determined by something that is not completely controllable by those in charge. [. . .] And these very variables lead to the mystery I am referring to.” Morricone and De Rosa, *Ennio Morricone: In His Own Words*, 91; see also the chapter “Mystery and Craftsmanship” (141-94).

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The above discussion offers a sense of how tracking down the recurrence of sound and musical patterns in a circumscribed environment over a relatively short period of time might open up new paths for historical and dramaturgical interpretation, taking, in turn, a technological, professional, or ethnographic focus. This perspective can fruitfully complement one centered on the “authorial intentions” of directors or composers. The six articles in this issue exemplify this framework. The content is designed so as to allow a multi-entry approach to Italian cinema of the long 1960s via musical and sound practices. We asked our authors to conceive thematic trajectories moving as much as possible across multiple films and involving different directors and composers; to tackle the relationship between cinema and the record industry; to explore the overlooked field of documentary; to examine the local specificity of film music and sound post-production practices. Some of the articles concentrate on cultural reception, others draw directly on research in both sound studios and composers’ archives. Some deal with film music in the strict sense; some prefer to intersect different production and media systems; others consider film sound as their main focus. For the most part they analytically delve into specific film sequences, yet consider them as symptomatic of broader contexts, whether these are musical genres or topoi, strands of media industry, production practices, or cultural issues that are specific to the Italian society of the long 1960s. These perspectives intersect films of different kinds, in no way depending on their “positioning” in the canon, but based on their working as instantiations of the above issues.

Specifically, the aspects considered by the six contributors are:

- Opera as a (not exclusively musical) genre or device traditionally targeted by Italian cinema throughout its history, which is remediated by a new generation of film auteurs to mark original, antagonistic takes on issues of national and social identity (Giuggioli);
- Film music as a non-verbal vehicle for shaping the cinematic representation and construction of the Italian south and “setting the tone” of the heated debates surrounding the “southern question” during the economic miracle (Corbella);
- Popular music as a node of intersection between the record industry and the film industry,

investing specific figures such as composers, performers, arrangers, lyricists, and screenwriters with cross-media cultural and commercial functions (Bratus);

- Film sound as a cultural-technological aspect closely intermingled with local practices of Italian Foley artists, investigated through ethnographic research and the exploration of film sound libraries and archives (Meandri);
- The industrial soundscape as the embodiment of the economic miracle's ideological ambiguity, grafting the sound–music continuum to the uninterrupted and creative dialogue between fiction and documentary (Cecchi);
- The experimental music of short documentaries, the soundtracks of which were often the prerogative of the composer alone taking care of almost every aspect of sound post-synchronization (Cosci).

On the whole, this special issue attempts to recast consolidated paradigms in a new light, avoiding engagement with ideological conflicts against “old” paradigms that are still valid and useful in many respects. The “film *auteur*” paradigm is not dismissed but reconsidered in light of collaborative practices, and *auteur* films are inserted within a broader compass and placed in dialogue with film genres including documentary films, the pervasive presence of which during the 1960s can hardly be overestimated. Films are considered to be negotiating their meaning and structure with Italian culture of the historical period under scrutiny; this includes the broad gray area of films suspended between “auteurist” aspirations and more or less intentional “commingling” of genres. Finally, the “film music” paradigm is revisited under a broader perspective of film sound as an overall process including and molding music as one of several specific layers. Within film music practice of this period, the score is considered in its technologically and culturally transforming status, and in any case as an initial stage taking shape through the phases of

performance, recording, re-recording, and mixing—all beyond the composer’s activity and control, exceptions notwithstanding.

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In conclusion, we wish to underline the collaborative context from which this issue has emerged. During the past decade some of the authors have shared research paths, co-edited publications, participated in the same research groups, co-organized conferences and panel sessions, shared contacts, references, discoveries, and information about sources, archives, practices, and historical figures; all this thanks to the awareness of their reciprocal research angles and the specificity of each one’s scholarly profile. The existence of this network has been intentionally flagged by means of cross-references between the articles of this special issue. All this in no way undermines the autonomy of each contribution. As guest editors we realize that the difference between the first submission and the published version of the texts is remarkable. This could not have been possible without the number of people who have generously and critically supported our work: the anonymous reviewers, who provided insightful comments and critical remarks eliciting changes and improvements at many levels; the journal’s editor, Bill Rosar, who supported this project from the beginning; and Giorgio Biancorosso, who as a member of the journal’s editorial board offered invaluable advice. Finally, we are grateful to Ailsa Parkin for her organizational work, and Dean Bargh for his accurate copyediting, all the more indispensable since the six authors express themselves in English as non-native speakers.

Translating cultures is one of the most challenging, delicate, and politically pressing tasks we face in current times: we hope that this special issue may increase the dialogue between scholars of different nationalities and add to the diversity of our knowledge of film music and history.

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