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The Representation of Disability in the Music of Alfred Hitchcock Films

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THE REPRESENTATION OF DISABILITY IN
THE MUSIC OF ALFRED HITCHCOCK FILMS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

in

The School of Music

by

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Abstract

Several of Alfred Hitchcock’s movies feature characters with disabilities. Often, these characters are protagonists, and Hitchcock systematically manipulates his audiences to identify with these characters through the editing process, sound effects, and music. This dissertation will analyze the ways music represents various disabilities in three Hitchcock films. *Vertigo* (1958) addresses obsession and phobia as its main themes, whereas *Psycho* (1960) investigates obsession and madness. Finally, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956) explores muteness, hysteria, and identity in the context of two pieces of diegetic music. Hitchcock made careful notes for the music in his films; songs represent disability through lyrics and in their use as part of a film’s underscore in specific scenes.

A non-diegetic orchestral score often accompanied one of his films, so Hitchcock needed a composer to write music to accompany the visual track. For the three films discussed in length, that composer was Bernard Herrmann. Herrmann’s music choices closely reflect Hitchcock’s desires for that specific film (they worked on eight films together). Herrmann represents disability through his music through several techniques: bitonality, dissonance, atonality, cell-based melodic structures, ostinati, and the use of the minor-major seventh chord. The extensive use of these techniques in Hitchcock’s films distinguishes Herrmann from other contemporary Hollywood composers.
Chapter One
Disability in Film and Music: An Introduction

Film director Alfred Hitchcock utilized sound (dialogue, music, and effects) in his films in innovative ways, often developing his complex characters and themes in the soundtrack as well as the image track. Many of his films deal explicitly or implicitly with disability, including physical disability in *Rear Window* (1954), mental and emotional disability in *Vertigo* (1958), *Psycho* (1960), and *Marnie* (1964), and muteness and hysteria in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956). Although these disabilities are most readily apparent from the image track, the sound track—including musical scores, many by Bernard Herrmann—also communicates their presence and shapes their meanings.¹ This dissertation will explore the theme of disability in Hitchcock’s films as developed by the sound track, demonstrating that the interdisciplinary field of Disability Studies can offer new perspectives and interpretive insights into these and other Hollywood films.

REPRESENTING DISABILITY

Scholars have studied disability in many forms and guises, and they define it along a number of paradigms. The Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), for example, defines a disabled person as someone who “has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity. This includes people who have a record of such an impairment, even if they do not currently have a disability. It also includes individuals who do not have a disability but are regarded as having a disability.”² This definition, responding to the advocacy

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¹ Alfred Hitchcock’s nine-year collaboration with Bernard Herrmann lasted eight films, beginning with *The Trouble With Harry* (1955) and ending with *Marnie* (1964).
of disability activists, differs from the medical model of disability, which treats disability as a physical or mental impairment within an individual and regards the limitations faced by people with disabilities as resulting primarily, or solely, from their impairments. By contrast, the social model defines disability as a “socially-derived bodily difference,” resulting from the interaction between

an individual and her social environment: the exclusion of people with certain physical and mental characteristics from major domains of social life. Their exclusion is manifested not only in deliberate segregation, but in a built environment and organized social activity that preclude or restrict the participation of people seen or labelled as having disabilities.

Once scholars began to think of disability as socially-derived, they discovered that it mirrors the scholarship of other identity categories, especially socially-stigmatized minority groups. Literary scholars David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder describe disability as an icon of other marginalized identities: religious, sexual, racial, and gender minorities are often marginalized on account of their bodily difference (e.g., the “Jewish nose,” the “exotic” body, the “hysterical woman,” or the “disease” of homosexuality). As a result, “disability has undergone a dual negation—it has been attributed to all ‘deviant’ biologies as a discrediting feature, while also serving as the material marker of inferiority itself. One might think of disability as the master trope of human disqualification.” It is this definition of disability that I

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will use in this dissertation. To fully understand representations of disability in the arts, one must consider not only the disability itself, but how it is stylistically characterized.

Although disability plays a large role in many Hitchcock films, its representation is highly stylized: for example, non-disabled actors and actresses were hired to play disabled characters. Disability Studies scholar Tobin Siebers refers to this practice as “disability drag”: non-disabled people pretending to be disabled for the entertainment of a primarily non-disabled audience. Disability drag creates a fictional performance that is less concerned with properly conveying the needs and wishes of a disabled community and more concerned with providing entertainment. These types of films create interesting dynamics between artists and their audience: films create photographic opportunities for filmmakers to encourage audience fascination with overt displays of physical difference. They appropriate disability to expedite the delivery of the narrative (audiences know who the villain is in Hitchcock’s *The 39 Steps*).

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7 Detractors of the social model feel that the “all-encompassing” nature of this definition prescribes non-existing narratives on other minority groups. For example, women and religious minorities, while they strive for equal treatment in society, have taken a different course in their struggles than disability activists. I would counter this argument by pointing out that for the purposes of definition, the fact that other minority groups have been socially stigmatized is disabling in how “normal” society views them. The specific course of their struggle is less relevant than the fact that they have been discriminated against. For more information on the social model and its detractors, see Jerome E. Bickenbach, *Physical Disability and Social Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) and Lorella Terzi, “The Social Model of Disability: A Philosophical Critique,” *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 21 no 2 (August 2004): 141-157.

8 Most of the implications for the legal, medical, and social definitions of disability are negative. There is, however, one paradigm that exists that relates a positive paradigm for a disabled person: that of the divinely-inspired afflatus. In this situation, the disabled individual imparts wisdom through the act of creating art. In this context, madness, for example, is no longer a debilitating departure from the norm but exists as a marker of creative genius. Many artists have been considered along this paradigm: Ludwig van Beethoven with deafness, Robert Schumann, Hugo Wolf and Vincent van Gogh with madness, and Claude Monet with blindness. For more information see Tobin Siebers, *Disability Aesthetics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), Neil Lerner and Joseph N. Straus, eds. *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music*. (London: Routledge, 2006), and Joseph N. Straus, *Extraordinary Measures: Disability in Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[1935], for example, because he has a physical disability) and give permission for the audience to gaze at, and thereby objectify the disabled body.\(^\text{10}\)

Rosemarie Garland-Thomson describes the practice of staring in her book, *Staring: How We Look*. She analyzes different ways of looking at people with disabilities and examines how agency is transferred from the person being stared at to the person looking. She describes situations in which a person with disabilities (the staree) becomes uncomfortable with the directed gaze of “normals” (the starer):

\[\text{[it] is profligate interest, stunned wonder, obsessive ocularity … like all physical impulses, staring has a history sedimented over time and across space that is specific to each culture, which in turn shapes its meaning and practice. The intensity of our physical urge to stare has been strictly monitored by social rules. … staring is a conduit to knowledge. Stares are urgent efforts to make the unknown known, to render legible something that seems at first glance incomprehensible. In this way, staring becomes a starer’s quest to know and a staree’s opportunity to be known.}\(^\text{11}\)

The stare is usually initiated out of curiosity, but it has the effect of “othering” the staree: it creates a “social process that hurdles a body from the safe shadows of ordinariness into the bull’s-eye of judgement.”\(^\text{12}\) Not only does the stare stigmatize, it also dominates, making the staree feel as if there is a reason *why* the starer is staring. (From an early age, children are taught not to stare, and when they do, parents admonish them: “Don’t be rude!”)

Staring takes on new meaning in the arts, especially in film. While staring might be considered rude in a social setting, a film audience is allowed, even encouraged, to stare at a performing artist with disabilities. A film provides an extra level of comfort as the staree is not

\[^{10}\text{Mitchell and Snyder, Narrative Prosthesis, 96.}\]
\[^{12}\text{Garland-Thomson, Staring, 45.}\]
in the same location as the starer; the audience safely stares at the staree’s on-screen image, knowing that the staree will never reciprocate. Some films go to great lengths to protect the starer from feeling shame. For example, they might use a narrative that treats disability in a comforting way; the “cure” or “overcoming” narratives (in which the protagonist with a disability has something to triumph over) are common storytelling devices. In *Psycho*, for example, the murder of Marion and the identity of “Mother” are two primary dramatic revelations of the narrative.

Mitchell and Snyder refer to a narrative’s appropriation of disability as *narrative prosthesis*. Narrative prosthesis enables a filmmaker like Hitchcock to participate in “an exploitative scheme that capitalizes upon the visual spectacle that disabilities offer to the camera eye.”¹³ By having the audience identify with a disabled protagonist, the audience “does not experience a feeling of superiority in his or her closer proximity to the normal ideal, but rather senses his or her own body to be at risk.”¹⁴ This tactic, when exploited by a director like Hitchcock, enables audiences to experience a disability as if they have it. In *Rear Window*, for example, the audience identifies with Jeffries’s physical confinement by experiencing most of the film in one apartment from a single point of view—the angle of shots, the ambient noises, and the music of the diegesis are manipulated so that the audience’s viewing position mimics Jeffries’s. As Mitchell and Snyder observe,

One cannot narrate the story of a healthy body or national reform movement without the contrastive device of disability to bear out the symbolic potency of the message. The materiality of metaphor via disabled bodies gives all bodies a

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¹⁴ Ibid., 37.
tangible essence in that the “healthy” corporeal surface fails to achieve its symbolic effect without its disabled counterpart.\textsuperscript{15}

Many of Hitchcock’s films that feature disability use it as a “contrastive device.” This dissertation will examine examples of disability in Hitchcock’s films—muteness in \textit{The Man Who Knew Too Much}, obsession in \textit{Vertigo} and \textit{Psycho}, and madness in \textit{Psycho}—and will address the realization of these disabilities in the film soundtrack.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{REPRESENTATIONS OF DISABILITY IN MUSIC}

Composers rely on music’s abstract nature to represent the programmatic theme of disability: they can manipulate the form of a piece, its harmony, the instrumentation, the use of chromaticism, and sometimes the sound itself for their expressive needs. How composers interact with music depends a lot on their personality. For example, in his book \textit{Extraordinary Measures: Disability in Music}, music theorist Joseph Straus describes the ways in which individuals reacted to their disabilities and reflected their bodies in music:

For Beethoven, disability is to be struggled with and, if possible, overcome, and his works often take on this personality of the Heroic Overcomer. For Schubert, given his difference experience of disability and his different musical inclinations, disability is not something that can be unequivocally overcome. Rather, it is something that must be lived with, accommodated. Its traces can never be expunged, but leave a permanent mark on the musical body, just as syphilis marks the physical body. As a result, when Schubert grapples musically with disability, his works are more likely to enact the cultural script of the Saintly Sage, . . . in

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{15} Mitchell and Snyder, \textit{Narrative Prosthesis}, 63-64.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Other disabilities are explored in Hitchcock’s movies (such as \textit{Spellbound} [1945], \textit{Rear Window}, \textit{The Birds}, and \textit{Marnie}), but since this paper specifically focuses on musical representations of disability in Hitchcock’s films, they are only analyzed briefly later in this chapter. For more on these films, see Kyle William Bishop, “The Threat of the Gothic Patriarchy in Alfred Hitchcock’s ‘The Birds.’” \textit{Rocky Mountain Review} 65 No. 2 (Fall 2011): 135-147; John Belton, “The Space in ‘Rear Window.’” \textit{Comparative Literature} 103, No. 5 (Dec., 1988): 1121-1138; Robert E. Kapsis, “The Historical Reception of Hitchcock’s \textit{Marnie},” \textit{Journal of Film and Video} 40, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 46-63; and Nathan Platte, “\textit{Spellbound} (1945): A Contested Collaboration,” \textit{The Journal of Musicology} 28, No. 4 (Fall 2011): 418-463.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
which disability confers a supranormal wisdom. In Schubert’s music, there is a sense that wisdom is something otherworldly, to be won only through suffering.\textsuperscript{17}

Another personal reflection of disability is found in Bedřich Smetana’s final movement of his String Quartet No. 1 (\textit{From My Life}), in which the first violin mimics the sound of his tinnitus (see Ex. 1.1). This literal representation of disability affects the sound of Smetana’s music itself, for the high E, sounding persistently, does not fit in with the ranges of the other parts—“disabling” the music itself.\textsuperscript{18}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{example1.1.png}
\end{center}

Example 1.1. Smetana, String Quartet No. 1 (\textit{“From My Life”}) fourth movement, mm. 222-230.

Sometimes composers draw on less literal, more symbolic representations of disability. Hector Berlioz, for example, manipulates the instrumentation, tempo, and rhythm of the \textit{idée}

\textsuperscript{17} Straus, \textit{Extraordinary Measures}, 64.

fixe in his *Symphonie fantastique* Op. 14 to portray the transformation of the artist’s beloved from an ideal woman in the first movement to an object of an unhealthy obsession at the end (see Ex. 1.2a and b). By using musical language in specific narrative fashion, Berlioz is able to relate the degrading mental state of the symphony’s protagonist, effectively ending the process of continuing variation as it is stated in the first movement. The fifth movement’s statement of the idée fixe changes the rhythmic tempo of the theme as well: the first note, which lasts for five beats in the first movement, now only lasts for a quarter note. This distortion can be
applied to the entire melody: what takes Berlioz thirty measures to play in the first movement only takes sixteen in the fifth movement. Shortening the melody changes its character to fit the dramatic needs of the musical narrative.

Music theorist Stephen Rodgers explores this deformation of rhythm and instrumentation and how it ultimately relates to the structure of *Symphonie fantastique*. He analyzes the first movement of the work from the perspective of rotational form and shows how “deformational musical form can behave like a disabled body.” Over the course of his analysis, he shows how traditional forms (like sonata-allegro form) do not fit the music, nor does modifying the form to fit the music (ie. modified sonata allegro-form).

Why then does Berlioz reference the conventions of sonata form? And how does he distort its conventions to heighten the form’s circularity? Debates about whether the movement is a sonata form at all persist to the present day, and with good reason. In fact, sonata form does seem rather inadequate. The movement can only very uncomfortably be squeezed into a normative sonata mold. But a great deal can be learned by recognizing how Berlioz invokes sonata form without necessarily embracing it. Berlioz composes hesitation into this music, and sonata form is one of the objects of that hesitation.

The hesitation Rodgers refers to is thematic to the disability narrative of the work. By obscuring the form, Berlioz is, in essence, disabling audience’s expectations. Rodgers ultimately defines the first movement as a rotating twist best illustrated in the shape of a spiral. As the thematic elements get closer to the center of the spiral, the frequency of their occurrence increases. By using disability as a lens for analysis, Rodgers is able to creatively determine a form that fits the narrative and dramatic devices of Berlioz’s music.

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20 Rodgers, “Mental Illness,” 245.
Aside from form, tonality is another variable composers can manipulate to represent disability. Once a tonic is established in a piece of music, two elements of tonicism are explored—imbalance and unrest; both terms denote disability. These are aesthetically desirable, however, for they provide the necessary contrast to the beginnings and endings of the piece. Without this contrast, music is lifeless and without interest. Music becomes normative through this process—having a place of rest, moving away from the place of rest, and then reasserting the tonic (such as in sonata-allegro form). As long as this musical format is followed, the music’s metaphorical body remains intact. Yet, at the same time, audiences yearn for imbalance and unrest, for they make the listening experience aesthetically pleasing. Showcasing these two contrasting points of view of disability as formally problematic and aesthetically pleasing displays disability as a pervasive interpretive tool for Western music.

Chapter Two  
Hitchcock and Herrmann: Style and Representation

Alfred Hitchcock started his directing career in England. He was a highly regarded director in Great Britain, but did not reach mainstream success in the United States until the film was released as a home video (which enabled audiences to study the film through repeated viewing). Hitchcock’s signature style comes from several influences and starts with his debut film, *The Pleasure Garden* (1925). In that film, he introduced many of the techniques and themes he would go on to use throughout his career: “the camera observing an observer, the rapid cuts from the watcher to the watched, the dizzy circular staircase—and the puckish humor.”

Hitchcock was very adept at manipulating audiences for a desired emotional response (usually for building suspense). He describes his suspense-building process in an interview:

> Mystery is an intellectual process, like in a ‘whodunit.’ But suspense is essentially an emotional process. You can only get the suspense element going by giving the audience information. I dare say you have seen many films which have mysterious goings-on. You don’t know what is going on, why the man is doing this or that. You are about a third of the way through the film before you realize what it is all about. To me that is completely wasted footage, because there is no emotion to it. . . . [L]et’s take a very simple childish example. Four people are sitting around a table, talking about baseball, five minutes of it, very dull. Suddenly a bomb goes off. Blows the people to smithereens. What does the audience have? Ten seconds of shock. Now take the same scene. Tell the audience there is a bomb under the table and it will go off in five minutes. Well, the emotion of the audience is different because you give them the information that in five minutes time, that bomb will go off. Now the conversation about baseball becomes very vital, because the audience is saying: ‘Don’t be ridiculous! Stop talking about baseball!! There’s a bomb under there!’ You’ve got the audience working. Now there is one difference. I’ve been guilty in *Sabotage* of making this error, but I’ve never made it since: the bomb must never go off.

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you do, you’ve worked that audience up into a state. Then they will be angry if you haven’t provided them any relief. That is almost a must.23

This subjective style has similarities to German Expressionism, which presents subject matter from a completely subjective (and often mad or hysterical) point of view. Popular in the 1920s, Expressionism gained popularity with directors like F. W. Murnau and Fritz Lang.24 Hitchcock was exposed to these techniques first-hand when the film company he was working for in England hired him as an assistant director for The Blackguard (1924). He mastered Expressionistic techniques while he was in Germany and incorporated them into his style.

Integral to the concept of a subjective presentation in film is the use of a “subjective camera,” which Hitchcock discusses over the course of several interviews: “[a] typical example is the film Rear Window where the central figure is a man in one position whose viewpoint we study. His viewpoint becomes his mental process, by use of the camera and the montage.”25 This technique combines with the techniques described earlier to create a narrative that is claustrophobic. Hitchcock references the subjective camera in a phenomenon known as the “Pudovkin effect”:

You see a close-up of the Russian actor Ivan Mosjoukine. This is immediately followed by a shot of a dead baby. Back to Mosjoukine again and you read compassion on his face. Then you take away the dead baby and you show a plate of soup, and now, when you go back to Mosjoukine, he looks hungry. Yet, in both cases, they used the same shot of the actor; his face was exactly the same. In the same way, let’s take a close-up of Stewart looking out the window at a little dog that’s being lowered in a basket. Back to Stewart, who has a kindly smile. But, in the place of the little dog you show a half-naked girl exercising in front of her open

window, and you go back to a smiling Stewart again, this time he’s seen as a dirty old man!”

Hitchcock narrates his films through the subjectivity of his characters: for example, with a close-up of a character, then a point-of-view shot of an event that he or she is “looking at,” and then the character’s response. This process not only relates the emotional content of the scene directly (in this method, the audience sees the same thing as the actor, and seeing how the actor responds provides a guide to the response of others), but it also forces the audience to “participate” in the action. This creation of identification is a key element of Hitchcock’s style.

Another influence on Hitchcock was Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein. Eisenstein had a distinctive opinion on editing techniques like montage that he offers in his “Statement on Sound” (1928): “It is well known that the principal (and sole) method which has led cinema to a position of great influence is montage. The confirmation of montage as the principal means of influence has become the indisputable axiom upon which world cinema culture rests.”

Eisenstein’s focus on montage in silent films influenced directors like Hitchcock. Montage would remain a prominent part of both directors’ technique. The quick-cuts of the shower scene in *Psycho*, for example, have their roots in the “Odessa staircase” scene from Eisenstein’s *The Battleship Potemkin* (1925). This style of editing allowed Hitchcock to have his work approved

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28 Filmed in 1925, the Russian film Броненосец Потёмкин (Bronenosets Potyomkin; or *The Battleship Potemkin*) contains the first example of montage in cinema history. The film dramatizes the story of the sailors on this ship who mutinied against their officers in 1905. They sail to Odessa, where the people of the town are celebrating their safe return. The government, fearing an all-out revolt by the people of Odessa send in the cavalry to stop the celebration. As the Cossacks line up at the top of the stairs, they open fire on the crowd. After the massacre is over, the sailors on the Potemkin fire on the military base nearby in retaliation. The sailors decide to leave port and face the rest of the Russian Navy in battle, but instead of fighting, the navy lets them go out to sea.
by the censors. The shower montage in *Psycho*, for example, shows a beautiful naked woman getting stabbed to death in the shower. Due to Hitchcock’s montage technique, however, no knife is seen to enter the body, nor is there any objectionable nudity. What makes the scene so effective is the parts of the scene that Hitchcock does not show. Audience’s imaginations are far more visceral than anything shown on screen, so Hitchcock exploited this tendency as often as he could in his suspense and horror films.

The cameo and the “MacGuffin” are also important parts of Hitchcock’s style.29 Hitchcock appeared in all of his movies (beginning with *The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog* [1927]), usually as an extra or in a non-speaking role. In his later movies, he would appear in the beginnings of his stories so audiences could focus on the film’s narrative and not his cameo. The “MacGuffin” is something in the narrative that characters care a lot about, even though it ultimately ends up being irrelevant to the plot. The McGuffin serves a point in the narrative to provide insight into the motivations and goals of the characters, which Hitchcock then uses to impart a moral perspective.30 A good example of a MacGuffin is the money that Marion steals in *Psycho*. Almost all of Hitchcock’s films have a MacGuffin, and some are subtly used: in *The

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29 The name “MacGuffin” has a story behind it that Hitchcock loved to tell in interviews: “You may be wondering where the term originated. It is a Scottish name, taken from a story about two men on a train. One man says, ‘What’s that package up there in the baggage rack?’ And the other man answers, ‘Oh, that’s a MacGuffin.’ The first one asks, ‘What’s a MacGuffin?’ ‘Well,’ the other man replies, ‘it’s an apparatus for trapping lions in the Scottish Highlands.’ The first man says, ‘But there are no lions in the Scottish Highlands,’ and the other one answers, ‘Well then, that’s no MacGuffin!’ So you see that a MacGuffin is actually nothing at all.”—from Truffaut, *Hitchcock*, 98-99.

30 Audiences identify with Alicia Huberman (Ingrid Bergman) in *Notorious* (1946) because she is trying to keep uranium from being used improperly by the antagonists of the film. The uranium is the MacGuffin of this film.
Birds, for example, the MacGuffin is the reason behind the bird attacks. It is an ultimately unanswered question (even if it provides great fodder for critics and scholars to debate).

Hitchcock’s overwhelming need for control was legendary and it gave credence to the argument that he operated as an auteur. Filmmaker François Truffaut was one of the first to think of Hitchcock’s films as unified works of art rather than middlebrow products of popular culture). In his interviews with Hitchcock, Truffaut describes an import aspect of Hitchcock’s films:

Mr. Hitchcock, there’s a systematic pattern that runs throughout all of your work. From the very beginning you have consistently chosen to limit yourself to those film elements that are visually inspiring or that have dramatic potential. As a matter of fact, during our talks you’ve referred again and again to the need to “charge the screen with emotion” or to “fill the whole tapestry.” By systematically eliminating what you call ‘flaws’ or ‘gaps’ from your scenarios and by continually improving on the original texture, you have built up a stock of dramatic material that is clearly your own. Whether you’re aware of it or not, this filtering process generally serve to express personal concepts that are supplementary to the action; it’s as if you were instinctively imposing your own ideas on all your themes. . . . it’s when somebody else uses your own words about the basic concept that you see you’ve succeeded in conveying to the screen the ideas that prompted you to undertake this picture instead of something else.31

In auteur theory, the director controls every aspect of the film-making process and thus creates a signature style unique from other directors. In other words, this director is the sole “author” of the film. (Note the difference in ownership between “Alfred Hitchcock’s The Birds” and “The Birds, directed by Alfred Hitchcock”). Detractors of this theory believe that film is too collaborative to have one person’s style permeate the entire production. Hitchcock may have had specific ideas about the music of Vertigo, for example, but the music was still composed by another autonomous composer—Bernard Herrmann. Despite this collaboration (or, perhaps,  

31 Truffaut, Hitchcock, 236-237.
because of it), Hitchcock created a unique directorial style based on the features listed above, including the pervasive representation of disability.

BERNARD HERRMANN’S STYLE

Bernard Herrmann develops his musical style throughout his career in dramatic music, first in radio, then in television and film. One of Herrmann’s initial influences as a composer was Charles Ives, with whom he developed a correspondence. He looked at Ives’s music as a fundamental expression of America. Due to Ives’s professional isolation, he broke away from the musical traditions of Western European composers and employ techniques others would develop thirty years later. While Aaron Copland’s musical style did not influence Herrmann’s style, Herrmann did pass along some of Ives’s scores to Copland, which led to their publication. Herrmann’s interactions with both composers mirrored his artistic growth: he struggled to combine late nineteenth-century romanticism with the harsher atonality of twentieth-century music (especially Ives, Delius, and Stravinsky).

Herrmann was first employed as an assistant in the music department for CBS radio. His duties included some composing, and also listening for balance during recording sessions. It was during this time that he met a young Orson Welles, and they collaborated together for the infamous War of the Worlds (1938) broadcast. When Orson Welles left CBS to make Citizen Kane (1941), he took Herrmann with him and hired him as the film’s composer. It was Herrmann’s first Hollywood film, and Herrmann would spend the next several years developing

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his musical philosophy and language, which was influenced by his time at CBS and would serve him well in his Hollywood career.

Herrmann’s philosophy of film music closely mirrors that of German musician Hanns Eisler, who emigrated from Germany to the United States and worked in Hollywood during the 1930s and 40s. He collaborated with philosopher Theodor Adorno on his ideas for film music in *Composing for the Films* (1947). In this book, Eisler recommends studying and emulating the scores of Arnold Schoenberg, applying his techniques for movie music. He wished for a style that is “especially qualified to construct consistent precise short forms, which contain nothing superfluous, which come to the point at once, and need no expansion for architectonic reasons.”  

Most Hollywood composers, Eisler notes, were not on the correct path:

> There is a favourite Hollywood gibe: ‘Birdie sings, music sings.’ Music must follow visual incidents and illustrate them either by directly imitating them or by using clichés that are associated with the mood and content of the picture. . . . What is in question here is not the principal of musical illustration. Certainly musical illustration is only one among many dramaturgic resources, but it is so overworked that it deserves a rest, or at least should be used with the greatest discrimination. . . . Music cut to fit the stereotype . . . is reduced to the character of a cheap mood-producing gadget, and the associative patters are so familiar that there is really no illustration of anything.”

Here, Eisler is frustrated by contemporary film composers’ practice of musically imitating the image track. This duplication is redundant and it would be better to create a music track in counterpoint to the image track. He illustrates this idea with several examples: a composer might have the music serve a function of movement as a contrast to visual rest (fast music

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while someone is sitting in a chair, for instance), or rest as a contrast to visual motion (as in a lullaby for an action sequence). These contrasts would allow music to comment on the visual track and be more meaningful to film audiences. Music used in contrast is just one of the many functions Eisler proposes:

The actual inventive task of the composer is to compose music that ‘fits’ precisely into the given picture; intrinsic unrelatedness is here the cardinal sin. Even in marginal cases . . . the unrelatedness of the accompaniment must be justified by the meaning of the whole as a special kind of relationship. Structural unity must be preserved even when the music is used as a contrast; the articulation of the musical accompaniment will usually correspond to the articulation of the motion-picture sequence, even when musical and pictorial expressions are diametrically opposed. . . . From the aesthetic point of view, this relation is not one of similarity, but, as a rule, one of question and answer, affirmation and negation, appearance and essence.

The studio system made the dialectics that Eisler proposed impossible because there were too many non-composers who had control over the musical process: aside from the director of the film, orchestrators, arrangers, conductors, mixers, and editors all had a stake in the way a film sounded.

Herrmann is a notable exception to this standard practice of Hollywood composing for many reasons. He employed autonomous short phrases that were then manipulated and developed in various ways. Herrmann himself spoke on his predilection for using short two-bar phrases as opposed to longer melodies in an interview with musicologist Royal S. Brown,

I think a short phrase has got certain advantages. Because I don’t like the leitmotif system. The short phrase is easier to follow for an audience, who only listens with half an ear . . . the reason I don’t like this tune business is that a tune has to have eight or sixteen bars, which limits you as a composer. Once you start, you’ve got

35 Adorno and Eisler, Composing for the Films, 17.
36 Adorno and Eisler, Composing for the Films, 47.
37 This technique will be analyzed extensively in the chapters on Vertigo and Psycho.
to finish—eight or sixteen bars. Otherwise the audience doesn’t know what the hell it’s all about. It’s putting handcuffs on yourself. An example of this is the “Madeleine” cue from Vertigo, which Herrmann breaks into four distinct motifs that are used as the bases for many other cues in the film.

Another way in which Herrmann deviated from the normal Hollywood practice is by orchestrating his own film music. He described his ideas in the Brown interview: “Color is very important. . . . To orchestrate is like a thumbprint. People have a style. I don’t understand it, having someone else orchestrate, it would be like someone putting color to your paintings.” Much of Herrmann’s uniqueness in Hollywood stems from his individualistic approach to instrumentation. No two scores are the same: from an emphasis on woodwinds in Vertigo to an all-string orchestra in Psycho, these important decisions were made by Herrmann himself, not a lackey.

Finally, Herrmann’s use of harmony and tonality sets him apart from his contemporaries. While most of Hermann’s tonal language would be best described as “post-Romantic,” he was not opposed to using atonality or bitonality when the narrative demanded it. Some of his most famous music is not exclusively tonal: “The Murder,” which accompanies the shower scene in Psycho is atonal and the “Vertigo Chord” is a bitonal combination of Eb minor and D major. Because most film audiences were unfamiliar with modern music techniques, many film composers avoided overusing them. As a result, many Hollywood film

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39 For more information on this modular system of composition, see Bartlomiej P. Walus, "Modular Structures in Film Music: The Answer to Synchronization Problems?" Journal of Film Music 4, No. 2 (2011): 125-154.
40 Brown, Overtones and Undertones, 292.
scores were in a style that made use of lush string melodies and hummable tunes. Herrmann distinguished himself in Hollywood by not shying away from using these modern techniques. He did not use them exclusively, but did incorporate them into his tonal language.

Any discussion of Herrmann must take his personality into account when considering his career. Biographies and interviews paint the portrait of a man who was supremely confident in his abilities, and could not tolerate the opinions of those he considered inferior: “I do not prefer to be judged by inferior talents; sparrows fly in flocks but eagles fly alone.”41 Many of these biographies anecdotally relate stories of those who suffered under Herrmann’s wrath. Musicians and non-musicians alike were not spared—his temperament became legendary in certain Hollywood circles.42 His impatience with those he could not tolerate affected his marriages and cost him several job opportunities. It even soured his relationship with Hitchcock, leading to his eventual firing on the set of Torn Curtain after Herrmann publically defied Hitchcock’s wishes for the music. His personality, along with his musical technique, made Herrmann an outsider when compared to other Hollywood film composers (a talent who was highly desirable as a composer, but an outsider none the less).

Herrmann’s musical development in Hollywood was uniquely suited to Hitchcock’s ideas of music’s functions in film. They utilized a number of expressive techniques to portray characters with mental, physical, and emotional disabilities. Their collaboration also contributed to an industry’s representation of disability that included disability drag, narrative prosthesis, and the use of disability as a cure or overcoming narrative. Both Hitchcock and

42 For more information on Herrmann’s personality, see Graham Bruce, Bernard Herrmann: Film Music and Narrative (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985), 25-29.
Herrmann took a unique path to get to Hollywood when compared to others in their respective fields. Hitchcock’s experiences in British and German cinema aided in his technical development, as did Herrmann’s experiences with Orson Welles and CBS Radio. The fusion of their unique styles would lead to the greatest films of their careers.

**REPRESENTING DISABILITY IN HITCHCOCK FILMS**

Aside from the three films discussed later in this dissertation, several other Hitchcock films incorporate disability into their narrative. Physical disability plays a large role in *Rear Window*. Starring Grace Kelly as Lisa and James Stewart as Jeff, the film tells a story from the point of view of a man who spies on his neighbors as he is temporarily confined to a wheelchair. The film equates Jeffries with the film’s audience, and what he sees is a projection of his own desires. As a result, immobility also symbolizes the relationship status between Jeff and Lisa: he is only interested in the events beyond his window. When Lisa starts to participate in events in the outside world (by breaking into Thorwald’s apartment and digging up the flowerbed), Jeff begins to realize how much he loves her. *Rear Window* is filmed in such a way so that the camera angles show the unfolding narrative from Jeff’s point of view; his temporary disability becomes our disability due to the limited presentation of the film’s shots.

Aside from the unique camerawork, Hitchcock also presents the sound design in a stylized fashion. Except for the opening credits, all of the music in the film is diegetic. Hitchcock includes many different popular songs, which sometimes provide ironic or dramatic commentary to the film. When Miss Lonely Hearts contemplates suicide, for example, the song being played on a neighbor’s radio is Bing Crosby’s “Love is Just Around the Corner,” which is

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taken as a cruel joke. By the end of the film, though, Miss Lonely Hearts has met the composer, and the two seem very happy together. In hindsight, the song that played for her suicide may be interpreted as an example of foreshadowing.

There is a particular song that takes on special meaning in *Rear Window*: the song the composer is writing, called “Lisa” (see Ex. 2.1). The film’s audience hears the genesis of the tune in a few chords at the beginning of the story, and as the movie progresses, so does the song’s development. It accompanies several important moments in the film, including the thwarting of Miss Lonely Heart’s suicide attempt (who hears the beautiful melody and decides to live) and the final dénouement of the film. “Lisa” is an obvious representation of Grace Kelly’s character (she and the song share the same name) and of her importance to the overall structure of the film.

*Rear Window*’s music comments, in some dramatic or ironic context, on every character in the film except for one. Jeff, the disabled observer and the film’s protagonist, has no musical accompaniment (there are songs which comment about the relationship status between Lisa and Jeff, but not Jeff exclusively). Music is one of the core elements of this movie, and, as Jack Sullivan states,
The songs are acting and liberating, opening Hitchcock’s often cramped view of human relationships, constantly transforming and interacting with each other and the characters. They are an antidote to Jeff’s stubbornly rationalized refusal to connect with Lisa, a neurosis scathingly diagnosed by Stella, as well as to the national illness of Peeping Tomism she also identifies. As we shall see, Lisa embraces the power of song while Jeff sarcastically dismisses it; the dismissal is a symptom of his emotional tightness.44

Even though the camera shares the point of view with Jeff, the music is sympathetic to Lisa. She is the emotional heart of the film. The fact that Jeff has no music emotionally disables him; the lack of music also mirrors his physical disability. Unlike his temporary physical disability, however, Jeff’s emotional disability is much more serious. The film’s story arc covers Jeff’s emotional growth throughout the film due to Lisa’s influence and “Lisa” (the character and the song). At the end of the film, Jeff’s physical disability has worsened—he has two broken legs instead of one—but his emotional state, now rehabilitated, makes the ending of the film a happy one.

Another Hitchcock film that ties emotional stability to the love of a gorgeous woman is Spellbound (1945). It stars Gregory Peck and Ingrid Bergman and was one of the first American films to use psychoanalysis, amnesia, and phobia as plot devices for the film’s murder mystery. It also features an interesting dream sequence featuring set design by Salvador Dali. This film falls into pace with Hollywood aesthetics of the 1940s: a mystery surrounds the identity of a likeable, handsome protagonist, who is saved by a virtuous, beautiful woman. Much of the music for the film, composed by Miklós Rózsa, follows the conventions of the time as well (it uses a lyrical “woman theme” and “mickey-mousing”), with one notable exception: this is the

44 Sullivan, Hitchcock’s Music, 172-173.
first film to use the Theremin as an instrument. It is used to great effect in the Dali-inspired dream sequence and during many scenes involving the pseudo-psychoanalytic mystery. Rózsa wanted to use the instrument for the score, and although Hitchcock had initially never heard of it, he approved. His instincts proved to be correct—the score became a sensation. Rózsa won the Oscar for Best Music that year, and while Hitchcock later denounced the score in later interviews, the score has become acknowledged as a monumental achievement in film music.

Another landmark achievement in sound may be found in Hitchcock’s The Birds. This film uses no film score in the traditional sense; Herrmann is credited not as a composer, but as a sound consultant for a new instrument. The trautonium was invented by Friedrich Trautwein, a German acoustician, and played for the film by Oskar Sala and Remi Gassmann (who were supervised by Herrmann). The sound effects make the entire film very surreal and, like Rear Window, the only time music is heard is when it is a part of the diegesis (for example, when Melanie sits down to play the piano, and when children sing a song at school). The lack of emotional support the score would usually provide is mirrored in the lack of emotional growth by the characters of the film. At the beginning of the film, Mitch (played by Rod Taylor) and Melanie (played by Tippi Hedren) are superficial characters whose actions do not make a lot of sense. Melanie, for example, buys lovebirds to give to Mitch’s sister (whom she has never met).

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48 Wierzbicki, “Electronic Sound/Electronic Music,” 12. The trautonium is a machine used in The Birds to electronically create bird sounds. Due to the ability to manipulate specific sounds created by the device (such as pitch, duration, and rhythm), the bird noises could be thought of as being “composed.”
and then drives to Bodega Bay to deliver them personally. This action is very irrational.

Hitchcock filmed the movie so that the protagonist’s actions supported the air of mystery in the film—he wanted the film to be unpredictable, as he stated in an interview with Truffaut:

> They [the audience] come to the theater and they sit down and say, ‘All right. Now show me!’ And they want to be one jump ahead of the action: ‘I know what’s going to happen.’ So I have to take up the challenge: ‘Oh, you know what’s going to happen. Well, we’ll just see about that!’ With *The Birds* I made sure that the public would not be able to anticipate from one scene to another.

This unpredictability continues when the birds begin to attack. The birds’ assault on the outside of the house, for example, is achieved purely by sounds effects. Melanie does not seem to be able to psychologically handle the bird attacks; when she is attacked by the birds at the end of the film, she suffers a psychological breakdown as well as physical injury.

The innovative nature of the sound effects in *The Birds* coincides with the theories espoused by Straus and Siebers in modern music and visual art respectively. In *Disability Aesthetics*, Siebers states his conception of disability:

> the disabled body and mind . . . [play] significant roles in the evolution of modern aesthetics, theorizing disability as a unique resource discovered by modern art and then embraced by it as one of its defining concepts. Disability aesthetics refuses to recognize the representation of the healthy body—and its definition of harmony, integrity, and beauty—as the sole determination of the aesthetic.

Siebers creates an entire aesthetic by thinking of modern art in the context of disability, and Straus follows the same line of thought for modern music. He compares the “wholeness” of a musical body, in terms of its melody, form, and harmonic progressions with modern music, which often is radically discontinuous:

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50 Siebers, *Disability Aesthetics*, 2-3.
Distinctive musical fragments are presented without introduction and abandoned without a cadence. There are no transitions to connect the isolated textural blocks, rather, they are simply juxtaposed, in the manner of a collage. Each block has a distinctive musical character, one that presents maximal contrast with the blocks that come before and after it. The music appears splintered, as though some more tonally normal passage, with its characteristic sense of connectedness and cohesion, had been shattered, or perhaps carved into pieces.\textsuperscript{51}

If Straus can take Siebers’s theory and apply it to modern music, can the same theory be applied to the sound design of \textit{The Birds}? The film’s modernism is associated with the birds. The unnatural sounds of the trautonium mixed with the birds’ irrational behavior highlight the differences between the rationality of day-to-day life and the events that transpire in the film. A corollary can be made between the juxtaposed sound blocks of modern music and the juxtaposed sound blocks of the bird attacks.

After the innovations of \textit{Vertigo}, \textit{Psycho}, and \textit{The Birds}, Herrmann’s score for \textit{Marnie} is fairly conservative and compact. The film represents disability through the many afflictions Marnie suffers. The color red is a trigger for a repressed memory, she compulsively steals from others, and she is emotionally frigid due to trauma in her past. The narrative deals with the efforts of her husband (Sean Connery) to “rehabilitate” her. The end of the film shows the beginning of that process.

When Hitchcock first approached Herrmann about the score, he used the screenwriter, Jay Presson Allen, to help describe the impact of the initial music: “At this time the MUSIC should rise to a CRESCENDO of the MARNIE THEME—very romantic, full of nostalgia, warmth,

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\end{flushright}
expressive of the real MARNIE whom we have never seen until this moment. It should even surpass the quality of the ‘Spellbound Theme.’”⁵² This comparison to Spellbound’s music is important, for it was one of the key reference points for Herrmann during the composition process. The “Prelude” for Marnie even imitates the “Prelude” for Spellbound: as Sullivan describes, it consists of “a jagged paranoia theme followed immediately by a resplendent love melody, a Spellbound design that repeats throughout the film in scenes juxtaposing attraction with repulsion.”⁵³ These two main themes, “Marnie” and “Trauma,” provide much of the re-use for the entire film (see Ex. 2.2).⁵⁴ The music is so compact that the obsessive of the same material seems to mirror Marnie’s obsessive behavior. Herrmann’s thematic material uses these two themes to form emotional leitmotifs: variations of the “Marnie” theme, for example, are used both as the love theme between Mark (played by Sean Connery) and Marnie (Tippi Hedren) and also as a representation of Lil’s jealousy toward Mark and Marnie’s relationship.

Hitchcock was not fond of Herrmann’s score. He accused Herrmann of delivering music that was too conservative (although this was what the script called for) and for plagiarizing himself. This was the beginning of the end for their professional relationship. Hitchcock publically fired Herrmann on the set of Torn Curtain, abandoning Herrmann’s partially completed score in favor of a score by John Addison.

⁵³ Sullivan, Hitchcock’s Music, 275.
Example 2.2. Bernard Herrmann, “Prelude” from *Marnie*, mm. 3-17

*Rear Window, Spellbound, The Birds,* and *Marnie* represent disability in different ways, yet they keep it in the context of other themes, such as love (familial and romantic), voyeurism and death. Hitchcock uses the soundtrack (sound effects and music) to represent these themes.
These films represent Hitchcock’s diversity and ability to portray difficult themes. The films that represent disability in greater detail will be explored later in this dissertation.
Chapter Three
Music, Muteness, and Hysteria in The Man Who Knew Too Much

Jo
Ben . . . We’re about to have our monthly fight.
Ben
I hope we don’t
Jo
Then stop playing Rasputin.

In one hand he has two capsules, in the other a glass of water. He holds them out to her.

Ben
Something to relax you . . . Jo, they’re for you. I’m the doctor. . . .
I make my living knowing when and how to administer medicine.
You’ll feel a lot better tomorrow if you take these today.
But you don’t think so. Okay, I’ll make a deal with you.
There’s something about Louis Bernard, the police station
and this whole spy business I haven’t told you yet.

He holds out the capsules
Ben
This is the price of curiosity.  

The Man Who Knew Too Much was released in 1956 to great acclaim. It is a remake of
Hitchcock’s 1934 film of the same name, and he changed many of the elements from the first
movie. The plot of the revised version prominently features two important musical moments:
Doris Day singing “Whatever Will Be, Will Be,” composed by Jay Livingston and Ray Evans, and
an orchestra performing Arthur Benjamin’s Storm Clouds Cantata. The song was originally entitled “Que Sera, Sera,” but was changed after it was discovered another song with the same title existed. Ironically, the song became famous as “Que Sera, Sera,” and that is how the song will be referred to in this paper.

56 The song was originally entitled “Que Sera, Sera,” but was changed after it was discovered another song with the same title existed. Ironically, the song became famous as “Que Sera, Sera,” and that is how the song will be referred to in this paper.
McKenna, a doctor and father vacationing in Morocco with his wife, Jo (played by Doris Day), and son, Hank. The two pieces of music provide important insights into Jo’s status in the relationships with her husband and her son and act as agents in the construction of Jo’s identity and gender.57

Before analyzing these two pieces, though, the overall ideas developed by Hitchcock for *The Man Who Knew Too Much* need to be explored. The first, identified by critic Donald Spoto, is the significance of interruption and accident:

The moment [of Louis Bernard meeting the McKennas] is significant, for an interruption has occurred in a hitherto unexciting journey, and the entire film that follows is structured on a series of such interruptions. That evening, they are interrupted in their hotel room by a man . . . who has apparently come to the wrong door. Then the McKennas are interrupted at the restaurant by the Draytons. . . . In London, Ben and Jo are interrupted by friends who come to their hotel suite. . . . And the film’s two great moments of suspense—Jo’s reaction to the news of the kidnapping and her response to the possibility of assassination at Albert Hall—are interrupted, the first by a sedative that stifles her scream and the second by her scream. . . . These interruptions are thematically significant in the film and exteriorize . . . the capricious, hostile emergence of *accident* . . . (Hitchcock’s narrative world is interlaced with accident, which can be identified as the single crucial element in virtually every one of his films.)58

These interruptions propel the plot forward. Jo wishes her life were more exciting and has to go to great lengths to recover her kidnapped son. *The Man Who Knew Too Much* shows a couple outside of their normal daily circumstances. This disruption of the McKenna’s routine threatens to destroy them, and culminates in Jo’s hysterical scream during the assassination scene.59 This

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57 There is no evidence to suggest that Hitchcock set out to make a movie lecturing about feminine identity in a 1950s marriage. This interpretation has been ascribed to Hitchcock by analysts and critics after the fact, he was focusing on a dramatic situation that just happened to feature a woman coming to terms with her identity. In fact, anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that he was very controlling of his female actresses; indeed, he spends much of his career in search of a woman he can mold and shape into some kind of ideal.
58 Donald Spoto, *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock: Fifty Years of His Motion Pictures* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 244-245.
film is but one of many examples from Hitchcock’s repertoire that depicts an average man (or woman) caught in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Another topic the film addresses is height—specifically, the height of James Stewart. Other characters seem dominated or intimidated by Ben, such as the taxidermist Chappell and Jo. Stewart’s height is also played for comic effect (in the scuffle at the taxidermist and in the restaurant) and as a hindrance (such as when he is trying to escape Ambrose Chappell by climbing up the bell tower and getting momentarily stuck). It becomes a crucial plot point when Bernard is able to spot him out of a crowd to give him the necessary information about the assassination attempt.

Height also symbolizes social status. According to disability studies scholar Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “height relations express a literal hierarchy. The dais and the pulpit ceremoniously raise kings and clergy above lesser beings; the arrangement of gender pairings almost always yield a man made tall by a shorter woman.”

Ben is a well-respected pillar of his community. His social status as a medical doctor is reinforced by others; the respect he expects has been earned. Jo and Ben even joke that the vacation they are on is paid for by the medical procedures of his patients. The expectation of respect translates into his marriage as well: once Ben and Jo marry, they move to Indianapolis where she can focus on being a doctor’s wife (not her Broadway career). In the events of the film, he drugs her, argues with her, and does not listen to her intuitions. Ben does not behave this way out of spite or intentional disrespect, but because he honestly thinks his opinion is better.

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The weakness of manners is another motif throughout many Hitchcock films. Bernard is able to meet the McKennas because of Hank’s breach of manners when he pulls the veil off the woman’s face. Jo sheepishly defends her son by saying, “It was only an accident,” but Hank’s act emphasizes the McKennas’ status as an “Other” (they do not speak the language nor are they familiar with local customs). Hitchcock uses manners to investigate the differences between appearance and intention, between the way in which someone behaves and the feelings embedded within. Manners are also an important theme in Hitchcock films because they help convey the idea that things are not what they first appear to be. For example, Mrs. Drayton goes through a number of appearances: she is initially a friendly woman, then a sinister accomplice in kidnapping and attempted murder, then a sympathetic character when she releases Hank, and then the only character left alone at the end of the film (she is standing at the top of the stairs by herself).\(^{61}\) Ben, as a doctor, is supposed to be sympathetic to the suffering of others, but his conversation with Jo about the funding of their vacation shows that he is benefitting from his patients’ sufferings and is even willing to joke about them.

Aside from determining the behavior of characters, manners also tie in with locations. Royal Albert Concert Hall, for example, with its “elegant setting, the situation of concert and harmony, becomes the ironic locus for the emergence of perfidy, chaos, and murder.”\(^{62}\) There is a quasi-religious aura surrounding a live musical performance in a concert hall: audience members, dressed in appropriate attire, are to be quiet once the performance begins and stay

\(^{61}\) Spoto argues that Mrs. Drayton is the most richly drawn character in the film due to the layers of unravelling of her character in *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock*, 247-249.
in their seats. They are to applaud only at certain times.\textsuperscript{63} As Hitchcock scholar Elisabeth Weis states, “[o]ne of the hallmarks of Hitchcock . . . is his use of familiar music to define a character or social milieu. . . . Classical compositions are usually treated as a product of cultural refinement—often overrefinement—whereas popular music is treated as a more natural expression of emotion.”\textsuperscript{64} By standing the entire time (even if it is in one of the alcoves), Jo physically separates herself from the rest of the culturally refined crowd; her behavior interrupts the performance, and she audibly separates herself from the quiet crowd.\textsuperscript{65} Jo is an outsider during the assassination sequence: an “Other” who acts differently than expected (she is not even at the concert to appreciate the cantata, but to stop the assassin and find her son).

Jo’s behavior at the embassy marks her outsider status as well. She is asked to perform for the entertainment of the crowd, but what she sings is not appropriate to the formal setting. Musicologist F. Murray Pomerance points out that Jo’s performance at the embassy is also a breach of manners. The McKennas know that Hank is somewhere in the building, and when Jo McKenna performs, it is “a desperate yodel for her lost son,” not the refined cabaret Jo Conway (her maiden name) is famous for:

Ben and Jo McKenna are on the embassy premises on false pretenses, merely pretending to be guests of the prime minister whose life Jo has saved; merely pretending to be gracious in bowing to a request for Jo’s act. Should it become openly known that they are hunting for a captive secreted in an upper room, they will be trespassing. And so, just as in any other entertainment, the song must press forward to its end. . . . Or que sera sera, what will be, will be. That key phrase is


\textsuperscript{64} Elisabeth Weis, \textit{The Silent Scream: Alfred Hitchcock’s Sound Track} (London: Associated University Presses, 1982), 90.

\textsuperscript{65} Once Jo has interrupted the performance, the music stops and then others start exclaiming and vocalizing. Jo, being the first to do so, startles everyone, most notably the assassin and us (the film’s audience), with her scream.
trenchant. The first “will be” is a simple future tense; that which we project as occurring in time beyond the present. But the second “will be” is a testament of intention and definition of what can be predicted with absolute confidence. . . . Whatever it is that must happen will in fact happen.66

“Whatever will be, will be” is one of the fundamental messages of the film. The first performance of “Que Sera, Sera” is as a vehicle for Jo (a famous singer who gave up performing to be a wife and mother in Indianapolis) with an audience of one. Hank participates in a breach of manners by singing and whistling along with his mother. He is not as accomplished a performer as she, turning the song into an intimate interaction between mother and child. The song’s intimacy in this scene is uncomfortable to watch—after the kidnapping, however, memory of this moment is tainted by the tragedy of separation. This serves as a good example of how effective Hitchcock was at audience manipulation.

The name of the movie itself is a misnomer: The Man Who Knew Too Much suggests that Ben, the titular character, is the one who will do everything necessary to save the day. Even though Bernard tells Ben the crucial information about the assassination, he does not appropriately act on it. It is Jo, not Ben, who saves her son and the Prime Minister. Jo’s actions are based on her instincts, which prove right in almost every instance: for thinking that her family is being spied on by the Draytons, for being suspicious of Bernard, for wanting to go with Ben to meet Ambrose Chappell, for discovering that Ambrose Chappell is a place and not a person, and for screaming during the cantata to save the Prime Minister. Jo saves everyone: the Prime Minister, her son, and her husband (as family trust had been slowly eroding).

As the heroine of the story, Jo is an effective and intuitive investigator. Ben, on the other hand, is not. He incorrectly assumes Ambrose Chappell is a person, clumsily fights with the workers at the taxidermist shop, gets knocked out at Ambrose Chappell, and futilely runs around outside of Royal Albert Hall, only able to break down the assassin’s door after the shot had been fired. Notably, he is also not an active participant in the music-making process for the two songs (although he does sing a hymn with Jo during the church scene). Hitchcock uses music to suggest that those who make music in the film are the active agents in the story.

The performances of “Que Sera, Sera” relate to another motif Hitchcock uses throughout this film: the role of mothers and motherhood. It would not be an understatement to say that in Hitchcock’s films, mothers (from the psychosis-causing Mrs. Bates in Psycho to the overbearing Lydia Brenner in The Birds) are not presented very favorably. The lone exception is Jo McKenna. Hitchcock critic Robin Wood describes the main difference between Jo and Hitchcock’s other mothers:

the rest are just mothers, in a culture that has (disastrously) effected a division of labor which makes nurturing almost exclusively the mother’s responsibility: the whole meaning of their lives has been bound up in their children, and the suggestion of the films is that motherhood can turn sour and twisted when it becomes an exclusive vocation. Jo, along with her male name ... possesses traits that our culture commonly defines as “masculine.” . . . She has also had—and wishes she still had—a career, and with it a degree of personal autonomy: she is a good mother because, emotionally at least, she is not just a mother.

This theme of motherhood also plays out the gender roles and societal expectations that were prevalent when the movie was released in 1956. Gender roles were well-defined by the 1950s: husbands made the money, and wives raised the children and ran the household. It was acceptable for single women to work, much less so if they were married.

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68 Gender roles were well-defined by the 1950s: husbands made the money, and wives raised the children and ran the household. It was acceptable for single women to work, much less so if they were married.
audience an archetypal married couple to identify with but complicates the identification by developing tension between them. Once Jo assumes the role of primary protagonist, with Mrs. Drayton acting as her foil, the themes become clear: both female characters have husbands who attempt to dominate them. By presenting the women as sympathetic characters, Hitchcock exposes the men who dominate their wives. Hitchcock uses the strength of character in both women to not only tell an exciting story (his primary goal), but also to expose flaws inherent in 1950’s American patriarchy (not necessarily one of Hitchcock’s goals, but an important consequence nonetheless due to the nature of the narrative).

Ben’s domination of Jo plays a major role in Jo’s temporary disabilities during the Royal Albert Hall sequence. Her disabilities manifest themselves in two forms during the Storm Clouds Cantata: the music causes her to temporarily assume a state of muteness and the music creates a building sense of hysteria that results in her scream. These disabilities are not only due to the overwhelming choice Jo has to make between saving the Prime Minister or her son, but they also symbolically stem from the way Ben treats her. Jo’s music (“Que Sera, Sera”) is far removed from the film audience’s mind at this point—she sang her song in the beginning of the film, and the music for the assassination sequence is much more exciting and dramatic. When she screams, she is rescuing the prime minister, and also re-asserting her identity—an identity defined by her voice.

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69 Wood, Hitchcock’s Films Revisited, 364.
70 The other foundation being the plot (the kidnapping/assassination choice).
71 The scream in this case is utterly redemptive. It not only saves the Prime Minister, but also cures Jo of her disabilities.
Jo’s music and career, her decisions, and her intuition (while eventually redemptive in nature) are initially treated with scorn or dismissed by Ben. If Ben represents the patriarchal norm, Jo represents the patriarchal “other,” who, according to feminist theorist Susan Wendell, “symbolizes the failure of control and the threat of pain, limitation, dependency, and death … Disability is not a biological given; like gender, it is socially constructed from biological reality.”

What makes The Man Who Knew Too Much so fascinating is its portrayal of Jo as disabled but also as a heroine; more typically, disabled or marginalized characters have no agency, and exist on the periphery or function as a foil within the film’s plot. Hitchcock is able to manipulate the multiple themes that develop over the course of this film by incorporating representations of disability as a dramatic part of the narrative.

**THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH’S MUSIC**

The Man Who Knew Too Much has become famous for its two examples of diegetic music: “Que Sera, Sera” and the Storm Clouds Cantata. Herrmann composed neither. Livingston and Evans were hired to write a popular song for Doris Day after she was hired to play Jo McKenna. Hitchcock was impressed by Doris Day’s vocal ability, and he promised her a role in a film. He decided to make full use of her talents; not having her sing would have been a wasted opportunity. Herrmann fully endorsed the use of a popular song in the film, saying

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73 Herrmann’s non-diegetic score, while emblematic of his own musical style, does not lend itself well to a disability studies interpretation. Mostly the score amplifies the setting (generalized “exotic” music for the streets of Marakesh) or the mood (light-hearted during the fight at the taxidermist), so references to Herrmann’s soundtrack in this chapter will be minimal. There are some moments in the score which Herrmann references in later movies: when Jo walks up to the side of Ambrose Chappell, for example, some high woodwinds are planing (to use a term usually associated with Debussy). Herrmann uses that same technique later in Vertigo to help add to Madeleine’s mystery, to great effect.

74 Sullivan, Hitchcock’s Music, 193.
that the structure of the finale necessitated it. Day’s character sings “Que Sera, Sera” as a way of connecting to her son. The song also thematically symbolizes Jo herself—as a person, woman, and wife, and her fame as a Broadway singer—and juxtaposes the vernacular song’s “middlebrow” style with the “highbrow” style of the *Storm Clouds Cantata*, a formal piece of concert music.

“Que Sera, Sera” is a song from Jo’s Broadway repertoire, performed twice out of context: in both instances, Jo is singing in her role as mother, rather than as a professional entertainer (as Jo Conway). Both performances are intimate, and ultimately intended for an audience of one. The text takes on a whole new meaning when applied in context to the film’s plot:

1. When I was just a little girl (boy)
   I asked my mother
   What will I be?
   Will I be pretty (handsome)?
   Will I be rich?
   Here’s what she said to me

   *refrain*: Que sera, sera
   Whatever will be, will be
   The future’s not ours to see
   Que sera, sera
   What will be, will be

2. When I was just a child in school
   I asked my teacher
   What should I try?
   Should I paint pictures?
   Should I sing songs?
   This (Here) was her wise reply

   *refrain*  

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*Ibid.* Herrmann’s instincts proved to be correct for this film. The song won an Academy Award, and was a hit for Doris Day. She used it for the rest of her career in concerts; it was even the theme song for *The Doris Day Show* on CBS from 1968—1973.
3. When I grew up and fell in love
   I asked my sweetheart
   What lies ahead?
   Will we have rainbows
   Day after day?
   Here’s what my sweetheart said
   refrain

6. Now I have Children of my own
   They ask their mother
   What will I be?
   Will I be handsome?
   Will I be rich?
   I tell them tenderly
   refrain

It is important to realize that this song was written intentionally for this film, so the manner in which Hitchcock presents it reflects the texts in revealing ways. At the first presentation of “Que Sera, Sera,” the McKennas are in their hotel, each in front of a mirror getting ready for the evening. Louis Bernard is on the balcony, observing the street below. Jo at first hums the tune, then starts to sing at the refrain. At this point, Hank, off-screen, starts singing, “When I was just a boy, I asked my mother, ‘what will I be?’” at which point Ben interrupts and says, “He’s going to make a fine doctor,” glancing over at Jo fondly; Jo smiles back. Hank continues singing as if there were no interruption: “Will I be handsome, will I be rich,” and during the last line of the first verse, “here’s what she said to me,” Jo holds out her hand to him and says, “Come along, darling.” Hank finally enters the bedroom, following Jo as she starts to unmake the bed. Jo takes over singing the refrain. She plays with Hank, and he sings the second verse. After the line

76 Jay Livingston and Ray Evans. “Que Sera, Sera,” http://www.lyricsdepot.com (accessed on June 9, 2015). The words in parenthesis are the ones changed for when Hank sings, the numbers in front of the verses are the order Jo sings in the embassy scene.
“what should I try?” she says “catch,” and tosses slippers to him. Hank’s singing is interspersed with laughter during the last line. Jo takes over singing the refrain, and Hank whistles along (establishing an important plot point for later). Jo wordlessly intones the refrain after she asks her son, “May I have this dance?”

There are several things to note about this sequence. First, what the audience sees is part of the diegesis, not accompanied by an invisible orchestra and not swallowed up in the action of the story. The audience also sees Jo in her roles as mother and wife. While these roles can be disabling (in a 1950s patriarchy, especially), she is good at them. There does not appear to be any tension between her and Ben (that will come later), and they are genuinely in love with each other. In the context of the song, when Jo sings, she takes on different roles in comparison to Hank. First he asks his mother, “what will I be?” Significantly, Ben interjects to answer this question, not Jo: “He’s going to be a fine doctor.” This interruption is a clue to Ben’s thoughts on Jo’s social status as a woman. He wants his son to follow in his own footsteps, not those of his wife.

Next, as Hank asks his teacher, “what shall I try,” Jo tosses slippers at him in response. Not only is she working on his hand-eye-coordination, she is teaching Hank music. She is a professional singer, and she knows how to impart vocal lessons to her son by making it a game. They also dance together, and he acts chivalrously toward her. She is imparting lessons on manners here as well: not only how to ask a lady to dance, but also how to dance. Finally, they are interrupted by a knock on the door, but it is interesting to look to the next verse to determine how the song would have continued: “When I grew up and fell in love . . .” Hank is
not at that age yet, and it would be awkward to sing this portion of the song with his mother; therefore, that part of the song is not sung.

In this one scene, Hitchcock relates all of the themes discussed earlier: manners, patriarchy (symbolized by height),

motherhood, and interruption. Hitchcock also manages to inform his audience about Jo’s character and temperament through this song. The scene is both enlightening and touching. There is also a subtle element of duality, as pointed out by Pomerance: Hank is singing a song from the point of view of a reminiscing adult, and its “rhetoric is thus self-parody, the child singer pretending to be grown up all ready, and not what he is.”

Ben and Jo both see themselves in their son. It is also important to establish Hank as a likable character so that when he is kidnapped, the audience has a vested interest in his recovery.

At the reprise of this song in the embassy, the film’s high moment of tension during the Royal Albert Hall sequence still lingers. Ben and Jo walk into the embassy as “Dr. and Mrs. McKenna,” right after Ben tells her, “Your job is to hold their attention.” When they are introduced to the Prime Minister, he is delighted she is there. When he learns she is the “famous Jo Conway,” he asks, “perhaps we could, uh . . .”—at which point Ben interrupts, “I’m sure my wife would be delighted to sing for you, would you, dear?” Ben is not only answering for his wife, he is reasserting his dominance over her by pre-empting the question and using the possessive form of identity (“my wife,” rather than “Jo” or “she”). The audience knows from the

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77 Ben’s height is subtly alluded to here, as he needs to bend over to see his reflection in the mirror as he is putting on his tie.
79 It is also interesting to note that the embassy butler is obviously excited to meet the McKennas, and that he shakes Jo’s hand first as he says “so nice to meet you.”
earlier conversation that her job is to distract the crowd by singing, so this exchange further shows how Ben struggles with Jo’s fame.

The other attendees at the embassy are political sycophants and hangers-on, creating a much different environment from that of the performance of “Que Sera, Sera” in the bedroom of the hotel. In this version, Jo performs at the piano in front of a seated audience. This environment is what one might expect for a performance of “serious” music like the Storm Clouds Cantata. The reaction shots of the audience during the first refrain confirm this subversion of expectation—some are confused by the choice in music, others react with distaste or frozen smiles. During the second verse and refrain, the camera travels out the room; a series of stills ascend the stairs to the upper floors of the embassy as the singing becomes fainter and more indistinct. The travelling stops in the room where Mrs. Drayton is pacing and Hank sits on the couch. In the third verse, as Jo (as the singer) is addressing her sweetheart, the camera cuts to Ben, who is slowly trying to make his way out of the room. The song’s lyrics and the film’s visuals are perfectly coordinated during this sequence.

There is a quick cut to a close up on Hank’s face—he has been crying—and he runs to the door trying the handle and yelling, “that’s my mother’s voice! That’s my mother singing!” Mrs. Drayton’s face expresses her indecision concerning her husband’s choice to hold Hank hostage, as do her questions to Hank: “What? Are you sure Hank? Are you absolutely sure? What is she doing here?” When the refrain begins, Mrs. Drayton asks the question, “Hank, can you whistle that song?” Her struggle is finally resolved, and she has decided to let Hank be rescued. This mirrors the same weighty choice Jo had to make during the cantata. Instead of interrupting the cantata to save the Prime Minister, though, here Mrs. Drayton allows Hank to
interrupt a performance and broadcast his location by whistling. The function of the two sounds is different, however, due to the dramatic needs of each moment—the embassy scene is presented more realistically with its use of spoken dialogue, sound diminishing over distance, and sound effects, whereas the Royal Albert Hall scene features unrealistic acoustics and no audible dialogue or sound effects.

Once Hank starts whistling, Jo hears him only after the first line of the refrain. She actually stops singing, but picks up again on the words, “...ever will be, will be.” She sings more determinedly; the emotion of the moment is clear on her face. Ben looks with incredulity at Jo. Their plan has changed—Jo’s music is no longer only a distraction; she is now the lifeline to their son. Hank stops whistling for the words, “Now I have children of my own,” and the conclusion of the song. As in the bedroom scene, the text does not apply to Hank, so he does not participate in the performance of the song.

When Ben rushes up the stairs, he is unsure which room Hank is in. Mrs. Drayton hears a noise in the hall, and, thinking it is her husband, screams, “No!” Ben knocks the door down and is reunited with his son. Mr. Drayton interrupts the reunion, holding them hostage at gunpoint. Jo, meanwhile, has started another song, “We’ll Love Again,” but the action stays with Ben, Hank, and the Draytons. As the trio make their way down the stairs, Ben is able to push Hank out the way and push Drayton down the stairs. As Drayton is falling, the gun goes off, interrupting Jo’s song (a third interruption of music!). She is reunited with Hank and they embrace.

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80 Spoto has identified interruption as a key theme in this movie. I interpret the interruption of the music, however, as a way of Hitchcock continuing the pacing of the film. If a song reaches its final cadence, it would
This embassy scene is important not only because it is the climax of the film, but also because of the textual implications of “Que Sera, Sera.” The editing of the film matches the pacing of the music, as in the assassination scene. Also, the text of “Que Sera, Sera” compares with the other song Jo sings at the embassy, “We’ll Love Again.” Here, Jo’s voice, while present, is difficult to understand. The resolution of Ben’s conflict with the Drayton’s is the important part of this scene, so the music is relegated to a background role. The lyrics reflect the renewal of Ben and Jo’s relationship:

We'll love again
But I can't tell you now
Where or when
We'll love again
And your kisses will haunt me till then
Now it's goodbye
And we're facing such lonely tomorrows
So many sunsets, till there's a sunset
When all at once he'll be there
Then we'll kiss again
And again, and again
Darling, we'll love again
Somewhere

Now it's goodbye
And we're facing such lonely tomorrows
So many sunsets, till there's a sunset
When all at once he'll be there

Then we'll kiss again
And again, and again
Darling, we'll love again
Somewhere

finalize the scene dramatically. By interrupting a performance, Hitchcock is letting people know there is more story to be told.

There is a narrative symmetry to both songs. “Que Sera Sera” is a reflective, nostalgic song that looks to the future and the lack of control an individual has on it. “We’ll Love Again,” on the other hand, is a song about an unhappy present that looks forward to a happier future. The differing points of view on time and tense within each song complement one another when compared. “Whatever will be” is answered by “Then we’ll kiss again.”

Hitchcock presents the music at the embassy in an acoustically realistic manner. When Jo starts to perform, she sings too loud. It jars the listeners at the embassy, but Jo has an ulterior motive: she needs to sing this loud in order for Hank to hear her. As the camera travels up the floors, the sound of his mother’s voice becomes fainter. This level of realism adds to the suspense of the scene: Can Jo sing loud enough to be heard by her son? Will he be able to respond?

By contrast, the Storm Clouds Cantata exhibits an acoustic artificiality that adds to the suspense for the scene it accompanies. The music, heard at the same level of volume no matter where the camera is, acts as the musical accompaniment to the assassination sequence; it is a diegetic underscore. The same music appears in the 1934 version of the film; Herrmann realized how perfectly the cantata fit the dramatic structure and decided to use it for the remake. The music in this version was arranged by Hermann to suit Hitchcock’s needs. Herrmann added parts for the brass, harp, and organ, lengthened the work by one minute and twenty seconds, and changed the text to further connect the images with the soundtrack.82 In

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the original 1934 film, the text of the cantata provides a descriptive analogy to the on-screen action:

There came a whispered terror on the breeze,
And the dark forest shook
And on the trembling trees came the nameless fear,
And panic overtook each flying creature of the wild.
And when they all had fled
All save the child
Around whose head, screaming
The night-birds wheeled and shot away.
Finding release from that which drove them onward like their prey,
Finding release the storm clouds broke and drowned the dying moon.
Finding release the storm clouds broke,
Finding release the storm clouds broke,
Finding release the storm clouds broke,
Finding release!83

For the second version of the film, Herrmann changed the words “All save the child” to “Yet stood the trees” in order to free the music from its immediate filmic connections. As it is presented in the newer film, people attending the concert are unaware of kidnapping or assassination plots. While the cantata plays, no other sound is heard, and the music is not realistic: when the camera cuts from inside the concert hall to Ben running down the hallway outside the auditorium, for example, the sound does not diminish to reflect the change in distance. Regardless of what is visually being shown, the musical unity of the Storm Clouds Cantata is preserved, making the sound world of this scene aesthetically separate from the rest of the film and from the visual montage it accompanies.

The form of the cantata is ABA. The opening material is dramatic, operatic, and percussive. It is accompanied by visuals that establish the location of the primary characters in relation to the hall and each other: Jo, the assassin, the assassin’s assistant, the prime minister, Herrmann as the orchestral conductor, and the cymbalist. The B material is slower and more lyrical. It introduces the soprano soloist, and captures Jo’s moment of muteness as she is unsure what to do. A dramatic change in tempo and mood indicates the arrival of the final A material, and Ben’s arrival at the concert hall.

The film contrasts the “serious music” of the cantata with the popular style of “Que Sera, Sera.” This contrast between the popular song and the classical orchestra has been established since the opening credits, when the percussive main theme begins the movie. Whereas Jo’s song symbolically relates to her character’s agency, Benjamin’s cantata is symbolically meaningful on multiple levels. It is associated with the assassination attempt, the assassin, and the Draytons—in short, the villains and the assassination plot. Herrmann, the on-screen conductor, and the cymbalist of the Storm Clouds Cantata can be implicated as well, since the assassination is timed to their performances. The cantata also symbolically represents the patriarchal society in which this type of music is taken seriously. In such a culture, a woman like Jo is not as comparatively appreciated as an artist or a person. This patriarchal outlook is embodied in Ben’s attitude. Throughout the film, Ben treats Jo like a hysterical child or dismisses her intuition completely. If the popular song represents Jo’s voice in the film, the Storm Clouds Cantata represents Ben’s voice and the societal expectations placed upon Jo.

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84 Notice in the opening credits the on-screen orchestra is all male.
During the entire performance of the *Storm Clouds Cantata*, Jo’s voice has been lost; she is emotionally hysterical, physically frozen, and mute, paralyzed by the weight of the decision she must make, but also symbolically frozen by the serious music and the societal expectations placed upon her. The cantata is played in a concert environment and while Jo looks the part of a polite member of the audience (her attire—a suit and a black hat—is not as nice as the other ladies’ formalwear, but not out of place), her actions are contrary to what is expected: she stands instead of sits, she is not a paying member of the audience, and she is muted by overwhelming emotion—not of the music like everyone else, but by her own internal struggle. The only way to break this oppressive impasse is to scream.

Jo must overcome her domineering emotions, but in order to do so she must overpower the orchestra. Her scream is shattering, not only to the on-screen audience—which erupts into chaos—but also to the soundtrack, which has been orchestral music for more than ten minutes. The sequence begins as Jo arrives at the hall, where the assassin sees her and reminds her of the stakes: “You have a very nice little boy, Madame. His safety will depend upon you tonight.” While his attitude and dialogue are menacing, the assassin looks like a normal concert-goer; he is wearing a tuxedo. The assassin’s assistant attracts attention due to the bright yellow top she has on. During this exchange we hear the orchestra warming up, and people talking. A porter asks for a ticket, but when Jo does not give him one, he decides not push the issue.

The concert begins, and Hitchcock provides the audience with a point-of-view shot of Jo looking at the prime minister’s box, then a close-up response upon locating him. Since the music has now started, the assassination attempt seems inevitable, which nicely parallels the lyrics of “Que Sera, Sera”—whatever will be, will be—unless Jo can act to prevent it. As the
music’s dramatic opening subsides, the audience hears the lyrical B section of the cantata, and the music here acts as a reminiscence of a more peaceful, domestic life. The music is very pastoral and evocative, but Hitchcock’s imagery acts in counterpoint to the music. As the strings and woodwinds play, the camera shows the cymbalist, sitting calmly in a chair and the cymbals on the chair next to him. The tension builds in the audience, who has information Jo does not (the exact moment the assassination will happen). Jo’s face reflects this tension: her eyes are closed, her mouth is open, and she is trying to decide what to do. The soprano slowly rises from her seat and begins to sing.

The choir sings “and when they all had fled” as the assassin looks through his binoculars. The camera shifts to a close-up on Jo, who starts crying. She backs up against the wall as the choir sings “There stood the trees.” This moment is the emotional culmination of the assassination attempt and the kidnapping plot: Jo realizes she cannot act alone. As if to emphasize this idea, Hitchcock next cuts to a close-up of the prime minister, leaning in anticipation of the increasingly energetic music. He is prime minister of the country he represents, but also an icon of the civilized world in general and a paragon of the marital dispute between Jo and Ben.

Right after the timpani roll, on the heroic trombone cue that begins the final A section, Ben enters the hall. His entrance is not only timed to the music, but also acts as the film audience’s first glimpse of hope. In this scene, more than any other in the film, Ben and Jo work

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86 “There stood the trees” is the replacement text for “All save the child” from the original film.
87 Also emphasizing the idea of culmination is the amount of time Jo spends overwhelmed. Several other shots are shown: the assassins moving into the shadows, the orchestra, the tympani, the cymbalist, and his music (one note, at the bottom of the page, is marked).
together toward a common goal without any of the difficulties that have plagued them up to this point. Now that Ben has arrived, he can help Jo emotionally by bringing her out of her metaphorically disabling state, and physically by covering more ground in their search for the assassin. Their reunion proves that together they are more effective than they are when separated.

**Now that Ben and Jo are together,** Hitchcock ramps up the tension, the orchestra’s music becomes more dramatic, and the images in the montage are occurring at a quicker pace. Ben rushes down the hall opening doors to the suites one by one. The cymbalist has his cymbals in hand. There is a fantastic shot of “Herrmann” conducting from the point of view of the cymbalist—the cymbals frame Herrmann, who is in the center, and the assassin’s gun is in position). The moment of the assassination arrives, and it is in the pregnant pause right before the cymbal crash that Jo screams. The camera then shows the cymbalist playing his one note, and then cuts to a reaction shot of the Prime Minister grabbing his wounded arm.

Several things take place in rapid succession. First, the plan to use a cymbal crash to cover up an assassin’s shot is successful: no shot is heard. Second, the music reaches its conclusion: the assassination attempt does not disrupt the performance, and neither does Jo’s scream. The audience does respond to Jo, but the music does not stop. It is not until the music ends and the assassin falls that the concert hall descends into chaos. Finally, while Ben eventually opens the correct door, wrestles the gun away from the assassin, and chases him out of his box (causing him to slip, fall, and die), he does not, in fact, prevent the assassin from shooting the prime minister. Had Jo not screamed, the bullet would have been fatal.
The *Storm Clouds Cantata* acts not only as a musical accompaniment to an assassination attempt, but also as a *locus communius* of the many injustices Jo experiences leading up to this moment. Throughout the film, Ben is frustrated by Jo’s lack of willingness to exclusively play the roles of the dutiful housewife and mother. He is haunted by the specter of Jo Conway and does everything he can to suppress who Jo was, from drugging her to making her decisions for her. In spite of all this, Jo is able to sustain her unique voice, symbolized in the songs “Que Sera, Sera” and “We’ll Love Again.” This social oppression is metaphorically dramatized in the *Storm Clouds Cantata*, which acts as an agent of repression and hysteria, muting Jo and her music. Jo’s hysteria is her reaction not only to the plot, but also against society’s laws of polite behavior. The hysterical scream not only saves the prime minister, but also liberates Jo from the disabling effects the concert music (and all that it had come to symbolize) had on her.

By using these two musical works within the diegesis of the film, Hitchcock elucidates one of the main themes of the film: the power of a married couple working together. It is not until Jo and Ben are able to resolve their differences, come together, and work toward a common goal that they are truly effective: Jo would have remained frozen up against the wall and Ben would be running around following the wrong path. Through the power of her performance at the embassy scene, Jo is able to actively participate in the rescue of her son (even though it is Ben who confronts the Draytons); her music gives her actions agency. When united, Ben and Jo are able to stop an assassination and save their son; the film ends with the family unit intact, and the promise that “we’ll love again.”
Chapter Four
Music as Signifiers for Disability in *Vertigo*

Today, Alfred Hitchcock’s *Vertigo* is listed as the top mystery film for the American Film Institute’s “10 top 10” list.\(^88\) When the film released to general audiences, however, many were confused by the film’s pacing, plot holes, and ending. As a result, it was not considered a success because it did not make a lot of money at the box office. The story is loosely based on Boileau and Narcejac’s novel *D’entre les morts* and involves a complicated murder plot, although the true nature of the murder does not become clear until the final third of the film (for a complete plot summary, see the Appendix). Instead, the film foregrounds its representations of phobia and obsession, beginning with the opening sequences. The film is full of references to disability: Scottie’s acrophobia becomes a plot point pivotal to covering up the murder that happens in the film; this particular disability is used here as a prosthesis—as a device to satisfy the needs of the narrative.\(^89\) Along with the acrophobia, Scottie’s other major disability, obsession, makes *Vertigo* a fascinating character study. Aside from being merely plot devices, these disabilities are thematic elements in the film that Hitchcock symbolically relates to color, scenic design, camera angles, and music.

Hitchcock made *Vertigo* in 1958; the whole process was marred with difficulties, including the writing, the casting, and the film’s initial reception.\(^90\) Originally, Vera Miles, who was being groomed by Hitchcock to be his next Grace Kelly, was cast as Madeleine/Judy. When

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\(^90\) Spoto, *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock*, 268.
Miles became pregnant and backed out of the film, Kim Novak was cast instead. Hitchcock wanted James Stewart to play Scottie, but Stewart wanted to wait for a workable script before he would officially sign on. Two other writers were previously assigned to write the script before playwright Samuel Taylor’s version was approved by Hitchcock. The total process took over two years to complete, from buying the rights to the first day of shooting.\(^\text{91}\) The setting was problematic as well, since many shots were made on location in San Francisco. Hitchcock was meticulous enough to wait all day for the lighting to be just right for a sequence lasting less than a minute in the final film.\(^\text{92}\)

Once the filming was complete, the movie was released to the general public and received mixed reviews from critics. Variety magazine, for example, criticized the first half of the film as “too slow and too long,” calling it the film’s “one major fault” while simultaneously praising the mastery of Hitchcock’s “hand” in the camerawork, editing, and development of themes.\(^\text{93}\) Today, reviews are much different. Under the scope of repeated viewings and access to the thoughts of others, Roger Ebert gave a completely different review in 1996:

“Vertigo” (1958), which is one of the two or three best films Hitchcock ever made, is the most confessional, dealing directly with the themes that controlled his art. It is *about* how Hitchcock used, feared and tried to control women . . . Alfred Hitchcock was known as the most controlling of directors, particularly when it came to women. The female characters in his films reflected the same qualities over and over again: They were blond. They were icy and remote. They were imprisoned in costumes that subtly combined fashion with fetishism. They mesmerized the men, who often had physical or psychological handicaps.\(^\text{94}\)

\(^{91}\) Spoto, The Art of Alfred Hitchcock, 266.
\(^{92}\) Ibid., 270-271. The sequence in question is the rooftop sequence. Many shots in this opening scene are filmed in the studio, but there were some shots on location.
The entire review is a glowing report on the masterpiece *Vertigo* has become and recognizes the importance disability plays in Hitchcock’s oeuvre as a symbolic referent to Hitchcock’s own obsession with controlling the minute details of the production, from costuming choices to what the female stars wore when promoting the film. Hitchcock’s obsessions often play out in his movies. Ebert, instead of critiquing the film’s plot, focuses on the plot as an allegory for autobiography, which he feels is a more resonant and artistic interpretation, but less about the movie itself.

Many other themes abound in *Vertigo* aside from autobiography. First is the theme associated with the title, *Vertigo*. Film scholar Robin Wood defines acrophobia in *Vertigo* as:

> the tension between the desire to fall and the dread of falling. . . . To live, [Scottie] must hold on desperately to the gutter, his arms and body agonizingly stretched, his fingers strained, his mind gripped by unendurable tension; to die, he has only to let go. . . . We do not see, and are never told, how he got down from the gutter: there seems no possible way he could have got down. The effect is of having him, throughout the film, metaphorically suspended over a great abyss.\(^9\)

Scottie is diagnosed with acrophobia after his near-fatal accident on the roof at the beginning of the film. Scottie’s vertigo is not only dualistic in nature, but also becomes a key point in Elster’s murderous scheme—his plot to kill the real Madeleine Elster hinges on being able to exploit Scottie’s weakness, and Scottie’s cure is linked to the discovery of this plot. Acrophobia therefore becomes a symbol of his identity as a wanderer: no family, no special relationships, and no job (he had to retire from being a police detective). This identity is important: since Madeleine also identifies herself as a wanderer, it gives them something in common. It also stands for Scottie’s relationship to the film’s audience and the emotional bond that is built as a

result. Right from the beginning of the film, Scottie is presented as a flawed but likeable person trying to overcome a disabling affliction. The audience sees Scottie’s disability as an addition to his personality, something that can be overcome.96

The audience also experiences a sense of the dizziness of vertigo through the point-of-view shots throughout the film (involving a simultaneous zoom-in and track-back), the spirals during the opening credits, and the dream sequence. The plot of Vertigo also dizzily disorients: the revelation that Judy was Madeleine, the “death” of Madeleine, and the death of Judy heightens the sense of despair and disorientation in the audience.

Through its prominence, acrophobia becomes a symbolic and structural element in the film. Hitchcock is careful to craft as much symbolism of the spiraling descent of Scottie’s obsession as he can in the image track. The opening credits sequence, for example, features a series of spirals that seem to emanate out of a woman’s eye. When Scottie follows Madeleine through San Francisco, his path is circuitous and downhill. The old mission tower staircase also spirals down. When the camera follows Madeleine, Hitchcock has it move to the right, but with Judy it moves to the left. These examples demonstrate Hitchcock’s ability to present vertigo as a visual metaphor.

Duality is another theme present in the film. Many aspects of Vertigo are dualistic in nature: the women Scottie falls in love with (Madeleine and Judy), the characterizations of the rational world and the ideal/irrational world (Midge and Madeleine), the frequent use of mirrors, the way in which the two men in Judy’s life (Elster and Scottie) remake her into

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96 The narrative “problem” of Scottie’s disabilities mirrors the music in the sense of Straus’s concept of the “tonal problem,” described previously.
someone she is not, the nature of Scottie’s acrophobia (struggle between the desire and dread of falling), and how the audience identifies not only with Scottie, but also with Judy at the conclusion of the film.

In addition, Kim Novak’s roles—Madeleine and Judy—reflect a doubling effect through the nature of the plot. Her duality is extraordinarily described by Spoto:

Each time Judy became Madeleine, she willingly annihilated herself. Isn’t there in this poor girl a lingering fascination with death, a vertigo to match Scottie’s? She’s caught in her own spell now, for a meaningful existence without the false Madeleine is impossible for both of them. She has become Madeleine for Scottie’s sake now, not for Elster nor for his plot to murder his wife. This time she has really renounced herself and become the double of a double, an imitation twice removed from the reality. She has allowed herself to imitate the false Madeleine who was herself forced to imitate the real Madeleine who we never see, never know. The first Madeleine was simply an Elster-concocted fraud, an impersonation by an imposter, while the second is an indulgence of Scottie’s fantasy. So following the double death (the literal death of the real Madeleine and the figurative death of the false Madeleine), Judy is compelled—by her own passion—to become a nonexistent person again, and so there occurs the death of the real and of an imitation—of the real Judy and of the false Madeleine.  

This complexity had an unintended consequence—the original audience had difficulty keeping up with the twists in the plot. Judy’s tragedy is due to the fact that the two men in her life—Elster and Scottie—do not want her to be herself. She has to assume the identity of Madeleine in order for her identity to be acknowledged. Madeleine’s dialogue right before the first mission tower sequence takes on new meaning upon a second viewing: “No, it’s too late, there’s something I must do...It’s not fair! It wasn’t supposed to happen this way.” Her impassioned plea not only gives the plot away, but provides insight to her thoughts as Judy, not Madeleine.

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Scottie’s obsessive pursuit of Madeleine and the ideal she represents in his mind are major plot points of the film. To this end, Hitchcock sets up more symbolic visual clues to link certain ideas to the growing obsession Scottie faces over the course of the story. The colors red and green are important signifiers in this regard. The two colors are usually set up in contrast to one another. Some example include Ernie’s restaurant, where the bright red walls of the restaurant strikingly contrast the bright green dress Madeleine wears. Also, when Scottie and Madeleine finally talk to one another in Scottie’s apartment, she is wearing a red robe, and he has on a green sweater. Finally, when Scottie remakes Judy into Madeleine at the hotel, the flashing green neon sign transforms the room into a very surreal setting.

Time is a theme exploited by Hitchcock for symbolic effect. Elster is able to use Scottie’s fondness for living in the past to nostalgically relate to him when he hires Scottie to follow his wife; he does so by repeatedly referring to the “good ol’ days.” Madeleine’s sense that she is possessed by Carlotta plays on Scottie’s sense of nostalgia as well. It gives Scottie a goal—he feels like he can help cure her—and it adds to Madeleine’s mystery. The relation to the past also allows Madeleine and Scottie to have something in common: a sense of wandering. Due to Scottie’s forced retirement, he has no immediate plans, goals, or deadlines. He is free to pursue Madeleine without having to worry about going to a job (pursuing Madeleine is actually a job he is hired to do, something he would not have been able to do had he stayed a detective). This sets up the opportunity for Scottie to fall in love with Madeleine before they even speak to one another. She exists as an ideal in his mind and her contrast is Midge, a woman clearly grounded in the real world. Midge is a former girlfriend who designs cantilevered bras, mothers Scottie, and plays classical music to try to help him heal: first to help him get rid of his sense of
acrophobia and again at the mental hospital to help him recover from Madeleine’s death. Both attempts fail.

There is one more topic that needs to be discussed—that of genre. There are many arguments about how exactly to categorize Vertigo, due its combination of several different conventions. Many call it a mystery, yet the central “mystery” presented in the story (Carlotta’s possession of Madeleine) becomes a moot point midway through the film (an example of the Hitchcock “MacGuffin”). Hitchcock scholar Lesley Brill sees the film as a contrast to Hitchcock’s “romances” (epitomized in Young and Innocent and To Catch a Thief) and as an example of an “ironic narrative”:

The central figures of Vertigo and Psycho struggle to understand and resolve destructive personal histories, both their own and those of allies and antagonists encountered in their quests for happiness. They fail. Their defeats reflect the unforgiving necessities of Hitchcockian tragic irony. The gay-hearted playfulness of the comic romances is overwhelmed in Vertigo and Psycho by moral inexorability. Retribution replaces forgiveness. Confusion and ambiguity baffle resolution. Both films give centrality to human illness and decay, not healing. . . . In both movies, the disease of the past is incurable. Crucial to most romances—and therefore at the corner of the failure of romance in Vertigo and Psycho—is the confronting and overcoming of a voracious enervating past. The cyclic, regenerative time that energizes romantic narrative returns from the fall and winter to spring and summer. In ironic fictions time is linear, an unprogressive succession of days stopping in the endless winter of death. Romance and irony thus clash in their understanding of time’s regenerative or entropic powers.98

By referring to Vertigo as an ironic narrative, Brill explains how the expectations and subversions of genre contribute to the film’s central themes; its tragedy is expressed by a central character, who tries not to plunge into the abyss but fails.

Hitchcock’s presentation of these themes (acrophobia, obsession, duality, time, and genre) forms the basis of many of the critical analyses in Hitchcock scholarship. All of these themes relate to disability through the careful interaction of these themes in the context of the film’s plot. Because mental disabilities are internalized, Hitchcock relied on music to represent these complexities.

**VERTIGO’S MUSIC**

Bernard Hermann was again hired to compose the non-diegetic score in places where there was not diegetic music already (which was most of the picture—indeed, the amount of music Hitchcock asked Herrmann for was unprecedented). The dichotomy between the two types of music—Hermann’s non-diegetic score and diegetic (pre-existing) classical music—is but one of many interesting musical ideas to emerge from an analysis of *Vertigo*. It parallels the dichotomy in the film between Scottie’s obsessive fantasy world (embodied by Madeleine) and the real world (represented by Midge). In the first scene, Scottie is left dangling precariously on a rooftop, and then the audience is introduced to Midge (and her music). Unlike the non-diegetic Herrmann score that preceded it, Midge’s music (the second movement of Johann Christian Bach’s Symphony in Eb Major, Andante con sordini) comes from a radio, is heard by audiences in mono (as opposed to the “Prelude” and “Rooftop” diegetic sequences, which are heard in stereo), and is pre-existing. Right from the beginning of the scene, Scottie is bothered by this music. As the audience gets to know Scottie, it becomes evident that he

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99 Sullivan, 222.
100 David Cooper, *Bernard Herrmann’s Vertigo: A Film Score Handbook*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 71. There has confusion over the identification of this piece among scholars. At one time, it was thought to have been composed by Mozart, and the script refers to a piece by Scarlatti.
prefers the fantasy world (represented by Herrmann’s score) to reality (represented by the classical music Midge plays).

The other major scene involving a piece of pre-composed classical music involves Midge as well. Scottie has been institutionalized and Midge visits him to try to help by playing Mozart’s Andante di molto from the Symphony No. 34 in C Major, K. 338. Not just the selection of the piece, but also Midge’s recording reflects Scottie’s mood and the inability of Midge to reach him: the movement is performed at a “ridiculously brisk tempo.”\textsuperscript{101} This performance reflects not only the superficiality of the music, but also a rejection of Midge and the real world she represents. It also confirms Hitchcock’s tendency identified earlier by critic Elisabeth Weis to portray classical music as “less in touch with genuine feelings.”\textsuperscript{102} “I don’t think Mozart is going to help at all,” Midge laments as she leaves the asylum. She is not seen for the rest of the film.

The inclusion of these two pieces of music clearly paint a portrait of Midge that is far more effective than any dialogue. The music is orderly, bound by rules, and, as a part of the film’s diegesis, symbolic of reality. Scottie has little patience for it. The ideal world of Madeleine and Herrmann’s non-diegetic accompaniment of this dream is Scottie’s (and by extension, our—the film’s audience) preferred realm.

The non-diegetic music composed for Vertigo is complex in its structure and its orchestration. It avoids many commonly-used harmonic progressions and melody-based themes that film audiences at the time were familiar with. As film music scholar Kathryn Kalinak

\textsuperscript{101}Wood, Hitchcock’s Films Revisited, 119.
\textsuperscript{102}Weis, The Silent Scream, 90.
observed, “the absence of a conventional melody . . . denies the listener the familiar point of access . . . [The score is disconcerting in] the way it avoids melody as a construct of organization and the way it bends the syntactical ‘grammar’ of harmony.”

Instead of a melodic focus, Herrmann’s score is based on several other unifying factors: the so-called “Vertigo chord,” seventh chords, bitonality, the “habanera” rhythm, and derivations of the “Madeleine” cue. These factors use a variety of musical styles, because, as Cooper points out, Hermann

revelled [sic.] in the creative possibilities of music, refusing to restrict himself to a single mode of expression or technique, and thus the score to Vertigo moves from Wagnerian chromatic harmony, through Pucciniesque diatonic bel canto to Schoenbergian atonal Klangfarbenmelodie. Although he was undoubtedly influenced by many other composers including Copland, Stravinsky and Delius, this should not to be taken to suggest that he was simply a talented pasticheur or only capable of composing through the styles of others, for his is one of the most individual voices of the cinema. Rather, he adopted the mode of expression he felt the most appropriate to the individual cue.

Despite these differences of expressive styles used, however, Herrmann returns to these central techniques to achieve unity in his score for a film that has a large amount of music.

The cue sheet for Vertigo helps to show this unity of musical organization (see Figure 4.1), as many of the cues are derived from material found in the “Madeleine” cue (all the bold-faced cues in the figure). Those cues which do not come from this melody are found in the shared theme of the “Prelude” and “Beauty Parlor,” the “Rooftop” (which ends with the famous bitonal “Vertigo Chord”), and the music that is played when Scottie is released from the asylum and meets Judy (“Dawn,” “The Past,” “The Girl,” and “The Park”).

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104 Cooper, Vertigo: A Film Score Handbook, 17.
105 Bruce, Film Music and Narrative, 180.
Not immediately apparent from listening to the score is the reliance on woodwind instruments, especially the clarinet and bass clarinet (as in the scene, for example, where Scottie is wordlessly pursuing Madeleine). These instruments are important in achieving the mysterious mood of the film. Notable on the cue sheet is the call for a larger-than-normal amount of woodwinds: some cues list as many as five clarinets and three bass clarinets. This imbalance creates a darker timbre for the orchestra which perfectly suits the tragedy of the film.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cue</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Tonality</th>
<th>Orchestration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>Prelude</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>tutti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>Rooftop</td>
<td>CM</td>
<td>tutti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1D</td>
<td>The Window</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>3 cl, 2 b cl, 3 trpts, 3 trbns, Hammond organ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2B</td>
<td>Madeleine</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>harp and strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2C/3A</td>
<td>Madeleine’s Car</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>ob, 3 cl, 2 b cl, hrn, strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3AI</td>
<td>The Flowershop</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 cl, violins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3B</td>
<td>The Alleyway</td>
<td>B♭7/D Aug.</td>
<td>3 cl, harp, and strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3BI</td>
<td>The Mission</td>
<td>B♭7</td>
<td>4 cl, harp, strings, Hammond organ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3C</td>
<td>Mission Organ</td>
<td>am</td>
<td>organ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3D</td>
<td>Graveyard</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 b cl and violins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3DI</td>
<td>Tombstone</td>
<td>B♭7</td>
<td>2 cl, 2 b cl, hrnb, 3 cb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3E</td>
<td>Carlotta’s Portrait</td>
<td>DM</td>
<td>2 fl, 2 cl, 2 hrns, harp, vibes, violins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3F/4A</td>
<td>The Hotel</td>
<td>B♭7 → FM</td>
<td>3 trpts, 3 trbns, vibes, strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4B</td>
<td>The Hallway</td>
<td>AM</td>
<td>3 trpts, 3 hrn, 3 trnbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4C</td>
<td>The Nosegay</td>
<td>GM</td>
<td>strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4E/5A</td>
<td>The Catalogue</td>
<td>GM → DM</td>
<td>2 cl, harp, vibes, violas, violins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5B</td>
<td>The Gallery</td>
<td>B♭7 → DM</td>
<td>2 fl, 2 hrns, harp, vibes, strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5C</td>
<td>The Bay</td>
<td>em →</td>
<td>tutti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5D</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>cm</td>
<td>strings (no basses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5E/6A</td>
<td>By the Fireside</td>
<td>cm → DM</td>
<td>strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6B</td>
<td>Exit</td>
<td>cm</td>
<td>strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6C</td>
<td>The Streets</td>
<td>2 fl, oboe, 3 cl, 2 b cl, 2 hrns, strings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6D/7AB</td>
<td>The Outing</td>
<td>Db</td>
<td>5 cl, strings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.1. Cue Sheet for Vertigo\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{106} Cooper, Vertigo: A Filmscore Handbook, 51-54.
This use of woodwinds contrasts with Herrmann’s use of string instruments in other moments of the film (such as “Sleep” or “Madeleine”). When used, the strings focus on Scottie’s emotions, and the inner turmoil he is experiencing. By orchestrating his own music, Herrmann not only creates unusual instrumental combinations but also makes the effect of the music especially dramatic. Aside from the uniqueness of Herrmann’s instrumentation in general, he varies the orchestration for the film narrative’s most important scenes: the “Prelude” and “Scene d’Amour” are tutti, while others, such as “Madeleine,” “Carlotta’s
Portraits,” and “The Necklace” call for various combinations of instruments. Herrmann insisted on orchestrating his own music, which separates it from the “typical Hollywood sound” of most other films composers.

Another characteristic associated with Herrmann’s style is the use of seventh chords in a variety of harmonic spellings (see Ex. 4.1). Seventh chords are liberally used throughout the film, often as a way of avoiding tonal closure. In Vertigo, there are several different qualities used: diminished seventh chords in “The Flowershop” and “The Nosegay,” tonic chords with minor sevenths in “The Alleyway” and “The Mission,” and half-diminished seventh chords in “By the Fireside” and “Farewell.” There is also another type of chord that Herrmann uses to great effect, and it is the first thing the audience hears during the opening credit sequence (“Prelude” on the cue sheet): a minor-major seventh chord. This chord is unique in how it resolves: it is the only seventh chord where the seventh of the chord resolves up instead of down; in this case the D would resolve up to E. By denying the resolution, Herrmann makes a musical connection to vertigo that is immediately apparent due to its harmonic implications. As musicologist Graham Bruce states,

The association between this literal and metaphorical vertigo, this acrophobia and the attraction for love and death in the form of a woman, is reflected in the music.

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107 The use of the half-diminished seventh chord may have a symbolic connection to Wagner’s “Tristan Chord” as both Wagner’s opera and Hitchcock’s film are tragic love stories.
The clash of D major and E♭ minor triads that later accompanies the bouts of vertigo is anticipated during the initial moments toward the face during the credits. Here the E♭ minor triad is not topped by the D major triad but by its root note D, converting the other to a seventh chord [which] . . . is heard twice: the first chord coincides with the end of the track in to the lips; the second, similarly marks the pause on the close-up after the movement toward the eye.¹⁰⁸

Herrmann establishes the seventh chord as an important aspect of the score with the opening notes. E♭ and D form the interval of a seventh and represent the two keys used throughout the film. The seventh chords are chromatically altered every other bar in augmentation and diminution during the ascending and descending lines respectively (the C in measure 1 becomes a D in measure 2, see ex. 4.2). The same chord is played later in the brass and sustained. The arpeggios in the “Prelude” do not function as a normal chord within a tonal system; many chords, especially when played as part of a progression, set up a series of expectations that are either delivered upon or negated. The expected resolution of a dominant-seventh chord, for example, is to the tonic chord; it functions within tonal systems according to a well-established set of expectations. Audiences know how to aurally interpret this type of chord. The chord used in the “Prelude” does not have the same deterministic associations, so audiences are immediately faced with unexpected sounds—an aural equivalent of “vertigo”—effectively

¹⁰⁸ Bruce, 140-141.
disabling the expectations of the audience musically. Not only is the chord atypical in tonal music, but Herrmann repeatedly arpeggiates it while maintaining harmonic stasis; there is no harmonic movement, nor a progression toward a cadence. This lack of movement in Herrmann’s use of seventh chords clearly symbolizes Scottie’s obsession with Madeleine throughout the film.

The structure of the arpeggios in the “Prelude” also illustrate duality: Judy/Madeleine is represented by the contrasting melodic direction of the two parts. The unrelenting repetition of the two lines also keys into Scottie’s obsession with Madeleine—the music is harmonically static to symbolize that he is fixated on her and cannot go forward with his life. The lack of resolution in the cue relates to a lack of resolution in the main story and the sense of timelessness that pervades the film. Herrmann does not use a specific musical idea that can be identified to any particular time or style, yet the music is effective at giving voice to the character’s inner and unseen thoughts.

The use of bitonality is another distinguishing feature of Herrmann’s music that can be used for a disability analysis. An important moment early in the film is when Scottie is hanging from the rooftop and he looks down and experiences vertigo for the first time. The chord that accompanies this moment is called the “Vertigo Chord” and stems from the arpeggiated material of the “Prelude.” There are two ways to interpret the chord. The first, suggested by Cooper, is as an Eb minor-major seventh chord with a raised eleventh, A♮ (the F♯ in the chord being the enharmonic equivalent to G♭). This interpretation favors the notion that “the ear will invariably tend to prioritise a single pitch, and in the case of the ‘Vertigo Chord’ it is hard to
escape the influence of E♭ as the root of the chord.” The other interpretation is to think of the “Vertigo Chord” as bitonal: a D major chord over an E♭ minor chord. This would explain the inclusion of both a G♭ and an F♯ in the chord, and underscores the film’s theme of duality. Every time Scottie has a moment of vertigo, a bitonal chord is played; the musical link to disability is now established.

Another bitonal chord is heard as Scottie becomes more and more obsessed with Madeleine. The second bitonal chord is labelled “Obsession” by musicologist Tom Schneller, and outlines A minor and G♯ major. The two bitonal chords together on a grand staff create a chain of thirds starting on E♭ (see Ex. 4.3). By using these two chords, Herrmann

Example 4.3. Combination of “Vertigo Chord” and “Obsession” Chord

musically links several themes of the movie: the moods of Scottie, the relationship between his vertigo and his obsession with Madeleine, and duality in general. A key feature of these two bitonal chords is the instrumentation involved: Herrmann rarely uses brass instruments as a featured section in the orchestra, but the “Vertigo Chord” is an exception. Scottie’s acrophobia

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110 Tom Schneller, “Death and Love: Bernard Herrmann’s score for Vertigo,” Cuadernos de Música, Artes Visuales y Artes Escénicas 1, no. 2 (April-September, 2005), 194.
overwhelms and debilitates his rational mind, and the music is fittingly dissonant, loud, and brassy—an audible representation of Scottie’s disability.

The final occurrence of the “Vertigo Chord” is right before Judy sees the nun in the tower. It is played by the Hammond Organ and the fact that it is barely audible signifies that Scottie’s vertigo no longer plays as important a role as it did in the beginning. He is cured of his acrophobia; the music provides a clue to a detail later confirmed by the film’s visuals. The fact that Herrmann focuses on these bitonal chords in these specific moments clearly illustrate his thoughts on the importance of representing Scottie’s disabilities.

Another technique that can link Vertigo’s score to the film’s portrayal of disability is found in the use of ostinato. One of the reasons Scottie becomes so obsessed with Madeleine is that she thinks she is possessed by the ghost of a woman named Carlotta, and Scottie feels compelled to try to help Madeleine. As the mystery surrounding Carlotta increases, so does Scottie’s obsession with Madeleine. Herrmann employs a rhythmic figure from a Spanish “habanera” (see ex. 4.4). But, as Bruce points out, “the music is not associated so much with Carlotta as with Madeleine’s alleged obsession with her ancestor. Herrmann conveys this obsession by giving the habanera rhythm . . . to a single, continually repeated note, D”—an important note in the “vertigo chord.” This rhythm first appears in “Carlotta’s Portrait” in the

Example 4.4. The “habanera rhythm”

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112 Cooper, Vertigo: A Film Score Handbook, 147.
113 Bruce, Bernard Herrmann: Film Music and Narrative, 166.
harp and appears again in “The Hotel,” “The Catalog,” “The Gallery,” “The Dream,” “Farewell,” and prominently in “The Necklace.” This last cue is important to the drama, since it is the scene when Scottie realizes that Elster and Judy have duped him. The music in this scene is very effective as the habanera rhythm intercuts the string section playing the love theme—this illustrates how distracted Scottie is as Judy kisses him.

The last component of Herrmann’s musical representation of disability is his use of dissonance and chromaticism to obscure any conventional references to chord progressions in a particular key. These techniques provide insight to the irrational, atmospheric, and moody plot. For example, when Scottie is tailing Madeleine, Herrmann writes a series of chords that makes it difficult to tell what key is being used, or even if that key is major or minor (see Ex. 4.5). Two flutes play these chords, and the lack of harmonic resolution does not provide any closure (musically or dramatically). Using these post-tonal techniques ensures that traditional musical narratives are thwarted. Other examples are found in the “Vertigo Chord,” comprised of a modally-mixed D major and Eb minor chords, and in the “Obsession Chord,” comprised of modally-mixed A minor and G# major chords. These bitonal chords are dissonant and effective in their use. Example 2.2 traces the harmonic path taken in the “Madeleine” cue and illustrates
an effective example of chromaticism: there are many augmented chords, diminished chords, as well as notes outside of a single key area.\textsuperscript{114}

Now that the techniques Herrmann used to musically illustrate disability in Vertigo have been identified, an analysis of specific cues will show how the music represents disability within the film’s narrative. The following cues will be discussed in the order they appear in the film: “Prelude,” “The Rooftop,” and “Madeleine.” These scenes were chosen because of their prominence of disability. “Prelude” sets the stage both musically and dramatically and introduces many of the concepts heard explicitly later in the film, “The Rooftop” introduces Scottie’s vertigo and the “vertigo chord,” and “Madeleine” represents the object of Scottie’s obsession.

The “Prelude” begins with a series of contrasting arpeggios. The arpeggios comprise an ascending minor chord with a major seventh, starting the second measure as E\textsubscript{b}, G\textsubscript{b}, B\textsubscript{b} and D juxtaposed against a descending arpeggio of D, B\textsubscript{b}, G\textsubscript{b}, and E\textsubscript{b}, which establishes E\textsubscript{b} as a center (see Ex. 4.6). The instrumentation at the beginning of the “Prelude” is notable as well: violins, clarinets, flutes, and vibraphones play the arpeggios, and the majority of the brass play a series of whole notes; the first pitch is played, down a half-step, down a major sixth, then down another half step. Analyzed another way, this progression uses set class (013) as its primary set of pitches (in this example the tuba plays D-C then E\textsubscript{b}-D, establishing D as a central tone). This juxtaposition between the two pitch centers, the E\textsubscript{b} of the arpeggios and the D of the bass line (more specifically E\textsubscript{b} minor and D major), sets up the two main musical themes of “The

\textsuperscript{114} The fact that “Madeleine” is the basis for many other cues lends credence to the importance of chromaticism and will be discussed later in this dissertation.
Example 4.6. Bernard Herrmann, “Prelude” from *Vertigo*, mm. 1-9.115

Prelude” between the arpeggio motif and the half-step motif. They become major unifying factors throughout the entire score. These musical elements accompany the opening credits, establishing the major motifs of the film: there are various close-ups of a woman’s face, and out of her eye comes a spiraling pattern of geometric designs. Obsession, doubling, mirrors, and spiraling are all reflected in the film’s opening few moments—visually and musically.\textsuperscript{116}

The overall musical form of the “Prelude” is tripartite, typical of overtures from this time. The first part features the woodwind ostinato and the long, low brass tones. The second part begins when the camera goes into the eye. The love theme of Vertigo predominates here, starting at measure 39 and continuing until the ostinato returns in measure 53 (see Ex. 4.7). This is the start of the third section, which features the sped-up ostinato until the end of the

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\textsuperscript{116} Cooper, Vertigo: A Film Score Handbook, 22.
cue at measure 89. This establishes an ABA form to the “Prelude,” which mirrors the plot of the film nicely: a love story bookended in disability-related tragedy (see Fig. 4.2). The music is not just a prelude to the film, but also foreshadows the plot as a whole.

In his *Film Score Handbook*, Cooper goes into detail about the hypermeter of the “Prelude.” Here is another example of how Herrmann exploits the theme of vertigo by musically disabling an audience’s expectations. In a hypothetical piece, phrase structure is normalized (see Figure 4.3). A 16-bar phrase would have groups of two, four and eight measures symmetrically arranged with one another. This phrase structure is balanced.

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<td>mm. 1-38</td>
<td>mm. 39-53</td>
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<td>Woodwind ostinato &amp; low brass</td>
<td>Fragment of “Love Theme”</td>
<td>Faster woodwind ostinato</td>
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Figure 4.2. Form of the “Prelude” in *Vertigo*.

Figure 4.3. Hypermeter of a hypothetical “normal” piece

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By unbalancing the symmetry of the hypermeter, Herrmann’s phrase structure in the “Prelude” creates dissonance between the normal smallest two groups and the abnormal two larger groups. Instead of having four equal groups of four measure each Herrmann establishes a different pattern (2+3+3+3+½+3+1½). The dissonance between meter and phrase grouping helps move the “Prelude” forward on a hypermeter level while simultaneously maintaining stasis within individual measures (see Figure 4.4). The graph helps relate the phrase structure of the “Prelude” to Scottie’s disabling vertigo. This music is heard only one other time in the film, as a part of Judy’s transformation into Madeleine. The connection between these two moments link the portrayal of Madeleine with the audience’s sense of vertigo, here musically defined by bitonality and unusual hypermeter. The low brass parts in Example 4 also reveals an asymmetry in the hypermeter of the “Prelude.” The shift in the two notes in the bass occurs over three measures, but not on the beat. Each note lasts six beats instead of four, obscuring any expectations the audience has in the music.

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Figure 4.4. Hypermeter of “Prelude.” m. 1-16

This unique approach to scoring the cue accompanies a visual track that was innovative for its time. The woodwind arpeggios, as an ostinato, accompany close-ups of a woman’s face, and then the camera appears to move into the woman’s eye (see Fig. 4.5). As visual spirals in a

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118 Cooper, Vertigo: A Film Score Handbook, 24.
variety of colors take over the visual track, the music shifts to the love theme. The ostinato’s rhythm increases from eighth notes to sixteenth notes; this helps prepare the audience for the fast-paced ostinato of the next track (“The rooftop”). The opening credit sequence helps establish the major themes of the film: obsessive focus on a beautiful woman, ambiguity, and an unrealistic image of reality by portraying the close-ups of the woman’s face in a variety of colors.

Figure 4.5. Alfred Hitchcock, Vertigo. Stills from the opening credits.\textsuperscript{119}

The first scene of Vertigo after the opening credits is a roof-top chase in San Francisco. The music starts off with a fast ostinato in the upper strings and woodwinds. This accompanies a visual image of a metal bar, later revealed to be the top rung of a ladder coming up to a roof.

\textsuperscript{119} Art of the Title, “Vertigo Title Sequence” Accessed on August 30, 2015. http://www.artofthetitle.com/title/vertigo/. This site contains a video of the opening credits as well as a montage of stills from the sequence.
This first image is important because the audience is initially unsure what this is. Only when the criminal uses the ladder in context is the meaning applied. As Cooper points out, the leisurely pace of the camera work and editing requires the non-diegetic music to supply a tension that is not present in the visual track.\textsuperscript{120}

The film’s visual obscurity is also mirrored in the music by the uncertainty of tonality: while the ostinato is centered on the pitch C, it is difficult to hear whether the piece is in major or minor due to the quickness of the tempo and the specific pitches of the ostinato. It is only through study of the score that one can see the ostinato outlining a minor third. The ostinato is repeated on the eighth-note level in the woodwinds; again, it is difficult to hear this too, since the sixteenth-note ostinato predominates. The third musical element in this scene is long brass notes. The combination of the three elements add much to the suspense of the scene.

One of the key features for the soundtrack in this scene is the addition of sound effects (since this is the first scene of the film, sound effects would naturally not appear in “The Prelude”). The sounds of the scuffling feet running on the roof, the thump of the falling body and the gunshots by the policeman add a percussive element to music that does not call for any such instruments. The gunshots in particular add a jolting syncopation to a musical ostinato that is rhythmically regular. Rather than use drums in a potentially confusing way, Herrmann scores the scene to allow the natural sounds of the diegesis to complement his accompaniment. Rather than competing, the sound effects and the music track act in concert with one another.

\textsuperscript{120} Cooper, \textit{Vertigo: A Film Score Handbook}, 83. The leisurely pace of the film was not appreciated by some critics, who accused the movie of being slow and boring. For more on this negative response, see Geoffrey Bent, “Falling Out of Love With \textit{Vertigo}” \textit{Boulevard} 29, No. 3 (2014): 29-41.
Another key sound element is the introduction of the bitonal chord that sonically represents Scottie’s vertigo. It is heard three times during this cue—the first time as Scottie catches himself on the railing and is hanging onto the gutter by his fingertips, the second as he looks down to the alleyway (the first time the cop says, “Give me your hand!”), and the third time as the cop falls to his death. This bitonal chord, mentioned previously as the “Vertigo Chord,” is composed of a D major chord over an E♭ minor chord. It features instrumentation that is different than the first half of “The Rooftop”: trumpets and harp glissandi are used for the first time, and their forte entrance provides a symbolic jolt to signal not only Scottie’s danger, but the onset of his vertigo as well. The scene ends with no musical resolution, instead the audience is left with a musical vertigo, which complements the visual ending to the scene that leaves Scottie hanging on the roof. The lack of resolution is emphasized in the next scene, when the music track plays J.C. Bach’s Sinfonia in E♭ Major and Scottie is seen trying to balance his cane on his hand.121 What happened in the interim? How did he get off the roof? How much time has passed? Even if Hitchcock leaves these questions unanswered, they set up anticipation for what happens next in the plot. The stark differences between the rooftop scene and the beginning of the scene in Midge’s apartment are accented by the stark differences in the soundtrack: non-diegetic music versus diegetic music, stereo sound versus mono, post-tonal versus Classical, and foreground versus background music.

The next scene to include music is the scene in which Scottie sees Madeleine for the first time at the restaurant. The name of the cue is “Madeleine” (see Ex. 4.8) and represents the woman Scottie will obsess over for the rest of the film. It accompanies a scene that is entirely

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121 Notice that he is not successful in trying to balance his cane—a subtle hint for things to come.
wordless, making the mystery of Madeleine totally reliant upon the music. Various musical characteristics of this track amplify the film’s mystery and Scottie’s yearning. The first


characteristic is orchestration, which is fairly representative of a “woman theme” (featuring lush strings) in Hollywood films of the time. Next is the tempo, a dotted quarter note equals seventy beats per minute, one of the few times that Herrmann is explicit with an indication in the original score. The harmonic rhythm, at one chord change per measure, is also fairly slow. The next characteristic is the range of the melodic line. At two and a half octaves, “Madeleine”
progresses higher and higher through “circular” phrases each lasting a measure until the climax in measure 10, when Scottie and Madeleine’s faces are seen in profile.

The form of “Madeleine” is fairly straightforward—AA\(^1\)B. The first A section is from measures 1-4, the A\(^1\) section is from 4-7, and B is from measure 8 until the end. Seventh chords and distinctive melodic characteristics—chromaticism and unusual intervals (notably the tritone and augmented second)—are present in “Madeleine.” For example, the melody emphasizes the tritone E♭ to an A♮ in measure 2-3 and the augmented second E♭ to F# in measure 3. Underneath these melodic intervals is the following chord progression: the first two measures have an A minor chord resolving to an E minor chord in first inversion, the next two measures outline an F dominant seventh-chord resolving to C major. The seventh of the F chord does not resolve down, like it normally would, be resolves up to E. The F# on the downbeat clouds over the retrogression of F\(^7\) to C, since F# is not a part of either chord. The melodic line repeats in the violas in measure 4. The A\(^1\) material contains a B half-diminished chord in second inversion in the seventh measure. In the B section, an A major seventh-chord is featured in measures 9, 10, and 11, and a G major major-seventh chord in measure 10. The cue ends with an E diminished chord in inversion resolving down to a D. The melody at the change from one chord to the next is from a B♭ to a D, which is not a conventional way to achieve a cadence. The prominence of these musical devices are an apt metaphor for the woman Scottie obsesses over.

The opening motif of “Madeleine” corresponds in contour to that of the “Liebestod” (“Mild und leise”) from Tristan und Isolde. Both Herrmann and Wagner use their music to depict yearning. The treatment of dissonance here in Vertigo is important, for it directly ties in with
Scottie’s feelings of yearning for Madeleine. A chief concern for Herrmann here is that he only has thirteen measures to achieve the same effect Wagner does in his entire opera. The same harmonic techniques are utilized: unexpected harmonic resolutions and delayed cadential impulses. For example, in the first phrase of “Madeleine,” the melody moves from C to D momentarily resting on an Eb before jumping up to an A and finally chromatically descending down to an E. This very unconventional harmonic path is evident of yearning on a number of different levels. When listening to the cue, for example, the dissonance of the Eb leap to A is not so severe when you take into account the enharmonic to Eb: D#. When thinking in terms of an enharmonic, D# to E (in C major) is a great example of half-step voice leading. Herrmann is using every tool at his disposal to address the emotional needs of the scene.

A melody for the strings and muted harp accompanies the scene, and this music, as Jack Sullivan says, “repeal[s] forever two conventions: the notion of movie music as background and the standard view of Bernard Herrmann as exclusively a manipulator of tiny motifs who assiduously avoided melody.” In fact, this cue has been cleverly arranged by Herrmann to not only fulfill the scene’s demand for a long-spanning melody but also to retain the flexible, modular style Herrmann was known for. The lyricism of this cue is notable; in spite of its use of a modern tonal language it mirrors Wagnerian ideas of harmony.

Herrmann places considerable importance on this cue as it relates to other cues that accompany scenes dealing with Madeleine. “Madeleine” becomes the theme in a set of variations that are other cues (see Fig. 4.6 for a full listing of all the cues influenced by parts of

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122 Sullivan, Hitchcock’s Music, 223.
123 Bruce, Bernard Herrmann: Film Music and Narrative, 143.
“Madeleine”). Different parts are pulled out to become independent thoughts in their own right: the melody of the first three and a half measure (referred to henceforth as A), the six-note descending scale in bars 4-6 (B), the dotted rhythms of measures 9-10 (C), and the six-note cello part in bars 12-13(D) are all examples (see. Ex. 4.9). In the scenes where Scottie is following Madeleine around San Francisco, these elements are often manipulated with an ostinato underneath It. The rhythm is usually an eighth note, a quarter note, and four eighth notes. In “The Flowershop,” for example, its main component is derived from A material, only

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124 This list does not include the love motif (which is inspired by “Madeleine,”) or its derivatives—“The Girl,” “The Past,” and “Dawn”—or the derivatives off the “Carlotta” cue—“The Necklace,” “The Dream,” “The Gallery,” “The Catalogue,” and “The Hotel.”
played two octaves higher in the strings. This music further attaches the audience to Scottie’s idealized views of Madeleine, as she is seen in center frame, surrounded by flowers in a brightly-lit shop. This gives her an ethereal quality that adds to the mysterious aura surrounding Madeleine. In contrast, “The Nosegay” uses B material in the violas and cellos to take on an almost teasing quality. The music accompanies the scene at the McKittrick Hotel, where Madeleine seemingly vanishes. The music has changed from 6/8 to 3/4 time and repeats three times, each time an octave higher than the last to mock Scottie’s bewilderment. These examples showcase Herrmann’s skill in manipulating the various motifs of “Madeleine” to form the basis for these other cues. Herrmann’s obsessive use of material from “Madeleine” mirrors the obsession Scottie has for Madeleine. In this case the soundtrack expounds upon a major theme of the film by the sheer number of times elements of “Madeleine” is heard.

This melody is also linked to the Vertigo Chord in its emphasis of D major. While “Madeleine” is not exclusively set in this key, it does make use of the raised third (F♯) and ends on the tonic of the key (D). The connection between D in “Madeleine” and the D major of the “Prelude” also establishes a link between the two disabling narratives associated with Scottie: his obsession with Madeleine and his vertigo.

Herrmann’s score for Vertigo succeeds at representing the disabilities portrayed in the film. Herrmann’ score mirrors Hitchcock’s story of obsession, duality, and by using bitonality to represent acrophobia and duality, ostinato to embody obsession, and modal mixture to characterize duality. Uneven hypermeter, unique orchestration, and the minor-major seventh chord also symbolize the dream-like state of Scottie’s world and the vertigo the audience feels
when watching the film. Herrmann musically represents Hitchcock’s theme of disability: Scottie’s vertigo, his obsession with Madeleine, and duality.
Chapter Five
The Sound of Insanity: *Psycho* and Strings

*Psycho* is one of Hitchcock’s most famous and financially lucrative films. Even though the film was originally panned by critics, audiences loved the unusual story, and played along with Hitchcock’s demands for watching the film (He wanted them to arrive early, watch the entire film in a darkened theater, and not to divulge any of the film’s secrets). *Psycho*’s success at the box office was due in part to Hitchcock’s notoriety in previous films and on television. He used his audience’s preconceptions of him as “the master of suspense” to promote a tale that was other than what was delivered—the trailer for the film only hinted at shocking secrets. While promoting the film, Hitchcock focused on Janet Leigh’s sexuality and her involvement in stealing the money—in short, *Psycho* was marketed as a caper film. Posters for the movie feature Janet Leigh in a bra and a shirtless John Gavin, suggesting that sexuality was going to play a major part of the film (see Fig. 5.1). A woman in her underwear on a movie poster shocked 1960s audiences, who were used to a standard way of marketing movies—nothing about *Psycho* was standard, however.

Because Hitchcock used his own money to fund the film, he needed to make sure audiences came to see it. He achieved this by turning the screening of the film into an event: he demanded that audiences see the movie from start to finish in a darkened theater (unheard of for movies at that time), and made theaters turn away patrons who arrived late. Spoto interprets this promotional tactic as part of Hitchcock’s desire to direct the audience more than the actors. . . . The advertising campaign reflected his desire and marked a new aggressiveness—for he was now making demands on and intimidating his viewers even before they came to see his films. And the tactic extended to critics as well. . . . He had urged
them by letter not to divulge the ending, and he had announced that nobody would be admitted to the cinema once the film had begun. Thus they went to the press show already huffy and affronted; and what they reviewed was not so much the film itself as the effect of its publicity on their egos.\textsuperscript{125}

While critics panned *Psycho* and its strange promotional ideas, audiences did not. Not only was the film successful at the box office, it also made Hitchcock a wealthy man. Part of *Psycho’s*

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\caption{Promotional poster for *Psycho*}
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success was also due to the thematic content of the film itself. Disability plays a large role in the plot, and Hitchcock carefully sets up the audience for the devastating reveal of Norman’s psychotic nature.

First, mirrors play a large role in the film. The mirror is used not only as a prop to portray Norman’s schizophrenic split personality, but also as a metaphorical method for introspection. Mirrors reflect Marion’s temptation, guilt, and fear in the film’s opening scenes. Also, a connection exists between Norman and Marion: the audience identifies with both characters, and both die before the end of the film—Marion literally dies, and Norman’s personality is destroyed by “Mother.” The double mirror in Mother’s room, which essentially gives away the plot of the film (see Fig. 5.2), reflects the similarities in appearance between Lila and Marion.

![Figure 5.2. Alfred Hitchcock, Psycho. Lila Crane startling herself in a double mirror.](126)

The double mirror also reflects Lila’s emotional state. She sees the back of someone, and, thinking another person is in the room, startles herself. In a film about identity, being unable to

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self-recognize is an important theme Hitchcock conveys to the audience by using this simple visual metaphor. This moment also creates a momentary jump-scare for the audience.

Mirror imagery is used as a marker for the haunted double. Not only does the mirror split everyone’s image (by seeing a person and their reflection), but it helps create cutting or slashing imagery throughout the entire film. An example of this imagery is in the shower montage, where Marion is murdered with a slashing knife. A more subtle instance involves the opening credit sequence (see Fig. 5.3)—Saul Bass created the visuals where words are literally

![Figure 5.3. Saul Bass, frames from the opening credit sequence of Psycho.](image)

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127 A recent film that deals with a “haunted reflection” is the thriller Black Swan (2010), directed by Darren Aronofsky.

slashed to pieces). There are other instances of vertical versus horizontal juxtaposition that occur throughout the film: for example, a construction crane that bisects the horizon of Phoenix, and, as Spoto notes, the interior of the hotel room that first reveals a standing man and a supine woman; the actors are positioned before venetian blinds and tapes that seem to ‘split’ them; Marion’s parked car is bisected by a telephone pole; the wipers on Marion’s windscreen are linked to the raised knife; scythes and rakes hang overhead in Sam’s hardware store—and most of all we have the horizontal motel and the looming, vertical Victorian house, which provide the predominant geometrical form of the film and illuminate the meaning of all the others. This is a film that splits images in every scene, for after all (thus the psychiatrist at the finale), ‘When the mind houses two personalities, there is always a conflict, a battle.’ And Hitchcock ensures that every image, every personality will be split—not just Norman’s.\footnote{Donald Spoto, \textit{The Art of Alfred Hitchcock}, 317-318.}

All these careful references to duality—mirrors and cutting/slashing—point to a larger example of duality present in the film: the duality of the film’s audience itself. Marion is the initial target of identification with an audience who is simultaneously disgusted and fascinated by her theft. Hitchcock presents the film’s opening scenes to make Marion a sympathetic character: her fear of the policeman’s gaze and her behavior at the car dealership imply that she is a good person caught in moments of irrationality. She hopes everything will work out for her so she can have a life with Sam. Of course, this hope is not achieved, and when Marion dies, Norman replaces her as the target of the audience’s identification (he is really the only viable candidate at this point). He is initially presented as a shy, nice man. His actions throughout the film give the false impression of normalcy: he dutifully takes care of his mother, cleans up after mother’s murder, and is relieved when Marion’s car finally sinks completely into the swamp. The horror of \textit{Psycho}
is found in the discovery that Norman, the “protagonist” of the second half, is actually a murderous psychotic.

Hitchcock deliberately makes the audience feel like voyeurs. The first shot of the film zooms in on a couple in a bedroom. The camera establishes its place within the room, and, as Sam sits down on the bed, the camera “sits” down with him. We, the audience, are now in the room with them, yet cannot interact with them. Through the act of watching, Hitchcock is able to involve the audience in the events as they are unfolding. In the scene when Norman spies on Marion, Norman removes the painting “Susannah and the Elders” (which is itself a story about spying and sexual blackmail) to reveal a peephole. The symbolism of the painting within the context of the film itself is significant, as confirmed by Hitchcock himself. In the trailer to Psycho, Hitchcock leads the audience on a tour of the set, and when he arrives in Norman’s parlor behind the office, he points to the painting and says, “oh, by the way, this picture has great significance because, [pause] uh, let’s go along to cabin number one.” In his traditional fashion, Hitchcock dropped hints about certain aspects of the film, leaving audiences to guess their importance.

The topic of voyeurism leads to a related concept tied to staring and eyes. This can be found in the numerous instances of characters spying on one another and in the many references to birds and taxidermy. Norman’s hobby of stuffing animals is a symbol for how he looks at the world, foreshadowing the eventual killings of Marion and Arbogast. The dead

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130 Spoto, The Art of Alfred Hitchcock, 320.
131 Alfred Hitchcock, theatrical trailer to Psycho, (accessed on October 5, 2015), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTJQfFQ40Ii.
stares of the birds mirror Marion’s stare when she is killed, and provide commentary on the nature of the gaze itself. Garland-Thomson describes how the “starer,” gains power over the “staree”:

[S]taring establishes a social relationship between the starer and staree. It is an interpersonal action through which we act out who we imagine ourselves and others to be. . . . Staring is a form of nonverbal communication that can be used to enforce social hierarchies and regulate access to resources . . . a stare can also communicate social status, conferring subordination on a staree and ascendancy on a starer.

Garland-Thomson’s ideas can be directly related to the characters on the screen. Norman stares at Marion through the peephole and has a power over her that directly results in Marion’s death later on in the narrative. When she is murdered, the stare out of her lifeless eyes lasts for several seconds, and Hitchcock positions the camera so she stares right out at the audience. A direct relationship is implied between the staring in the film and the staring of the audience when watching the film. The traditional axis has been flipped around, however: by making a film (which is, by definition, an opportunity for staring), Hitchcock has agency over the audience by creating a world that is in control of the audience looking at it. Instead of the starer (the audience) having agency, the staree (Hitchcock’s film) does.

Aside from the relationship of events in the film directly relating to the audience, the theme of the dominance of the past over the present and future is a motivating factor that drives many characters’ actions. For example, Marion wants to marry Sam, but he cannot afford

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132 The script makes several pointed remarks about the connection between the narrative and birds: Marion’s last name is Crane, Norman tells Marion she “eats like a bird,” and when talking about traps, he says, “We’re all in our private trap. ‘We scratch and claw, but only at the air, only at each other.” Also, the first shot of the film is a “bird’s-eye view” shot of Phoenix, Arizona.


134 Garland-Thomson, Staring, 23.
to take care of her because of the alimony he owes his ex-wife and the debt he inherited from his father. She ends up stealing the money to help with this problem. Because Norman’s past is the most traumatic of the characters, it has much more control over him. His entire house is frozen in the past: Norman’s room is that of a child, and the imprint of mother’s body on the empty mattress is still visible even when Norman’s mother is not in it. The audience learns that Norman killed his mother and her lover in a fit of rage and jealousy, and the guilt he has since experienced led to the creation of “Mother.” His psychosis—his schizophrenic disability—is the direct result of his past trauma. At the end of the film, the “Norman” personality is killed in favor of the “Mother” personality; the past is triumphant in destroying whatever future Norman might have had.

The themes combine together to create atmospheres and moods based in the horror genre. The film excels at creating a sense of horror at the sudden death of Marion, a sense of revulsion upon the reveal of who Norman really is, and a general sense of abandonment in the world Hitchcock has created.135 To refer to this movie as “merely” a horror film, however, would be a disservice to the film itself and Hitchcock’s ingenious marketing for it. Hitchcock himself referred to the film as a black comedy.136

**PSYCHO’S MUSIC**

Herrmann adds to the mood of *Psycho* in his musical score. Many techniques he employed in *Vertigo* are used again in this film, including the use of ostinato, seventh chords

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(focusing on the minor chord with a major seventh), and many post-tonal harmonies. The psychotic nature of Norman Bates is suggested through a number of musical means including a three-note motif, mutes on the strings, polyphonic scoring within a single instrumental timbre, and the extreme registers of the highest and lowest instruments.\footnote{Bruce, \textit{Bernard Herrmann: Film Music and Narrative}, 183.}

There are two famous stories about the creation of the score. The first involves Hitchcock’s decision to fund the movie himself. This led to a reduced amount of money available to hire musicians and compose the score, so Herrmann used only strings, in part because it saved money, but mostly because it complemented the aesthetic of the film.\footnote{Smith, \textit{A Heart at Fire’s Center}, 237.} In an interview with Leslie Zador, Herrmann states, “I felt that I was able to complement the black and white photography of the film with a black and white sound.”\footnote{Leslie Zador, “Movie Music’s Man of the Moment,” \textit{Coast FM and Fine Arts}, June, 1971: 31.} Within this single timbre, however, Hermann exploited a wide range of expressive techniques such as extreme registers, \textit{sul ponticello}, \textit{senza vibrato}, mutes, and the use of successive downbow \textit{marcato} attacks. The decision to exploit only the sounds of strings would become one of the famous features of this film.

The other famous story involves the composition of the music for the shower scene. Hitchcock was not impressed with the final cut of the film, but he was convinced by Herrmann not to make any final decisions about the movie until Hitchcock came back from his Christmas break. During that time, Herrmann would start the scoring process. Hitchcock agreed, but on the condition that Herrmann not compose any music from the time Marion arrived at the hotel until after Marion’s car goes into the swamp (a period of time covering many cues in the final
cut, including “The Madhouse,” “The Peephole,” and “The Murder”). Herrmann, under no immediate scrutiny from Hitchcock, set to work scoring the shower scene. Herrmann relates what happened next:

> We dubbed the composite without any musical effects behind the murder scene, and let him watch it. Then I said, “I really do have something composed for it, and now that you’ve seen it your way, let’s try mine.” We played him my version with the music. He said, “Of course, that’s the one we’ll use.” I said, “But you requested that we not add any music.” “Improper suggestion, my boy, improper suggestion,” he replied.

The music for the shower scene is one of the most well-known cues in all of film music, and it almost did not happen.

> The music adds tension to the film, especially in the beginning third of the film, when much of the visual track contain mundane material like Marion driving in a car or packing a suitcase. Several scenes are wordless, but the music keeps the audience’s attention. Herrmann intended the audience to know that something bad was going to happen right from the beginning—the music foretells the horror to come in “The Prelude”:

> I wrote the main title music for PSYCHO before Saul Bass even did the animation. They animated to the music. The point, however, is that after the main title nothing much happens in the picture, apparently, for 20 minutes or so. Appearances, of course, are deceiving, for in fact the drama starts immediately with the titles! The climax of PSYCHO is given to you by the music right at the moment the film begins. I am firmly convinced, and so is Hitchcock, that after the

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140 There are many connections between the music to Psycho and the music for his 1936 Sinfonietta. Both are scored for strings and express a dark mood. Several cues in the film are taken directly from the earlier work: the “madness” motive associated with Norman (which also appears in the score for Taxi Driver) and “The Swamp” especially. Herrmann develops the film score in a different fashion—he was able to keep in mind the differences in the function between film music and concert music and be sensitive to the needs of each. For more information of the similarities between these two works, see Mark Richards, “Comparing Bernard Herrmann’s Psycho score and Sinfonietta (1936),” Film Music Notes: Analysis, Style, Technique and More.” Accessed on October 10, 2015, http://www.filmusicnotes.com/comparing-bernard-herrmanns-psycho-score-and-sinfonietta-1936/.

141 Smith, A Heart at Fire’s Center, 240.
main titles you know something terrible must happen. The main title sequence tells you so, and that is its function: to set the drama.  

The first thing the audience hears is a chord type Herrmann used in Vertigo—the minor-major seventh chord (here built on a B♭). The chord is repeated four more times, and then an ostinato passage repeats (see Ex. 5.1). “The Prelude” contains much of the material Herrmann would use for Marion’s trip to the Bates Motel. After Marion is murdered, this music disappears.


The music for “The Prelude,” like the “Madeleine” cue from Vertigo, is composed of a series of two-measure cells that Herrmann breaks up to form the basis for other cues (see Ex. 5.2). The opening notes of “The Prelude,” B♭, D♭, F, and A (cell A, see below), form the first initial mood of the film. The same quality of chord starts off “The Prelude” in Vertigo, but where in that film the unexpected harmony sets up a feeling of vertigo in the audience, here the starkness of the chord’s presentation—unison downbows repeated five times—not only sets up the emotional mood of the film but also foreshadows the viciousness of the murders of Marion and Arbogast. The mood is established by the unresolved dissonant harmony and the material’s

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tempo (*allegro molto agitato*) for much of the first third of the film. This type of seventh chord and its method of presentation captures attention through its motivic repetition, harmonic language, and driving rhythms.

Example 5.2. Four basic cells from “The Prelude” form the framework.

Immediately after the first five notes comes the second cell of “The Prelude” which is not overtly in a particular key, but suggests D minor. The leading tone—C♯ is an enharmonic respelling of the D♭ of the previous measure, and its upward resolution by half step is the correct resolution for a leading tone in this instance. “The Prelude” ends on a D, which further emphasizes this note’s central importance in the piece. These two measures form the basis for an important motivic idea throughout the entire film: the semitone figure—ascending or descending—is used as an ostinato in this moment and is usually heard whenever a character is
worried about something—Marion about the theft of the money, Norman about the discovery of his Mother, and Lila about the discovery of her presence in the house. This semi-tone accompaniment is comprised of a trichord (014), which is a common device used in Modern music.\textsuperscript{143} Cell C (measures 5-6) is used as an ostinato to link Marion’s obsession with the money. The last cell is often used in transition to return to Cell A.

The second half of “The Prelude” is referred by many as the “Psycho Theme” and is one of the few instances of a melodic line in the entire score.\textsuperscript{144} The melody supports chords in E♭ minor, and the voice leading of the underlying harmony in measure 37 and in measures 45-48 contains the semitone motif (see Ex. 5.3). The melodic line rises and then descends, but before

\begin{center}
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\end{center}


\textsuperscript{143} A trichord is any combination of three pitches found within a larger system (like 12-tone music). For more information on these types of chord, see Allen Forte, \textit{The Structure of Atonal Music} (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973).

it can reach the tonic pitch (E♭) the melody drops a semitone and passes through four measures in E minor. The second half of the melody ends with the repeated descending semitone motif (this time from G to F♯) before concluding this melodic material with a D♭-F-A chord (an incomplete version of opening chord). It is repeated quite often, especially in the beginning of the film. This theme mirrors the narrative shift from Marion (with a semitonal melody featuring E♭ minor and E minor) to Norman; this tonal section contrasts with the atonal music that occurs in the second half of the film. The music’s duality also represents disability by contrasting compositional techniques in the two halves of the film. Marion’s music (representing a normal character acting irrationally) contains ostinati and “The Psycho Theme,” whereas Norman’s music (representing a disabled character trying to act normal) is atonal and contains a motif associated with Norman’s madness.

Due to the dualistic nature of the film, many of the cues are related to one another. In this particular case, the music of “The Prelude” is connected to “The City,” the cue that follows it. All of the tension and worry that “The Prelude” contains contrasts with this music. As the camera slowly zooms in over the city of Phoenix, the musical accompaniment settles on a slow, gently-cascading series of chords (see Ex. 5.4). The audience has not forgotten the mood set by “The Prelude,” so this music plays counter to audiences’ expectations: instead of creating a nice romantic afternoon for Marion and Sam, the music suggests that something horrible is about to happen. The genius of Hitchcock is his ability to toy with audiences by making them wait forty minutes for that horrible event to occur, even though it was emotionally prepared by the music in “The Prelude.”
Example 5.4. Bernard Herrmann, reduction of “The City” from Psycho, mm. 1-3.

“The City” is in A♭ minor, which is about as harmonically remote from the D played at the end of “The Prelude” as one can get: there is a tritone relationship between these two cues. The descending chords in the opening of this cue are alternating diminished and half-diminished chords. This soundscape helps establish the disturbing world of Norman Bates long before the film’s images reveal it to the audience. After the descending chords, the semitone motif starts off in the third measure; the music again plays against the images shown and injects the scene with tension.

The music for these two cues reveals much about Marion’s character, and provides the content for the music that occurs when she steals $40,000. She obsesses over the money and the consequences of her theft, and this is mirrored in the ostinato figures of Cells B and C. A precedent is established with the “Prelude” and “The City” (no music exists within the diegesis); no diegetic music is used throughout the whole film. This allows for a focus on the story and on the importance of Herrmann’s score, which amplifies the strangeness of the narrative. Marion gives in to her desire to steal the money. She becomes obsessed with her theft—first as a
means to marriage and normalcy—and then with the consequences of stealing the money. Her obsession with the money is represented by “The Temptation” (see Ex. 5.5). The ostinato introduced in the first measure is slightly varied in pitch and rhythm throughout the cue, and is derived from the bass line and semitone figures of Cell C of “The Prelude.” The oscillating variations in the rhythm represent Marion’s anxiety over the theft, her hesitancy and doubt, and the instability of her relationship with Sam. The cue is played with minimal audio distractions, as there is no dialogue, voiceover, or ambient sound effects. “The Temptation” is comprised of an ostinato that initially appears in the first measure, and then is transposed down a step in the second, forming a cell that Herrmann manipulates through the rest of the cue. The obsessive repetition of this two-measure cell provides a musical reflection to the nature of Marion’s obsession. The ostinato features a repetition of each new two-bar permutation of the opening two measures: measures 1-4 begin on D and moves to C, mm. 5-8 from F♯ to F, mm. 9-12 from E to D, and mm. 13-16 from C to B. The pattern then begins to repeat. Herrmann maintains the structural framework of this cue in relation to the “Prelude”

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145 Bruce, Bernard Herrmann: Film Music and Narrative, 193.
and “The City.” The semitone descent, not only in the whole notes and dotted half notes, but also in the ostinato, provides a musical characterization for ideas established earlier in the film (that something bad is going to happen Marion as a result of her actions).

The form of the first sixteen measures of “The Temptation” can be arranged into four-bar phrases. The fact that the form of this cue is regular reflects the emotional and mental state of Marion at this point in the film: she has not yet become completely obsessed with the money, nor has she met Norman yet, so the music to accompany her is only varied on the surface of the music (in the rhythm of the ostinato). Due to the small degree of change within the ostinato, and the semitone nature of the whole note motif, D is the pitch center for this cue. A tonality of D minor is reduced by the majority of chords being diminished in quality—either half-diminished or fully-diminished seventh chords. The unusual resolution of these chords adds to the general mood of uneasiness. The ostinato references Marion’s obsession, and the dissonance heightens just how far removed from normal her actions are. Herrmann achieves in this cue an ability to relate the emotional duality (obsession and doubt) of Marion in this scene.

The music associated with Marion and her flight out of Phoenix is based on techniques from previous Herrmann scores: motivic development through repeated short musical cells, the minor-major seventh chord, and the frequent use of ostinato. Once Marion arrives at the Bates Motel, much of these ideas are slowly exchanged with musical techniques associated with Norman. The ostinato that has come to represent Marion’s obsession with money is heard in a new context as Norman is facing his temptation (Marion), who represents a threat to Mother’s authority.
This shift in musical style begins with “The Madhouse,” which represents the first real glimpse into the inner thoughts of Norman. This music accompanies the scene where Norman and Marion discuss Norman’s mother over sandwiches. Norman quickly masks his flash of insanity, and Marion realizes that a conversation about Norman’s mother is not one she wants to have. The cue begins on the word “madhouse” when Marion asks Norman, “wouldn’t it be better if you put her someplace?” Norman leans in and responds, “You mean an institution? A madhouse?” She is surprised by the venomous response. The scene provides a glimpse into a 1960’s view of disability, and it also showcases the difference between what conversations about disability sounded like then. People today would not use such terminology as “madhouse” or have an awkward search for words due to embarrassment. General awareness about people with disabilities has increased, as well as the ability to talk about/to them.

The music for this scene plays a three note motif associated with Norman’s madness, which is played by the cello and bass and acts as a frame for the entire cue (see Ex. 5.6). The motif, which Bruce calls the “Madness Motif,” is represented by the notes F, Eb, and D.146

Rather than descend in step-wise motion, though, Herrmann displaces the Eb up an octave. This

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146 Bruce, Herrmann Film Music and Narrative, 194.
results in an ascent of a minor seventh followed by a descent of a major ninth. These intervals are liberally used throughout the rest of the cue, and in much of the music from this point in the film to the end.¹⁴⁷ The use of sevenths and ninths throughout “The Madhouse” creates a tapestry of sound that is neither tonal nor melodic. As Norman repeats the idea of sending his mother to an institution, the viola and cello play a duet in counterpoint, while the cellos are rhythmically offset by an eighth note (see Ex. 5.7). This rhythm, along with the atonal harmonies, muted strings, and slow tempo, represent Norman’s madness and his struggles to hide it.

Example 5.7. Herrmann, “The Madhouse,” viola and cello line, mm. 1-3.

The next section of the music underscores Norman’s rant about patient treatment (see Ex. 5.8). There is a natural pause between each of Norman’s lines that Herrmann fills with two pulses of chords after the words “places,” on “cruel” and after “there”: “Have you ever seen the inside of one of those places? The laughing and the tears, and the cruel eyes studying you. My mother, there?”¹⁴⁸ A musical punctuation on the word “cruel” creates a significant juxtaposition between text and music; this provides insight not found in the dialogue alone, the staging, or

¹⁴⁸ The dialogue for this scene also alludes to the film’s audience, judging Norman with “cruel eyes.”
the camerawork. It is also the only one of the three musical punctuations that changes chords. The first chord (spelled E-B-F-D♭), the second group of chords (spelled C♯-A-G♯ and G♯-C-G), and the third chord (spelled E♭-A♭-E) are all atonal and yet all contain either perfect fourths or fifths. The spelling of these chords relates to the duality of Norman and Marion by containing elements of both tonality (perfect intervals) and dissonance (atonality).

Example 5.8. Herrmann, “The Madhouse,” violin 2, viola, and cello line, mm. 4-6 aligned with dialogue and shots from Psycho.

The next instance of musical and visual counterpoint occurs in measures 13-19, after Norman says, “Of course, I’ve suggested it myself” (see Ex. 5.9). Next, three statements of the “Madness Motif” accompany the lines, “It’s not as if she were a maniac, a raving thing. She just

149 These chords contain set classes commonly used by composers of the Second Viennese School (Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg). Schoenberg, especially, was fond of using a specific set class to denote madness (016, which occurs in the last two chords of “The Madhouse”). This set class is prominently used in Schoenberg’s Pierrot Lunaire. For more information see see Allen Forte, The Structure of Atonal Music (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973).
goes a little mad sometimes. We all go a little mad sometimes. Haven’t you?” Marion responds with an affirmative as the music dies away. This dialogue and the music here is significant. All of the musical techniques associated with Norman and his madness are used: atonal harmonies, rhythmic dissonance, octave displacement, and the one leitmotif of the entire film. Hitchcock literally spells out his belief in the script during this scene.

“‘It’s not as if she were a maniac, A raving thing.’

“She just goes a little mad sometimes”

“We all go a little mad sometimes. Haven’t you?”

“Yes.”

Example 5.9. Herrmann, “The Madhouse,” mm. 15-19 aligned with dialogue and shots from Psycho.

This scene is not only important due to the clues of Norman’s insanity, but it also provides the beginnings of the shift in narrative away from Marion to Norman. As Bruce says, the music has
prepared us for the substitution of the story of one for that of the other. But the function of the music here is considerably more complex than this, striving also to suggest by formal means Norman’s madness. It achieves this by the interplay between the upper and lower ‘voices’ of the music—their distance apart and their interaction in the polyphonic texture; by the restless, dissonant character of the piece; and, in addition, by the direction to play con sordino [with mutes]. This last muting of the strings, combined with the pianissimo after the first fortissimo statement of the madness motif, gives the music an inner, withdrawn quality. But it is the rhythmic and harmonic interplay of the voices of this musical segment which gives it its most unsettling quality.150

“The Madhouse” is diverse in its functions as an underscore, a way of building tension, and an important dramatic moment in the narrative. The two cues that immediately follow provide further insight into Norman’s madness: “The Peephole” and “The Murder.”

“The Peephole” continues the musical exploration of Norman’s character. Another ostinato symbolizes obsession and the insistently compulsive nature of a psychotic man. In this case, Norman’s growing obsession with Marion and the sensual threat she represents is presented in this music. Unlike “The Temptation,” though, this ostinato does not alternate in pitch or rhythm as often. It is far more insistently regular; this illustrates that Norman’s irrational obsession is not temporary (unlike Marion’s irrationality). The scene unfolds as Marion leaves the office to get ready for bed. Norman checks the registry and sees “Marie Samuels,” which is not the name she just gave him in conversation (Marion Crane). Norman eats some candy, closes the office door, and looks through a peephole from the office to the room where Marion is undressing. The peephole is covered by “Susannah and the Elders” which is itself full of symbolism: it depicts a woman being accosted by two men.151 He replaces the

150 Bruce, Herrmann Film Music and Narrative, 195.
151 The painting is taken from a story in the Catholic Bible from The Book of Daniel.
painting and goes to confront Mother, but his determination is undermined and he sits in the kitchen brooding.

As Norman is watching Marion through the peephole, the ostinato begins by playing two notes together at an interval of a whole step (B and C♯). Underneath the ostinato, the viola plays a dotted half-note alternating intervals of a half step and a tritone (see Ex. 5.10). This cue features Herrmann’s musical representation of obsession suggested by the ostinato. It also continues the atonal ideas presented in “The Madhouse.” Whereas the music associated with Marion has triadic harmonies and pitch-centers, Norman’s music features the opposite of this.

“The Peephole” begins with the dissonant ostinato and the semitone and tritone melody, but changes when the camera shifts to Marion: the violin shifts to an extreme high pitch, and the dynamic change from pp to ff over a short amount of time (see Ex. 5.11). This mirrors the emotional turbulence Norman feels when he sees Marion. Her musical influence takes over at this point: the ostinato drops to one pitch, and the harmonies above it become triadic (much like the previous cues associated with Marion). Herrmann musically constructs
Norman’s mental distress: not only is the ostinato of “The Peephole” suggestive of his mental disability, but the introduction of new material in mm. 19 shows Norman’s inability to perceive Marion’s sexuality as anything other than a threat.

The cue that is most famously associated with Psycho is “The Murder.” This cue, like the two that precede it, is very rhythmic and dissonant. It is marked by a downbow articulation for each note, and a cascading series of pitches in the extreme high register of each instrument:


first an E, then an Eb, then an F, and finally a Gb (see Ex. 5.12). This cluster of pitches creates the first cue of the film that does not feature a melody or motive. This music is viscerally

152 Kelly, “Inside the Madhouse,” 55.
savage and is a fitting accompaniment not only for the brutal murder of Marion, but also as a musical representation of Norman’s disability. The dissonance of the previous cues (“The Madhouse” and “The Peephole”) culminates in “The Murder,” which visually features Norman at one of the most disabling moments of his psychosis (He is unable to deal with his obsession with Marion, and he therefore has to kill her in order to satisfy his urges. This is musically mirrored in the sound track: as Norman’s obsession with Marion builds through “The Peephole,” the music becomes more atonal and dissonant until a violent explosion of sound occurs at the beginning of “The Murder.”

The cue’s form is AB, and it is divided by the two main visual components that comprise the scene: the stabbing montage (the first sixteen measures where the music is set in the strings’ highest tessitura), and Marion’s death after the murderer flees the scene (the next twenty measures, which is musically set in the lowest range). These two components complement one another and act as a mirror for the scene. Marion’s terror (and screams) are accompanied by screaming strings, and as her life’s essence is literally being washed down the
drain, the rhythmic push of the earlier section is slowed down and the instruments’ ranges are lowered. The cue is derived from tritones and semitones. The final chord heard in “The Murder” contains a tritone between F♯ and C in the top two voices (see Ex. 5.13). This is reminiscent of the tritone melody of “The Peephole.” Norman’s mental disabilities are on full display in this scene (psychosis, schizophrenia, multiple personalities), so Herrmann uses modern musical techniques (chord clusters based on semitones and tritones, extreme ranges, and exaggerated bowing) to represent Norman’s madness.

“The Murder” ends Marion’s musical ideas in Psycho, but it also links to thematic ideas heard previously in the second half of “The Prelude” (see Ex. 5.3). As musicologist Stephen Husarik states,
One of the musical reasons we suspect that Norman is the killer is because the tonic notes of his ‘Psycho Theme’ (E flat and E) are presented in a cascading chord cluster that references the eight-note rhythm of ‘The Psycho Theme.’ . . . Norman is musically transformed into the deadly knife itself as he stabs Marion to death with atonal chord clusters based upon the key notes of his own theme. Since this is Norman’s greatest moment of madness, we expect to hear melodic fracturing, disjunction, and great dissonance—even atonality. ‘The Psycho Theme’ is here dismembered in the tradition of operatic mad scenes—where tunes are typically fragmented, broken up, and distorted in order to demonstrate insanity in a character of the plot.¹⁵³

As stated earlier, the “tune” of the film, “The Psycho Theme,” has a phrase in E♭ and then in E. These two pitches begin “The Murder” and, as a consequence, foreshadow Marion’s death. The semitone descent, a feature of much of Marion’s music, is also featured in the second half of “The Murder.” So even though the cue is ultimately about Norman’s insanity, it employs the material (albeit in a new way) that is associated with Marion. From the point of Marion’s death, the underscore is dissonant and unpredictable. Unlike Marion’s music which uses many of the repeated two-measure cells of “The Prelude,” Norman’s music is more through-composed and dissonant. It also contains the Madness Motif” and frequent uses of “The Murder” cue (this music appears during Arbogast’s murder and the attempted murder of Lila). The music for the murders is all the same because the motive for the murders (Norman’s psychosis) is the same (Norman’s psychosis). Much like the beginning of the film, the music provides another clue to the mystery.

There is one other cue that derives its thematic material from the “Psycho Theme” which Husarik calls “The Discovery.”¹⁵⁴ It is fragmentary, consisting of sequential sixteenth-note

runs: every two measures, the sequence starts on a new pitch. The pattern of notes spell out the first five pitches of the “Psycho Theme,” transposed up a half step (B-C-D-C-B instead of B♭-C♭-D♭-C♭-B♭, see Ex. 5.14). This music accompanies the moment when Lila discovers Mother’s corpse and her hand knocks the lightbulb. Norman rushes in, his secret exposed, and tries to kill Lila. Sam is able to stop him. This is the musical crux of the entire film, and Herrmann links “The Discovery” with “The Prelude” through his masterful thematic manipulation. This cue reinforces the theme of duality, uniting Marion’s disabling secret (her obsession with money) to Norman’s disability (his obsession and schizophrenia).

The film reaches its conclusion with an extended close-up of Norman’s face. A ghostly superimposition of Mother’s skull over Norman is shows for a few frames, proving that Norman’s identity has been replaced by that of Mother. The final shot shows Marion’s car pulled out of the swamp, and Herrmann uses the three-note “Madness Motif” one last time. It is an effective ending for a fascinating musical journey. The “Psycho Theme” and the ostinato associated with Marion seems like such a long time ago, so it is fitting that we do not hear any aspect of them at the conclusion of the film, even if the visual track alludes to her.
Herrmann translates Marion’s moment of insanity, and her resulting obsession, doubt, and guilt into music very effectively. By using ostinati, bitonality, and chords like the minor-major seventh chord in unique ways, he represents Marion’s emotions through purely musical means. Cues such as “The Temptation,” “The Prelude,” and “The City” illustrate Marion’s slow descent into irrationality (from her point of view, she is acting out of character). The music hints at the horrors to come (but there is no other context for this horror except for the mood of the music). When Marion finally meets Norman, she also has no context: for the danger that she is in or for Norman’s level of irrationality. His madness has completely consumed him. When the narrative focus begins to shift to Norman, the musical world changes to reflect the severity of his disabilities. Norman’s sound world is atonal: cues such as “The Murder,” “The Madhouse,” and “The Discovery” represent his disabilities through use of the “Madness Motif,” extreme register shifts, aggressive rhythm, and atonality.

Marion and Norman are also linked throughout the film. Hitchcock references the dualistic nature of the film and its main characters in a number of ways: visually, it is represented in mirrors, in bird imagery, and in the film’s opening credits. Duality is represented musically in the similarities of structure between “The Temptation” and “The Peephole,” the use of the “Psycho Theme” to frame the film with “The Prelude” and “The Discovery,” and the use of the “Madness Motif.” Herrmann’s musical treatment of the characters’ disabilities unites the themes of the film. Interpreting the film from a Disability Studies point of view expands upon the interpretations of the film and provides a deeper appreciation for Psycho as one of Hitchcock and Herrmann’s collaborative masterpieces. An analysis of the film using Disability Studies as a lens also highlights the importance of the music: not only does Herrmann’s score
drive the narrative, it also shows the inner emotions and thoughts of the main characters. The music for Marion and Norman reflect the differences between rationality and madness, and capture an unseen disability for audiences to hear.
Chapter Six
Conclusion

In *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *Vertigo*, and *Psycho*, Hitchcock effectively uses all avenues of expression to represent the various disabilities of the major characters. Hitchcock does not depict just one type of disability in these films, but characterizes different mental and physical forms. In order to achieve these representations, Hitchcock manipulates audiences, devises new techniques in camerawork (like the vertigo effect of moving the camera back while zooming the lens in), and explores themes not usually seen in mainstream Hollywood movies.

Modern reception of Hitchcock’s movies allows for a form of analysis not readily available when Hitchcock made his movies. Once his films left theaters, Hitchcock scholars would have to rely on their memory, interview Hitchcock, or would to find a reel of the film to use. Today, technologies like streaming internet, DVD, and the ability to watch scenes repeatedly make a scholar’s job easier, but the lack of ability to interview means that a study such as the representation of disability in the music of Hitchcock’s films is more open to interpretation. These interpretive analyses lead to several points that need to be clarified.

First, all of Hitchcock’s films are narrative. As such, whenever disability is appropriated by Hitchcock, a paradigm is created comparing something abnormal to a norm. This dichotomy is displayed in many disability discourses and is heightened in Hitchcock’s films because of how disability functions within a narrative. Usually, Hitchcock uses disability as a reflection of

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characters who are different from the norm. In *Psycho*, for example, the abnormal (Norman) is in conflict with the normal (Marion) ending in the destruction of both. Due to the defamation of this norm, disability can be used as a metaphor for a subtler issue (like the bond between an emotionally out-of-touch photographer with his socialite girlfriend in *Rear Window*), as an obstacle to be overcome, or as a narrative prosthesis. Whenever a representation of disability is used, though, a deviation from the standard practice of representation is necessary. In *Rear Window*’s narrative, for example, this deviation occurs by not using various locations, limiting the audience’s awareness of events (except for one key scene) to just what Jeffries knows, and have Jeffries’s physical disability mirror a lack of emotional stability.¹⁵⁶

Another consequence is the appropriation of disability in the context of Hitchcock’s films: due to the fact that the films are all narratives, disability is often used as a way of raising the tension or suspense of a scene. In *Rear Window*, for instance, the climax of the film occurs when Thorwald assaults Jeffries in his apartment, and Jeff cannot defend himself adequately due to his immobilized leg. The suspense comes from the audience not knowing what Jeff is going to do to resolve the confrontation. Music can be complicit in delivering this suspense, as in the parlor scene in *Psycho*. The tension rises because of “The Madhouse” cue, which accompanies Norman and Marion’s conversation about institutionalizing Norman’s mother. Norman’s reactions during this conversation, as well as the accompanying music, act as a marker for insight into Norman’s personality: he is “enfreaked” through the harsh atonality of the music.

¹⁵⁶ The scene in question is when Thorwald leaves his apartment with a woman in the middle of the night. Jeffries is asleep.
Next, whenever Hitchcock’s films are done filming, one of the next steps in developing a finished product is the composing of the score. With the visual imagery in place, the movie’s music buttresses the narrative. Whenever a visual defamation of a norm is used to represent disability, Herrmann would often employ musical differences as well: techniques such as bitonality, the minor-major seventh chord, and ostinato would serve as a means to musically represent disability. The use of these techniques greatly differed from the standard practice of Hollywood film composers. With the disabilities represented in Vertigo and Psycho being mental, the music serves as an auditory clue to the characters in question. Music makes an “invisible” disability “visible” through its representation in music.

Those who would be critical of Hitchcock in this case could point out that his use of disability as a theme is in the context of a Hollywood filmmaker trying to make money in order be appealing to an audience that, for the most part, is not disabled. The conversations raised by watching a Hitchcock film are thus pretty “safe;” he is not willing to risk a movie about disability where it’s use is not approved by the general consensus of society. I would counter that point with the argument that even though, by today’s standards, Hitchcock’s treatment of disability is not groundbreaking or sensitive to the ways in which we discuss disability today, the films discussed in this document were shocking to contemporary audiences. Psycho especially touched a nerve with mainstream audiences, many of whom had never seen representations of severe mental disabilities. Rather than disapproving, audiences went to see the film to experience the shocks for themselves. Hitchcock’s films thus represent moments of artistry in a popular-culture medium that combines movie imagery with musical representation to create works that many today still consider to be masterpieces of the genre. This dissertation shows
that a musical representation of disability in film is a valid interpretational tool for creating a deeper appreciation for Alfred Hitchcock’s films.
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Appendix
Plot Summaries for Hitchcock’s Films

THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH

After inadvertently insulting one of the local women on a bus, Hank McKenna meets the mysterious Louis Bernard, a local man who is able to appease those upset by the boy’s behavior. Hank’s mother, Jo, is suspicious of Bernard because he acts too friendly to Hank and her husband Ben. As the McKenna’s get back to their hotel room to go to dinner, Jo sings “Que Sera, Sera” to Hank, who whistles along. At dinner, they meet the Draytons, and the McKennas agree to go to the market with them in the morning. They run into Bernard at the market, and a chase sequence begins that culminates with Louis being stabbed in the back. As Bernard is dying, he warns Ben of an assassination plot in England dealing with Ambrose Chappell. As the police arrive, they need to question Ben, so arrangements are made for Mrs. Drayton to look after Hank until they get back. When Ben is released by the police, the Draytons have checked out of their hotel and are gone; Hank is also missing. Ben gets a phone call saying Hank has been kidnapped, and the McKenna’s silence is the only way to guarantee his safety.

Ben needs to break the news of the kidnapping to his wife (see the epigraph). He coerces her into taking sedatives before revealing that Hank is gone. They decide to find out as much as they can about Ambrose Chappell. Ben thinks Ambrose is a person, so he visits a taxidermist. Jo, meanwhile, realizes that Ambrose Chappell is a place, and she meets up with Ben there. They participate in a church service run by the Draytons. Using the singing of a hymn as a cover, Jo tells Ben what the next step is going to be. They wait for the service to end, and Ben gets locked inside. Jo, waiting outside, does not realize that Hank and the Draytons left out a back entrance, and she gets the police to try to open the locked Chappell for her. When they
are unsuccessful, she convinces them to go to Royal Albert Hall where the assassination attempt is going to happen. The assassin meets her there, and warns her to keep quiet. Ben meets up with Jo at the concert hall after the *Storm Clouds Cantata* has begun.

As the music plays, Ben and Jo begin a frantic search for the assassin. Ben tries to open the locked doors to the box seats to confront the assassin while Jo is wrestling with the decision to save her son or the assassin’s target, a Prime Minister attending the concert. Her frustration culminates in a scream, which occurs immediately before the assassin fires his shot. The disruption causes the assassin to miss, and when Ben bursts into the assassin’s box, the would-be killer falls to his death in an attempt to escape. Wounded, the Prime Minister thanks Jo for saving his life.\(^{157}\)

Ben and Jo convince the embassy to let them in, and the Prime Minister recognizes Jo as a famous Broadway singer and invites her to sing something. She knows that Hank is upstairs in the embassy and loudly sings “Que Sera, Sera” so he can hear her. Hank starts whistling along, which enables Ben to track down his son’s location. Mrs. Drayton, who has been wrestling with her own frustrations, lets Ben take Hank without complaint. Mr. Drayton tries to stop Ben on the staircase, and is shot. The shot gets the attention of everyone in the embassy, and the McKenna family is finally fully reunited with one another.

\(^{157}\) This sequence has been influential to many filmmakers over the years, including 2015’s *Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation*, directed by Christopher McQuarrie. In this movie, Ethan Hunt (Tom Cruise) has to stop an assassination attempt at the Vienna Opera during a production *Turandot* where “Nessun Dorma” is the featured song). Whereas Hitchcock’s version is full of symbolism and features a piece of music not readily known by most people, here “Nessun Dorma” distracts from the film due to its familiarity. Also, rather than stopping the assassination attempt, Hunt shoots the Prime Minister of Austria, wounding him and alerting the security detail before the real assassin can claim the kill shot. The end result is a scene not nearly as suspenseful as Hitchcock’s film.
While chasing a criminal on a rooftop in San Francisco, Scottie Ferguson (James Stewart) misses a jump from one building to the next and hangs from a ledge several stories off the ground. A policeman tries to help him, but falls to his death. Later, Scottie is in the apartment of his friend, Midge (Barbara Bel Geddes) and she tries to help him get over his recurring acrophobia and the guilt he feels for the policeman’s death. They are unsuccessful.

Scottie, now a private detective, is hired by industrialist Gavin Elster to tail his wife. He has suspicions that his wife has been possessed. Scottie initially thinks he is wasting his time, but agrees to meet them at Ernie’s Restaurant the following night. Scottie first spots Madeleine Elster (Kim Novak) who is a stunning blonde wearing a black dress and a green shawl. He is mesmerized by her. The next morning, he starts following her through the streets of San Francisco as she visits a flower shop, the Mission Dolores, and the cemetery, where she stands at the grave of Carlotta Valdes, who died in 1857. He then follows her to an art museum where Madeleine sits and stares at a painting for hours. Scottie notices that the bouquet she purchases and her hair are just like the one in the drawing. The curator of the museum tells Scottie that the painting is titled "A Portrait of Carlotta." Finally, he follows her to the McKittrick Hotel, where Scottie observes Madeleine through the second-floor window. Scottie enters the hotel after Madeleine, but the room she was in is empty. He looks down the street to discover that her car is gone.

Scottie returns to Midge’s home where she tells him of a historian who owns a book

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158 Although we never meet the “real” Madeleine Elster, I will refer to the fake Madeleine played by Judy without quotes to lessen the sense of awkwardness.
shop. The historian tells Scottie that a rich man built a house for Carlotta Valdes, and they had a child. However, the rich man threw Carlotta out, and took her baby away from her. Carlotta fell into depression and took her own life. On the drive home from the book shop, Midge and Scottie talk about the portrait; he shows her the catalogue picture. The resemblance to Madeleine is uncanny. Another conversation with Gavin reveals that Madeleine had started to wear Carlotta's jewelry, particularly a ruby pendant shown in the painting. Madeleine's great-grandmother was Carlotta Valdes, a fact that Madeleine does not know. Gavin only knows this fact, because Madeleine's mother told him. The next day, Scottie follows Madeleine to the art museum and to Fort Point near the Golden Gate Bridge. Madeleine strolls by the shore, throwing petals into the bay; suddenly she jumps in. Scottie dives after her. He tries to revive her, but she is unconscious, so he takes her back to his apartment.

She wakes up naked in his bed, where she is handed a red bathrobe. Scottie asks her if she remembers anything; he explains that he rescued her from drowning. Madeleine maintains that she fainted and fell. He gets a phone call from Gavin, who is concerned about the whereabouts of his wife. Scottie reassures him that Madeleine is at his apartment. Gavin confides that Madeleine is twenty-six: the same age as Carlotta when she committed suicide. While on the phone, Scottie hears the front door close and realizes that Madeleine has left. As Madeleine drives away from Scottie's house, Midge arrives misunderstanding that Scottie and Madeleine are in a relationship.

The next morning, Scottie trails Madeleine through the streets of San Francisco, only to find that Madeleine has been looking for Scottie's house. Scottie catches her leaving a thank you letter for saving her. Scottie insists that they wander together. They arrive at Big Basin
Redwoods State Park, where they admire the ancient redwoods. As they view a cross-section of a tree with the approximate dates of historical events. Madeleine goes into a trance, seemingly becoming Carlotta, recounting the dates of her birth and death. Madeleine wanders deeper into the woods, and Scottie follows her. He confronts her about the jump, and tries to bring Madeleine back. By the shore, Madeleine begins to reveal fragments of her vague memories: an empty grave with no name, waiting for her; an empty room in which she sits alone; and finally a tower, bell, and garden in Spain. Madeleine admits she is not crazy; she does not want to die. They kiss and Scottie promises he will never leave her.

Meanwhile, Midge has been painting a picture of herself as Carlotta Valdes and when she shows it to Scottie, he is not amused. When he leaves, Midge ruins the painting, upset with herself for falling for Scottie again. Madeleine returns to Scottie's house, where she tells him of a nightmare, with a tower, a bell, and a village. As she describes the location in detail, Scottie finishes her descriptions. "You've been there!" he exclaims. Scottie is talking about the San Juan Bautista, a mission that has been converted into a museum. They drive to the mission and they enter the livery stable, where Scottie tries to dismiss the dreams logically. He points out certain objects that are real. They kiss. Madeleine explains she must do something. She asks him if he believes she loves him. He replies yes. “And if you lose me, then you'll know I, I loved you. And I wanted to go on loving you,” she says. She starts to go to the church, when Scottie realizes she is going to the bell tower. Scottie chases her into the chapel, and sees her run up the stairs. He follows her, but as he looks down, his acrophobia sets in: he cannot follow her up to the top of the bell tower. He watches, helpless, as Madeleine's body plunges past the window where he stands.
At the judicial hearing concerning Madeleine's death, the judge is particularly cruel to Scottie, as he insults him for letting his weakness get in the way of saving Madeleine. The court rules the incident a suicide. Gavin comforts Scottie, while telling him that, with the loss of his wife, he can no longer stay in San Francisco. Scottie has trouble sleeping. Blue and purple flashes signal his nightmare, as an animated bouquet unravels. He dreams of Carlotta Valdes at the hearing, falling, an open grave, and his body landing next to Madeleine's on the tiles of the mission. He wakes up in a cold sweat.

Scottie has been admitted in a psychiatric ward and Midge comes to visit. She tries to comfort him by playing Mozart, but Scottie will not respond. When he leaves the hospital some time later, he visits the places where he saw Madeleine. Each time, he sees someone he thinks is her. While looking at a bouquet at a flower shop, he sees a striking brunette in a green suit. Although she does not resemble Madeleine in dress, style, or movement, the face is a match. He follows her to the Hotel Empire, and sees her through the fifth floor window. When Scottie knocks on the door, the woman is concerned that he is a creep. He reassures her he just wants to talk. He questions her, and she reveals that she is Judy Barton (also Kim Novak). Judy realizes that Scottie's heart is broken for his former flame, and she takes pity on him.

Scottie leaves and Judy tells her story via flashback. She, in fact, was Scottie’s Madeleine. At the top of the bell tower, Gavin was there holding the body of the real Madeleine Elster, dressed in exactly the same wardrobe as Judy. It was the real Madeleine's body that was thrown off the bell tower, with Judy letting out the scream. Judy reveals to the audience the gray suit that she wore as her disguise hidden in the back of her closet. She begins to write a letter to Scottie, explaining that she was Gavin's accomplice in the murder of his wife. She had become her doppelgänger to fool
Scottie, and use him as a witness to explain that Madeleine was mentally unstable. Gavin had known about his vertigo, and knew that Scottie would never make it to the top of the bell tower. Judy reconsiders this letter, and tears it up.

That night, Scottie suspects he sees Madeleine at Ernie's. He escorts Judy home that night, her apartment flooded with the green neon light of the Hotel Empire sign (whose significance becomes apparent later on in the film). Although he loves Madeleine, there is something about Judy that intrigues him. They have a series of dates, with Scottie becoming happier with the relationship. However, he begins to buy her clothes, searching obsessively for the gray suit and white gloves that Madeleine used to wear. As Judy's resistance to these changes begins to break down, Scottie realizes that she must dye her brown hair blonde. Although Judy begs him to love her as Judy, she has fallen in love with him and so agrees to the changes if it will mean that he will love her back. Her makeover complete, she returns to a waiting Scottie who has her pull her hair back for the final transformation. In a dreamlike state, with a green glow from the hotel’s neon sign all around them; they embrace. The room turns into the livery stable from the Mission, Scottie's last kiss with Madeleine, and then back to the apartment. Madeleine has re-asserted her control over Scottie by her “coming back to life.”

A couple of nights later, the two decide to go out to Ernie's. Judy dresses up, and wears Carlotta’s ruby pendant. Scottie recognizes the necklace and figures out what this means. They arrive at the mission Bautista, where Scottie forces Judy to tell him about Madeleine's death. He wants to use this as a chance to save her this time and exorcise his demons forever. As he reaches the top of the bell tower, conquering his acrophobia, he puts the whole puzzle together. He realizes that Judy was the counterfeit all along. He never knew the real Madeleine:
he has fallen in love with a ghost, and now again with the ghost of a ghost. He was being set up as Gavin’s witness. He pulls Judy to the top of the tower, where she protests. Judy pleads that she has fallen in love with Scottie. They kiss. The sudden appearance of a nun, however, surprises Judy, who falls out the window and plummets to her death. A stunned Scottie looks over the ledge, acrophobia cured, distraught over losing the same woman twice.

**PSYCHO**

The story involves the beautiful blonde, Marion Crane, and her out-of-town lover Sam Loomis. They end a stolen lunchtime interlude with a disagreement about their future. Marion wants to marry Sam, but debts inherited from his father and his own alimony payments do not leave him enough money to support her as he would like, so they part leaving their future uncertain. Marion returns to the real estate office where she works as a secretary, arriving just ahead of her boss Mr. Lowery and his client Cassidy who buys a house from Lowery with $40,000 in cash. Lowery tells Marion to put the money in the bank until Monday. Pleading a headache, Marion asks to take the rest of the day off after her errand to the bank.

On the spur of the moment, Marion decides to keep the money; she packs a suitcase and starts driving out of town only to be spotted by her boss at an intersection. Worried that she has been found out already, she proceeds out of town on her way to Fairvale, California, where Sam lives. She keeps looking behind her, fearful that she is being followed. She drives well into the night and parks alongside the road to sleep. In the morning, a highway patrolman stops to investigate her stopped car, and awakens her. Startled and nervous, she arouses the patrolman's suspicions. He looks at her license and registration, taking note of the plate number. He allows her to go on, but follows her for a while, which intensifies Marion's
agitation. Realizing that her car can easily give her away, Marion decides to trade it in for a different car. She stops in at a used car lot, hurriedly pays the salesman $700 cash for a likely substitute, and completes the deal as the same highway patrolman watches from across the street. Nervous, she drives away and continues toward Fairvale.

As night falls on this second night, with her fears of pursuit crowding in around her, she drives into a rainstorm. Unable to see the road clearly, she spots the lighted sign of the Bates Motel, and decides to take a room for the night. As there are no other cars there, and no one in the motel office, she honks her horn upon seeing a light on in the house behind the motel, and a silhouette in the window; a young man soon comes down the path to greet her, and he introduces himself as Norman Bates. He is a soft-spoken and shy young man who tells Marion that he lives in the large house with his mother. The motel seldom has guests anymore since the new interstate bypassed the local highway, and Marion realizes that she probably took a wrong turn in the storm. Still nervous about being tracked by the police, Marion registers under a false name, and Norman checks her into cabin 1 next to the office. When she asks about food, Marion learns that Fairvale is only fifteen miles away. Norman offers to share his supper with her so she does not have to go out again in the rain, and he goes back to the house. She begins unpacking, taking time to repack the money inside a newspaper which she sets aside on the bed table. Then she overhears a shouted argument between Norman and his mother coming from the house. Mother Bates seems to have a low opinion of beautiful young women, and does not want Norman associating with them. He brings sandwiches and milk back to the office where Marion joins him in the parlor just behind the check-in desk. Marion is taken aback by Norman’s stuffed birds that fill the parlor, a product of his taxidermy hobby. In their
conversation, Norman talks about being trapped: just as Marion presently feels trapped by her guilt, Norman is more permanently trapped in his co-existence with his mother and her madness. Taking Norman's situation as a cautionary tale, Marion decides to return to Phoenix to make amends, and try to pull herself out of the trap she has gotten herself into before it is too late. When Marion goes back to her room, Norman takes down a picture from the wall and looks through a peephole where he can watch Marion changing.

Marion sits in her robe and calculates some figures, working out how she can repay the $700 she has already spent. Then she tears up the paper containing the figures, and flushes the pieces down the toilet. With a newfound peace of mind, she slips out of her robe and slippers, and steps into the tub to shower. Unseen behind her, the bathroom door opens. A figure approaches and pulls back the shower curtain. It is the shadowy figure of an old woman wielding a large kitchen knife. Marion screams. The blade lifts high into the air and strikes again and again. Marion cannot escape the slicing blows of the knife. The savage attack continues and her killer leaves. Marion sinks down to the floor of the tub reaching for the shower curtain. It rips down around her, and she falls over the edge of the tub. The shower continues to run over her, and her diluted blood flows down the tub drain, her lifeless eyes fixed in a final hopeless stare. From the house, Norman's voice yells out in shock, "Mother! Oh, God! Mother! Blood! Blood!" He comes running down the hill and into Marion's cabin to find the aftermath of Mother's knife attack. He quickly cleans up the murder scene. He wraps Marion's body in the shower curtain and places her in the trunk of her car, and gathers her belongings into the trunk as well. At the last moment he spots the newspaper on the bed table and tosses it into the
trunk, not knowing that it contains the stolen money. He drives to a swamp near the motel, where he pushes the car in and watches it slowly disappear into the dark bog.

One week later, Sam Loomis is sitting in the back office of his hardware store in Fairvale, writing a note to Marion. He has changed his mind about marrying Marion and he wants to marry her right away even if his finances are limited. Marion's sister, Lila, comes into the store and asks if Marion is there. Sam tells her no. A private investigator named Arbogast also enters the store and asks for Marion's whereabouts. His interest is in recovering the stolen $40,000, which Lila knew about, but Sam did not. Arbogast is convinced that Marion is somewhere in this town close to her boyfriend, so he sets out on a search of hotels and boarding houses around Fairvale to track her down. When Arbogast gets to the Bates Motel, Norman tells him he has not seen Marion, and that there have not been any guests in weeks. But Arbogast manages to look at the register and sees the false signature in Marion's handwriting. Caught in his lie, Norman admits to remembering her now, and says she stayed that Saturday night and left early on Sunday morning. Arbogast spots Mother's silhouette sitting at the window of the house and asks to see her, but Norman refuses, saying that his mother is an invalid. When Norman lets slip his Mother's impressions of Marion, Arbogast becomes determined to talk to her, but Norman insists that he leave. Arbogast phones Sam and Lila to tell them that Marion had registered the previous Saturday night at the Bates Motel in cabin 1, and that he means to sneak back and talk to Mrs. Bates regardless of Norman's objections. When he gets back to the motel, Arbogast heads up to the house and goes inside. Sensing that no one is downstairs, he starts up the stairs. As he nears the top of the stairs, Mrs. Bates emerges from the bedroom and stabs him. He stumbles backwards down the stairs and falls to the floor, where he is stabbed again.
At the hardware store, Lila and Sam have been waiting for Arbogast, and they are now out of patience. They expected Arbogast to be back hours ago, so they decide to look for him. Sam suggests they go see Sheriff Chambers to report Arbogast missing. At the sheriff’s house, Chambers and his wife listen to Sam and Lila tell their story. At their urging, Chambers phones the motel and talks to Norman, who says that the detective had been there but had left. When Lila presses Chambers about the mother, Chambers tells them that Norman's mother has been dead and buried for the past ten years, having poisoned her lover and herself in the only murder-suicide in Fairvale's living memory. But Sam and Lila insist that there is an old woman. That makes the sheriff wonder, if Norman's mother is up there at the motel, then who is buried in that grave in Green Lawn Cemetery?

Norman is worried about all the people who have been snooping around. His concerns lead to another unseen argument with Mother in which he tells her she should hide in the fruit cellar for a few days. She refuses. In spite of Mother's protests, Norman carries his mother downstairs for her safety.

The next morning, Lila and Sam meet Sheriff and Mrs. Chambers coming out of church. The sheriff has already been to the motel before church services. Norman is alone out there, he says. He saw the whole place. The detective has probably just moved on to pursue a lead without telling them. He suggests that Lila report a missing person and a theft, and let the law find her sister. Unsatisfied, Lila and Sam decide to go out to the motel for themselves. Their plan is to register as husband and wife and check into a cabin. Then they will search every inch of the place, inside and out. Norman assigns them to cabin 10, and Sam insists on signing the register. As he pays and asks Norman for a receipt, Lila takes the key and goes ahead toward
their cabin. On the way she checks that the door to cabin 1 is unlocked. After a brief stop in cabin 10 to talk matters over, and after they are sure Norman is not nearby, Sam and Lila enter cabin 1 to search for clues. The only thing they can find is a scrap of paper with something subtracted from 40,000, proving Marion had been there. But that was never in doubt. Lila wants to talk to the old woman, because she must have told Arbogast something. She wants Sam to distract Norman while she goes to the house. Sam tries to dissuade her, but she insists she can handle a sick old woman. Sam finds Norman in the office and starts talking with him, while Lila circles around behind the motel to the house. She goes in and looks through all the rooms upstairs. She goes into Mother's bedroom, a scene of old-fashioned lavishness gone to ruin. The outline of the woman's body is deeply impressed into the old mattress. She looks into Norman's bedroom, a little boy's room frozen in time. Meanwhile, Sam has been trying to get Norman to talk about money, looking for some indication that Norman has the stolen cash. Norman begins to grow agitated. When Sam suggests that Norman's mother might know something about the $40,000, Norman begins to realize that his other guest may be snooping around at the house. Sam tries to keep Norman from leaving, and they struggle. Norman knocks Sam over the head, and Sam falls dazed to the floor. Lila is just coming down the stairs when she sees Norman running toward the front door. She ducks around behind the stairs and partway down the cellar steps to avoid him. Norman heads upstairs. Lila starts to come back up, when she notices the cellar door at the bottom of the steps. This is a room she has not examined yet, and she risks the opportunity to look into it. Walking through a storage room and into the barren fruit cellar beyond it, she sees an old woman sitting in a chair facing the far wall. She whispers, "Mrs. Bates." But the woman does not respond. She taps the woman on the
shoulder. The chair swivels around to reveal the desiccated remains of an old woman's corpse, her face contorted into a near-skeletal grin and seemingly staring out of eyeless sockets. Lila screams and turns away, and her flinching reaction causes a bare hanging light to start swinging. At that moment, the living semblance of an old woman enters at the door wielding a large knife, blocking the only escape route from the cellar. In the next moment, Sam's timely arrival saves Lila, as he subdues the would-be assailant from behind. The "woman's" wig falls away to reveal Norman Bates dressed in the guise of his mother. Lila, Sam, and Sheriff Chambers are among a bewildered group of interested persons who sit in an office in the County Court House, waiting to hear from a psychiatrist who has been called in to examine Norman.

The psychiatrist enters to tell them he has gotten the whole story, but not from "Norman." He got it from Norman's "Mother." As a personality, "Norman" no longer exists; the "Mother" half of Norman's mind has taken over. Years ago, she tells them, after the disturbing death of Norman's father, Norman came to depend on the undivided attention of his mother. But when she took a lover, the already deranged Norman felt as if he had been replaced. His jealousy could not stand to share her. So he poisoned both his mother and her lover. Instead of letting her be buried, he stole the corpse and treated it to preserve it as best he could. His crime of matricide overwhelmed his already fragile mind, and he began to divide his mind with his mother, to give her back part of the life he had stolen from her. He went to great lengths to preserve the illusion that she was still alive so that he could deny to himself that he had killed her. He began to think and speak for her. He walked around wearing her clothes and a woman's wig to further enhance the illusion. At times he could be both personalities and carry on both
sides of conversations. Other times, the "Mother" half, the dominant half, took over completely. He was never all "Norman," but he was often only "Mother." And because he was so pathologically jealous of her, he assumed she was just as jealous of him and would not let him be attracted to other women. When Norman met Marion, he felt a strong attraction to her. That attraction set off the jealous "Mother," and it was "Mother" who killed Marion, the latest in a series of young women to meet a similar fate. Afterwards, "Norman" would return as if from a sleep and dutifully clean up after "Mother's" crimes, sinking all evidence into the swamp near the motel. But now it looks as if "Mother" has won the inevitable battle that always develops between multiple personalities, and has driven "Norman" out completely.

In a locked and guarded room, the physical shell of Norman Bates sits unmoving as "Mother's" thoughts dominate the mind, free of "Norman's" mental presence. She regrets that she had to condemn her own son, but she could not let him say that she had killed those people. As if she could commit murder. As if she could do anything except just sit and stare. She knows they must be watching her. But she will show them what kind of person she is. Then they'll see. They'll say, "Why she wouldn't even harm a fly!" And with that, "she" stares ahead motionlessly as "her" face contorts into a near-skeletal grin. In the film’s final image, a tow chain begins pulling Marion's car out of the bog.
Vita

John T. Dunn is a native of Natchitoches, Louisiana. He received his Bachelor’s Degree in music from the Louisiana Scholars’ College at Northwestern State University in 1999 and his Masters’ Degree in Music from the University of North Texas in 2002. He is now an Assistant Professor of Fine Arts at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches. He has been at NSU since 2002, and he is the course steward for Fine Arts 1040. John has taught music theory and music history courses there and represents his department as a senator on the faculty senate. He has been the faculty sponsor for the NSU Gamers’ Guild since its creation in 2006. John will graduate in May 2016 with his PhD in music.