Chapter Five

NOSTALGIA, MASCULINISM DISCOURSE AND AUTHORITARIANISM in John Williams' Scores for Star Wars and Close Encounters of the Third Kind

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1977 was a major year for Hollywood, ranking with 1915, 1927 or 1939 as a year of particularly significant ‘event’ films. The release of both Star Wars (back when it was just called ‘Star Wars’ and Close Encounters of the Third Kind again, before it had any ‘special’ or collector’s edition amendments to its title) prompted Jerry Gross to describe the moment as “the Year of Our Lord 1977” especially in relation to blockbuster action films (1993: 7). Gross goes on to trace a genealogy of what he calls “the Big Loud Action Movie”, positioning Star Wars and Close Encounters as key influence films standing between 2001: A Space Odyssey, the James Bond films and the Irish Allen disaster movies, on the one hand; and then, on the other hand, leading to ‘Big Loud Action Movies’ like Die Hard trilogy or Batman Forever. Star Wars and Close Encounters are also identified as significant, although not as groundbreaking as Jaws, in the important essay entitled ‘’The New Hollywood’ written by Thomas Schatz (1993). Schatz cites the economic and marketing factors that transformed Hollywood filmmaking in the mid-1970s, moving it towards the production of blockbuster films that, through front-loading and saturation marketing, were capable of generating the massive profits for the industry. While both Gross and Schatz agree that several elements of production come together to make the New Hollywood a blockbuster; a cultural event, neither seem to regard music as an especially significant factor in the films’ multiple successes. The films’ successes can be measured in many ways: in terms of economics, they can be seen as successful at generating revenue, as entertainment for audience members, the massive ticket sales speak to the numbers of people desiring that filmic experience; and as historically, these films must surely be respected for their success at conveying any number and type of values, the full implications of which we may never comprehend.

Yet music, and specifically the orchestral scores of John Williams, has become an important part of the New Hollywood. Williams’ scores of the mid-1970s have been hailed as a kind of renaissance or re-emergence of symphonic music for cinema (Palmer and Marks, 2001). At the same time, the symphonic score never completely disappeared from Hollywood, and Jerry Goldsmith is one of several who might be unmoved to hear that Williams ‘restored’ the type of score he and others had been writing throughout the late-1960s and early-1970s. It would also be inaccurate to suggest that the symphonic score led to the removal of more popular music from Hollywood’s soundtracks. More than just returning to an older way of making musical sounds (using a symphony orchestra), Williams’ scores are remarkable for their non-historical novel. At the heart of Williams’ wildly successful scores for Star Wars and Close Encounters is an effective blend of memory, nostalgia and manipulative power for the films’ less obvious arguments. Just as both films give the illusion of looking to the future while offering up reactionary arguments steeped in a desire for the values of the past, the two scores similarly resist radical musical languages in favor of the familiar sounds of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. What I want to offer in this chapter is a reading of these two film scores that reveal their subtextual and, at least to some, unsavory arguments in Star Wars, a particular (and central) melodic motif reinforces the film’s overall masculinist imagery and focus; with Close Encounters, the dialectic between the modern and antimodern styles supports those critics who find the film’s rhetoric authoritarian or even fascist.

Musical Codes and Masculinity in Star Wars

Williams’ score for Star Wars sits at the heart of one of the great, unremarked paradoxes of the film and its reception. It is quintessential in the sense that the music does not, in certain ways at least, reflect the images. While Lucas’s mise-en-scène was roundly praised for its illusion of a gritty realism— for example, the space ships and robots show evidence of wear and tear, the scifi equipment sometimes needs repairing, the menacing space station has a seedy trash compactor, and so on — the music could hardly be called ‘realist’ in any sense. As performed by the London Symphony Orchestra and recorded through a Dolby sound system, this music conceives something without grit; on the contrary, it gleams and shines. Williams employs a musical style that has long been encoded with associations of precision, power, and bourgeois subjectivity: namely, the post-romantic, orchestral style of composers like Richard Strauss or Erich Wolfgang Korngold. That such a musical language felt natural for this film was no accident, given its clear connections back to the adventure films of the 1930s, like the Errol Flynn swashbuckling costume epics (scored by Korngold) and the Flash
gender roles, for the central focus in this narrative is made clear for us by the music — is the coming-of-age of Luke SkyWalker.

That the female experience is omitted, marginalized, and subsumed into traditional subservient roles is an observation that commentators quickly made about Star Wars. Dan Kubey wrote about the film's foregrounding of the male relationships and male-oriented viewpoints.

Women exist primarily to provide motivations for male activity; to act as spectacles, or to serve as mediators between different levels in the male hierarchy. When Luke's aunt isn't scolding him, she serves as a mediator between Luke and his uncle and then as a motive for revenge when Luke returns home and finds her charred body. Princess Leia, despite her attractive spunkiness and toughness, basically fills the same male-oriented role. She is the traditional damsel in distress — it is her capture by Darth Vader which begins the film and provides the motivation for Ben Kenobi's return and Luke's rescue mission. Although she does grab a laser at one point and fire a few shots, she is dependent on her male rescuers, and the only action she initiates during the rescue almost gets them killed in the garbage crash. Her most memorable line, repeated over and over by her holographic image, is "Help me, Obi-Wan Kenobi. You are my only hope." (1978: 18)

The boys' club was not limited to the fictional world of the film. In an unauthored biography of Luke, Dan Pollock reports that Carrie Fisher, often the only woman on the set, was required by Lucas to flatten her breasts with electrical tape in an effort so conceal her femininity. Pollock also quotes Lucas as saying that Leia was "sort of a drag and she's a nuisance, just like most little sisters." (1983: 163). And in case Lucas's screenplay did not make clear Leia's role as a relatively passive object, Williams's motif for her (slow, alluring, with the rising major sixth suggesting a passionate longing) further confirms that her character is always defined by her reactive, gendered roles: Leia's motif, quite unlike Luke's, argues little transformation or development.

In contrast, it is made apparent from the opening moments of the film that Luke is at the center of Star Wars, as Williams's score presents the heroic theme, a melody that becomes Luke's leitmotif throughout the film. Commenting on his motif for Luke, Williams has said that he "composed a melody that reflected the bravery, bold, masculine, succinct qualities I saw in the character" (quoted in Michtom 1987: 131). Consider as we first hear it, during the opening credits, when it is not yet clear that the motif will represent Luke, the music sounds brave, bold, and masculine. The martial drum rhythms, the trumpet timbres for the melody and the leaping, distant quality of the melody's shape (ascending first a fourth, then a fifth and finally, twice, up a seventh, before coming to a resting point) are all ways that many composers have earlier used masculinity through music. Many of the features of the Star Wars main title music resemble the main title music in Korgiold's score for Kings Row (1943). While the film's
argic settings are literally words apart, they both share an important similarity: both films are coming-of-age narratives about a male protagonist, and both works imply that character's importance by aligning the character's motif in the film's title.

Many commentators have remarked on the similarity between the Luke and Pavini motifs — act, for example, Adams (1999), Filch (1999), Larner (2001), and Spicero (1997) — and Williams follows Kurosawa in using different forms of the motif to represent varying stages of the character's development. In one of Kurosawa's most effective examples of cinematic technique and character development, the main character from King King, walks over a tumbling, away from the camera, as a child. Then, after an ephemeral stroll covering the passage of ten years, he walks back towards the camera and over the same tumbling only now as an adult. His date is found lying in the woodwind, slowly, softly, without a clear sense of pulse, and thinly, overbled. Then the adult Pavini's footprint follows, unmedicine by the breeze, in a much louder and rhythmically decisive fashion. The shifts in tempo, rhythm, and, most importantly, with subtle effect the audience to Pavini's moratorium.

Williams extends that technique throughout Star Wars where Luke's motif goes through considerable development. The motif occurs several times beyond the opening scenes. As we first see Luke, his name called out by his aunt, his motif occurs in the French forest, slower and more smoothly than during the main title. The melody comes back in late-accent (for instance, as Luke meets with Luke's intakes, often on the woodwind, as Luke is defined as a natural, and slightly,itura. During the scene where Luke and Leia escape from stormtroopers by avoiding across a chasm, the motif returns as it did in the main theme, loudly and braavely, with the melody back in the trumpets. It creates one of the most profound elements in the film itself song of the excitement and the fear — for fear — that girls gives Luke's right before leaving the apathy.

Luke's motif also figures prominently in the music accompanying the rebel's attack on the Death Star, where Williams sometimes shifts it to the minor mode, both in terms of its harmony, as well as through its visual symbols, the attack on the spacecraft marks the final step in Luke's growth as a man in this film. The earlier rebel briefing, where the rebels are shown a film showing them how to produce their missiles, brings a odd resemblance to a sex education film, showing it for how one tiny but precisely-delivered missile can set off the chain reaction that can bring about the explosive climax of the relatively huge and spherical Death Star. The symbolism is hard to define: X and Y emanate (X-wing and Y-wing fighters) are sent off to the giant sphere, and we watch the faces of the all male pilots stretch up and grin as they enter the Death Star's trench. Some of them deliver their missiles promptly and externally, and thus indifferently, while others do not penetrate. That, Luke, with the help of Han and the rest of the rebels, in the trench long enough to find the missiles to its destination, which causes his face to relax as he takes

long, heavy breaths in the afterglow created by the Death Star's massive detonation. Williams' music building, crescendo, ultimately diminishing — counterpoint to the image to enhance the image of the achievement of the first type of malevolence.

It is not hard to imagine why this progression with martial and masculinity would have been so popular in 1977, so sharply after the patriarchal power structures in the United States were challenged both domestically and abroad. The success of the motif in Star Wars, that it was thought that Williams revives the element transforming the sounds of Kansas and Hollywood's golden age, but never improved. The motif has for music works, it seems to be consistent with the rest of the film locate a nostalgic, epic, for a called simpler times. Film and music return us to a film of unproblematic masculine dominance.

Politics, Science Fiction and Aesthetic Modernism in Close Encounters of the Third Kind

Close Encounters was Steven Spielberg's follow-up to the industry-shattering alien, the 1975 film that single-handedly established and defined the current Hollywood marketing machine of the front-loaded summer blockbuster. In the wake of Close Encounters reached the highest-concept, a love story of the cosmos, and alien love story — in a word, alienating. The film's arc — utopia for place, particularly the alien invasion of the E.T. — Science Fiction's feature popular in the 1970s, indeed, Spielberg's early working title for the film was "Watch the Stars!" the coming films from 1975's the thing from another World, was early interest alien invasion films. One of Spielberg's more radical transformations of the genre fell under the influence of the popular model of Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968), which presented the definitive possibility of earlier in the same space in 1950's. Faced with the Earth faced with this huge, visibly threatening alienextravagant, strange and human creatures that care and don't want to know it as. As the tagline went, are you not alone?

The initial release of Close Encounters sparked two divergent responses: to the film enjoyed commercial and critical success, being closely compared by filmmakers, a relatively unknown films. Close Encounters were quick to draw attention to Spielberg's manipulative cinematic techniques. Robert Youngman and Vincent Seymann turned to Spielberg's tendency to substitute a number ofLINDEMAN, "EYES, FACES AND STARS," IN THE FILM'S EYEDESIGN, EYES, FACES AND STARS, 1975, AUGUST 1976. They noted connections, between Weizmannism and the Carter era in the film's attacks on the governing authorities, its rallying against to authoritarianism and elitism and its escalation.
spectacle of the film's conclusion is to realise the extant to which Spielberg authorises in both the diegetic and the non-diegetic viewers and inscribes into the present in Williams' score – the movement from a high modernist vocabulary towards a more familiar melodic vocabulary – serves as a powerful semantic, rhetorical, and critical strategy.

Besides its obvious Science Fiction antecedents, the film also has less-obvious roots in the genres of the religious epic film popular in Hollywood in the 1950s and 1960s and in the Disney magic film, especially Pinocchio (1940) (Perrin 1953). An example of the former, the war epic, has been noted in one or another, the film's religiosity and its theological tone – see Emmann and Seymour (1972); Terry 1951. The central lesson of the parable of Roy Neary is, like Peter Pan, to dream the adult world of responsibility in order to chase one's childhood dreams. Indeed, it serves to underscore the relative productivity of the moral lesson in Spielberg's next alien film, E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial (1982), which is conveniently if not necessarily simple: “to be good.” Some examples of the Judeo-Christian religiosity in Close Encounters: Roy Bowers as a sort of Moses figure, lending his chosen people out of the suburns and to an important promised encounter at a mountain (in his first scene, the crossing of the Red Sea sequence from the film The Ten Commandments is playing on Roy’s radio and Roy is also enquiring as a kind of Noah figure (Moses' typological equivalent). His very name, contains an old Shakespearean pun ("Roy" = 'ro' = 'king'; "Harry" is a "kings" royal character while also creating certain ironies as both 'a king' is an ineffectual, even impotent patriarch within his family and as someone 'true' (the alienated from job, wife, and family), Spielberg's decision to include part of the Bischophe Jingle "Here comes the king' was a financially costly one, according to Fred Karlin, who saw its presence only as a way to increase an illusion of realism (1994: 137). However, it was also a clever way to reveal Roy's kingly status and also his connection with material consumer culture - we hear "The king is coming, let's hear the call! When you've said goodbye you said it all!" just a moment before Roy has his television epiphany that connects one of the 'dudes' running up the mountain with Ray succumbs to the army's sleeping gas, like the sleeping disciples in the garden of Gethsemane.

Roy is selected from a group of twelve red-suited 'pilgrims' and led, armed extended, in the shape of a tree, up to his ultimate connection with the heavens. Other biblical sources invoked in Close Encounters include the interaction experience on his way to Damascus (Roy hoy is lost on the path and the blinding light pums and transformation of the issues of communication (the government workers are involuntary in reaching up to the heavens, in part because of their language barriers, while characters like Roy and Barry are able to intuit messages from the alien), and the para-scientists return of the dead as acted out by the Motherboard's returning of the abductees.

of irrational dementia over scientific reason. Tony Williams took the argument further, memorably referring to Close Encounters as 'a Disneyland version of Triumph of the Void' (1983: 23). A study of Williams' remarkable score can enrich this ideological critique.

Although it is not normally read as a critical aesthetic manifesto, Steven Spielberg's film is tied to John Williams' score for Close Encounters contain, among other things, a familiar rendering of a certain kind of musical modernism that endows that which is meant to be perceived as 'alien'. Music plays a significant role in the film's diegesis, acting as the most important of several nonverbal languages, teasingly connecting some characters while alienating others (or of us not at all unlike the alienation of some listeners with concert hall modernism). The film has already been fruitfully interpreted as one of several post-Watergate, post-Vietnam texts appearing in the mid-late 1970s, offering up a US middle class distrustful of the government, the military and patriarchal authority in general – a populace ripe, as several have argued, for an authoritarian message. Classified generally as a Science Fiction film, Close Encounters addresses some of the traditional questions of the genre – questions of moral and metaphysical speculation, of cultural identity and one's position in the cosmos (or, at least, the suburns) while projecting and personifying collective anxieties onto the easy target of an alien. It is a Science Fiction film that is aware of its generic ancestry, for in it we can find a number of references back to earlier films, including the genre formulating 2001: A Space Odyssey as well as a host of alien invasion films from the 1950s. Beyond, or underneath, the film's political and metaphysical discourse, however, lurks Williams' richly eclectic music, persistently pulling us towards the film's infinitesimally epiphanic conclusion.

The Close Encounters score employs several characteristic techniques of high musical modernism, including aleatoric passages and the use of tone clusters, in addition to the overreaching modernist musical reckoning championed by Richard Strauss in 'Der Rosenkavalier' (1952). An analytical analysis of Williams' score for Close Encounters can enhance our understanding of the overall cinematic text, Spielberg's seemingly inevitable movement from darkness to light, from mystrophy to enlightenment, from suburn to celestial paradise, is powerfullyunderscoreed as the music shifts stylistically from cues with a pointed lack of melody early in the film (emulating the progressive/modernist tone cluster pieces of György Ligeti and Krzysztof Penderecki) to later cues featuring a clear, familiar melodic theme (frequently Disney's When You Wish Upon a Star), harmonised with a post-romantic tonal language. The score thus sets up the more experimental musical style as strange by associating it with the aliens, and ultimately it rejects this modernist musical language, substituting tonality for atonality just as it substitutes a non-descript heavenly existence for middle-American material banality. As a film existing in several versions and rich in intertextual allusions, Close Encounters offers up a peculiarly disturbing response to life in the United States of the 1970s. To look past the visual and musical
Roy's earlier entwined to take his children to see Pinócho follows Spielberg's Christological narrative. A Christ figure, the character of Pinócho finds himself uncomfortably torn between two worlds, that of being a wooden puppet and that of being a 'real' boy. After wishing upon a star, his father's wish (his wish that his only brother) son be transformed from wood into flesh. Along the way, Pinócho faces the temptations of Pleasure Island, the acting life, and that nagging conscience in the form of Jiminy Cricket, who sings the most famous song from the score. When You Wish Upon a Star, a melody that was later adapted by Disney as the theme for their weekly Wonderful World of Disney television series. The melody appears diagnostically in Close Encounters to music box play - a scene of it in the Special Edition and also non-diegetically, as Williams quotes it several times in the final scenes (as well as in the closing credits - only - the Special Edition). In early drafts of the script, Spielberg intended to have Lukin, Rae's original version of the song from Pinócho playing as Roy enters the Mothership. Spielberg's conversion of the film makes clear something that may not be as obvious from the screenplay or finished film: the song When You Wish Upon a Star is what Roy is hearing as he enters the Mothership (Roy "was thinking and hearing a song in his head" and it goes on to print the words)²⁹. The fact that the music is intended to be heard within Roy's head is but one example of how Roy's experience and positioning is strongly set up as the intended subjective positioning of the audience - we are all supposed to be Roy.

The music participates in the film's authoritarian rhetoric; it leaves little ambiguity as to how the film demands that it be read. Williams' score masterfully manipulates the audience through its careful use of a number of widely understood musical codes, some of which are quite cold. A recurring Chase motif in the film consists of obsessive, Herrmannesque repetitions of the first part of the Dies Irae chant (a melody Williams used before briefly in Star Wars, and also in E.T. Williams finds the sorrowful remains of Luke's aunt and uncle, the moment of the famous Mission to John Ford's The Searchers (1956)). This melody is sometimes blended together with an alternating tricking: two chord pattern often a D-flat major with an added sixth to C seventh, privileging a rising tritone melody. This music accompanies most of the early observations of the recurring shape that will eventually become identified as the United States' first national monument and site for the close celestial encounter, Devil's Tower. Could Williams have purposely attached the old adagio in music (the tritone) to Devil's Tower?

Beyond using ancient religious musical codes for the somber (the tritone and the Dies Irae melody), Williams plays with certain modernist vulgarities in order to emphasise the frightening nature of the aliens (before we learn their true benevolent intent, they are set up as mischievous and even ms-macing, they mess up our refrigerators and steal our children). In interviews, Williams speaks of two musical vocabularies, one stern and one Romantic (Bluethenthal, 1998). Hollywood's stylistic hegemony of musical vocabularies has generally avoided avant-garde modernist practices except when incorporating horror or Science Fiction films (there are exceptions to this as well). The horror film in the 1930s and the Science Fiction film of the 1950s both turned to modernism of time. Kubrick's famous theme track/score for 2001 brought the post-tonal tone cluster sound of Ligeti's e a wide audience, implicating that sound with images and ideas of the profoundly unknown and unknowable (the alien). Williams' tone clusters cues for Close Encounters follow that precedent. Referring to the most (traditionally) frightening scene in the film, where Barry is abducted from his mother's house²⁰, music editor Ken Wurmberg has recalled, "the single piece I remember was it was tormented and eerie" (quoted in Bond, 1998: 28). Even though Wurmberg does not name it, it is fairly plausible that this piece was Perdido's famous and heavily anthologised Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima (1960), whose tone clusters and non-traditional string playing techniques can be heard in Williams' abduction music. Extreme dissonance, unusual harmonies and atonality have long been associated with representations of negative entities and emotions, and Williams' use of this post-serial atonal vocabulary here acts only to heighten the sense of terror associated with the abduction²¹. This scene (and its music) marks one of those points where Science Fiction and horror conventions are identical.

Like many carefully crafted verbal arguments, the score's most powerful rhetorical manoeuvres occur right at its conclusion. In general terms, the music in this film progresses from a more abstract, melody-less atonal language (the adagio modernism) to one that is more familiar, melodic, and tonal. The visual motif of darkness and light plays a key part in this - Williams presents a drive towards spiritual enlightenment, finds a musical parallel in the transition from melody-less music towards a "music of light". Every familiar, resonant, melody. Formlessness yields to form; the threatening yields to the familiar as Per- dido's yields to Disney. The closing scenes depict Roy's assumption to the heavens as the government officials who originally predicted his attendance at the event mysteriously decide to include Roy among the twelve other red-handed "pilgrims" and as the child-like humanoid aliens choose Roy from the group as the sole human who will ascend with them. The music begins in the style of the earlier abduction scene but Williams gradually interpolates the melody from When You Wish Upon a Star into an increasingly tonal and melodic symphonic section that juxtaposes the postmodernist harmonies and satisfyingly familiar voice-leading and cadences. Early drafts of the screenplay reveal Spielberg's diacritical placement of the song and his early conception of Roy as a sort of Pinócho figure. Spielberg later wrote that when Royoney walks up the ramp to the Mothership, "he becomes a real person. He loses his strings, his wooden legs, and he goes on that ship knowing what he's doing" (quoted in With Roy, given upon the womb-like interior of the Mothership. Williams' music for this sequence in The Special Edition repeats the larger progression from abstract to melodic, actually juxtaposing the two vocabularies during a tilt shot showing the aliens behind windows. Since one of the main
now known as Star Wars (Episode IV). A New Hope. When pertinent, I will distinguish between Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977) and Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977): The Special Edition (1980). These films are set in the same general time frame, and thus it is often helpful to compare and contrast them. The two films are significantly different in tone, style, and musical score. In the present film, the musical score is more prominent, while in Close Encounters, the music is more of a backdrop. In both films, the music serves to underscore the dramatic action.

3. Given the distinctive influences of Lucas and Spielberg on MS footage crucial to the new action movie. A movie genre of deities is elevated into deities and expensive production. A narrative complexity is relaxed, and the emphasis is on action and spectacle. In the present film, Lucas and Spielberg have utilized some of the same techniques to create a more complex and engaging narrative. The film also features a wider range of characters and settings.

4. More often than not, the score is a key aspect of film sound design, and it is often used to create a sense of mystery and wonder. In the present film, the score is used to create a sense of awe and wonder, and it is often used to underscore the dramatic action. The score is also used to create a sense of mystery and intrigue, and it is often used to create a sense of tension and suspense.

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in the ideas it shares the subject of the chapter itself: ‘I wouldn’t say so’ (printed in Mexico, 1999: 22).}

11. Michael Parente notes that the title motif has become the signature music for the entire Space Wars series — that every film opens and closes with that music — in a paper entitled ‘Building an Empire: Levels of Communication in John Williams’ Film Music,’ presented at the national meeting of the Society for American Music, March 3, 2001, in Lexington, Kentucky.

12. I am grateful to Kevin Brown for sharing that observation with me.

13. Further examples of this finely-tuned psychosocial imagery come from the obsessively repeated symbolic narratives, in the form of road-trip/birth/ini tiation/return narratives (compare and the similar locales in the films and their strategies) — and also the sequences in the Northern part of the films, as in the use of the platitude that occurs with the light saber, a “role of the Father” (Salser, 2000: 69). J. J. Capel has written about the pervasive narrative musculature of Star Wars, noting

14. In the musical language that Williams develops in Star Wars finds its way into later films like Superman: The Movie (1978); Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981) and their sequels, as well as numerous derivative scores by other composers.

15. That Snyder’s ambition was to be “the C. G. B. Shedd of Star Wars” was reported by Frightzone contributor Jim Butler quoted in Variety, March 1, 1997: 46D.

16. It is likely a coincidence that this five-syllable phrase could fit with the five-syllable “communicator” word. Snyder was initiat ed that the melody not be too long, like the seven notes of When the Lights Go Out, but rather something more compact, like a bass line. Williams generated somewhere from 230 to 350 melodies until Snyder settled on the one that made it into the film (Orsman, 1998).

17. Gillian’s observations about Strain’s Melbourne audience, his drabness in rhythmic uniformity, rings true for Williams as well, as when he writes that Strain “may see a composer who hardly recognized the dynamics of modern life and believed that such incoherences should not be marked by a marked musical style” (1999a: 97).

18. The resonant militias to earlier films by many Hollywood directors in the 1970s is discussed in Carroll (1998), and although Carroll only mentions Snyder’s references to a close encounter with the film (‘Flying saucers that stop the highway like Road Runner’) on the ways the ending ‘reflects off the Night on the Lights’ musculature of Fantasia) (232), the significance of the Tenth Commandments to Close Encounters should not be underestimated.

19. The song appears in say’s head in both the original novelisations of the film (Snyder, 1977) and the revised 1989 presentation, Close Encounters of the Third Kind. The special edition (Sydney, 1990).

20. It might be argued that the final scenes of artificial intelligence and government officials, finessed with wide eyes and black jowls in the presence of a mysterious higher power, is in fact the most terrifying image from the film.

21. Williams employs a similar dialectical score, setting up a resistance in opposition to society in Robert Altman’s Between (1972), described as “one of film music’s outstanding creations” by Robert Shearer (1973). As practical, this film is hard to find although excerpts sometimes appear on CD, and the analysis of a few pages of the score are reproduced in Feeney (1975: 305-167).

22. Shavey and Thiel are two composers who earlier had互相sailor s and similar effects.

Chapter Six

SOUND AND MUSIC IN THE MAD MAX TRILOGY

REBECCA COYLE

In the beginning, my approach was very straightforward. I saw film purely as visual and I became fascinated as we took little bits of celluloid and joined them together like notes on the piano. For me, my first feature Mad Max was a piece of visual rock and roll. I cut Mad Max like a silent movie trying to get the rhythm working just for the eye. Only later did I add the sound. (George Miller, interviewed in the documentary White Fellas Dreaming (1993))

In the above quote, director George Miller suggests that his first feature film – Mad Max (1979) – was edited without sound. Yet, despite this emphasis on an original ‘silent cut,’ premised on diegetic elements of action and visual rhythm1, sound is a key (and foregrounded) aspect of the film and its sequels Mad Max 2 (1981) and Beyond Thunderdome (1985), co-written and co-directed with George Ogilvie. The Mad Max film trilogy has been widely reviewed and critiqued. Curiously, the music and sound of the films are rarely mentioned, much less analysed in depth2. Yet the film sound tracks, apart from serving the visual and narrative elements, significantly construct their own narratives, refer to their own generic conventions, and have their own production stories. These, in turn, contribute to the aesthetic aspects of their speciality in the audiovisual texts. Furthermore, as reflected in Miller’s comment quoted above, musical concepts and metaphors have influenced the director’s oeuvre, commencing with the aesthetics that informed the production of the Mad Max film in the late 1970s, and which developed in its sequels.

Miller was born in 1945 and raised in Chinchilla, a small town in rural Queensland. Although television was introduced in Australia in 1956, Miller