BAROQUE MUSIC IN POST-WAR CINEMA

Performance Practice and Musical Style

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Elements in Music since 1945

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Abstract: Studies of pre-existing music in narrative cinema often focus on a single film, composer or director. The approach here adopts a wider perspective, placing a specific musical repertoire – baroque music – in the context of its reception to explore its mobilisation in post-war cinema. It shows how various revivals have shaped musical fashion, and how cinema has drawn on resultant popularity and in turn contributed to it. Close analyses of various films raise issues of baroque musical style and form to question why eighteenth-century music remains an exception to dominant film-music discourses. Account is taken of changing modern performance practice and its manifestation in cinema, particularly in the biopic. This question of the re-imagining of baroque repertoire leads to consideration of pastiches and parodies to which cinema has been particularly drawn, and subsequently to the role that neo-baroque music has played in more recent films.

Keywords: baroque music, film music, neo-baroque music, historical performance practice, musical revivals

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Contents

Introduction 1
1 Baroque Music Before World War Two 3
2 The Vivaldi Revival 6
3 Bresson, Pasolini and Musical Disconnection 35
4 Authenticity and Historically Informed Performance 59
5 The Neo-baroque, the New Baroque and Minimalism 63
6 Final Thoughts 68

Bibliography 71