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Preface

Before you lies the dissertation *A Musical Analysis of Religious and Horror Film Tropes as used in The Omen*. This dissertation fulfils the graduation requirements of the Film Music Composition Program at the University of West London (London College of Music). I was engaged in the research and writing of this dissertation from September 2018 to May 2019.

I have always been a massive horror film enthusiast. The combining of religious and horror music in such films has forever intrigued me. Although the research and writing of this work were at times challenging, it was mostly a thrill to research this personal interest of mine in such depth. Fortunately, both Prof. Robert Sholl and Leigh Phillips from UWL were always available to share my fascination and answer my queries. I want to thank my supervisors for their care and guidance during this process. Without their help and assistance, I would not have been able to conduct this analysis to the best of my ability.

I would also like to give special thanks to Mr Leigh Phillips, lecturer in Film Music Composition at UWL, for having provided me with many of the orchestrations used for analysis in this dissertation: *The Omen* and *The Omen III* by Jerry Goldsmith as well as *Ben Hur* and *King of Kings* by Miklós Rózsa.

Lastly, I would like to express my utmost appreciation and thanks to David Huckvale for his generosity in providing me with answers to my questions, and most of all, for sending me the original scores of James Bernard's *The Devil Rides Out*. With Huckvale's act of kindness, I was ever more motivated to pay respect to one of my idol horror music composers, James Bernard.

I hope you enjoy your reading as much as I enjoyed writing this dissertation.

Sheila Bugal

London, April 29, 2019

A Musical Analysis of Religious and Horror Film Tropes as used in *The Omen*

Introduction

This paper analyses religious and horror film music tropes and how they were intertwined in the score for *The Omen* (1976). Other composers later combined both types of trope (which will be detailed later) in films such as *Hellbound: Hellraiser II* (1988), as well as in Goldsmith's music for *The Omen III* (1981). There is a lack of consistent research on how composers have combined these two tropes and why it is so significant. Kathryn Kalinak, in *How the West was Sung* (2007), only describes the tropes of Western music without engaging with other genre elements (such as haunted towns). The same is true for religious film music books, for example, *Religion and Film: Cinema and the Recreation of the World* (Plate, 1976) which does not analyse religious horror (e.g., satanism). The idea of the sublime is used in this paper to connect religious and horror music tropes. The sublime is naturally present in horror film music because it "is the most effective way to express fares that lie beyond the merely phenomenal world" (Huckvale, 2013, p.44). Religious and horror music tropes correlate because they both express physical (e.g., demons) and metaphysical (e.g., Satan, God) matters that lay beyond all possibility of our imagination.

Religious music tropes in *Ben Hur* (1959) and *King of Kings* (1961) will be analysed because they were amongst the most widely known religious epics of the era. *The Mephisto Waltz* (1971) and *The Devil Rides Out* (1968) are also examined as exemplars of horror music. *The Omen* is then analysed to show how both these tropes interact. To explain how the impact of *The Omen* effected other film music, two further films are explored: *Hellbound: Hellraiser II* and *The Omen III*.

Current Literature

The following provides a short survey of the literature on horror and religious musical tropes. Lerner's research in *Music in the Horror Film - Listening to Fear*, examines the impact of film music and its ability to provoke or exacerbate fear in horror films. This is done through the study of gothic horror movies including *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1941) and *Rosemary's Baby* (1968). Lerner does not discuss the detail of horror tropes nor the significance of religious tropes in horror films. He offers no wholly satisfactory definition of the genre (c.f. *A Companion to the Horror Film* (Benshoff, 2017). There is no doubt that there is a wealth of recent film musicology research on horror music.¹ There is a plentiful amount of research on religious epics such as Stephen C. Meyer's *Epic Sound: Music in Postwar Hollywood Biblical Films*. Meyer focuses on ideological and aesthetical aspects of the religious soundscape only.²

¹ Recent musicology research on horror music includes Shehan, 2018, Dixon, 2000, Hill, 1997, Lerner, 2010, Dupuis and Martini, 2013, Cooper, 2018, Edwards and Graulund, 2013.

² More research on Ideological and aesthetical aspects of the religious soundscapes: Plate, 2008, Callaway, 2010, Callaway, 2013, Wright, 2007.

Religious Music Tropes

Not only does sacred music have a significant contribution to make to our society, but also that it meets a deep and intrinsic human need for the spiritual, mystical, transcendent, or unearthly. (Arnold, 2014, p. 150)

Religious music tropes (as represented in religious epic films) are used as an expressive aesthetic medium in *The Omen*. Religious music is customarily composed and performed for the explicit intention of inspiring a devotion to God (Arnold, 2014, p. 147) (the same could arguably apply to Satanic music). Consistent tropes of religious music are specific Latin rite texts or orchestral pieces that are distinctly labeled to reference 'religious' purposes, polyphonic and homophonically textured choral music, sacred texts, bells, plainchant and organum.³ The term 'Religious purpose' can here be understood as the human aspiration towards the divine, and the desire to have a relationship with God whether in a formal liturgical context or outside the church; religious music has the function of "mediating between people and another being" (Rust, 1996, p. 15). Again, this ideal of mediation could equally be said to apply to satanism.

Steve Neale identifies religious epic films as "two overlapping contemporary trends: films with historical, especially ancient-world settings; and large-scale films of all kinds"(Meyer, 2015, p.3). Epics are set on a vast scale of film-making on all levels including the music. The sort of religious music used in epics such as *Ben Hur* and *King of Kings*, according to Stephen C. Meyer, consists of "a certain amount of diegetic music for bacchanalian dances, religious ceremonies [and] trumpet fanfares" (Meyer, 2015, p. 4). Judeo-Christian religious music can have an iconic function. Religious music becomes an iconic vessel through which we can see God in a similar vein. It becomes a filter through which we can understand the supernatural (see Nolan, 2011). By using religious music as a form of ritual (that of connecting to the supernatural through music) proved significant to Goldsmith's musical development for *The Omen*.

According to Sholl and Van Maas

Religion it seems may have been important for the artistic imagination, but it was clear that these artists were using religion as a means to point to something more than this context (Sholl and Van Maas, 2016, p. 17).

The 'yearning' for 'something more' in the context of religion resonates with the ideal of the sublime. The sublime has three transcendental categories: "God, Infinity, and Immortality" (Sholl and Van Maas, 2018, p. 17). Religion interweaves all three of these categories. Thus, what makes the sublime significant in the context of religious music is that it has been a "major source of inspiration for artists in particular with respects to the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century" (Sholl and Van Maas, 2018, p. 17). While the sublime inspired various art-music composers, the same can be said for religious music composers (music inspired by God) and horror music composers (music inspired by Satan or other metaphysical beings). This feeling (of the sublime) which is translated through spiritual music therefore raises questions about the impact that this has when combined with occult Horror movies. Religious music has a purpose of interpreting or giving an intimation of the ineffability of God. The question of what happens when this ineffability of God is mixed with visual representations of the demonic is rich and complex. Horror music can instantiate Satan as a Deity (instead of or in default of God) and use the feeling of awe and majesty associated with the sublime through this *via negativa*.⁴ This plays upon the fear of Satan or evil (see Russell, 1987) as a well established medieval societal precept and it is a taboo that is exploited in horror films of the 1970s.

³ For example the *Dies Irae* and the *Lacrimosa*.

⁴ "Via Negativa" is "latin for negative path. It is a means of distillation. A way of describing something by saying what it is not" (Hannum, 2019).

Ben Hur - The Star of Bethlehem Cue

Most music in *The Omen*, specifically the *Main Title* cue, glorifies the birth of Satan while in the film *Ben Hur*, *The Star of Bethlehem* cue, glorifies the birth of Jesus.⁵ Primarily, both films celebrate a similar situation, however, the celebrations are of opposing natures. The following music techniques as used in *Ben Hur* reflect the religiosity discussed above.

The Star of Bethlehem cue theme leads on to a second theme called the *Balthasar* theme. The two interweave throughout the entire cue. The *Balthasar* theme is “warm, major modal [and] comforting” (Lysol, 2019). *Balthasar* possesses a wordless ethereal choir which “suggests the host of angels celebrating this event” (Hickman, 2011, p. 110). Upon analysis of Ex 1.0 and 1.1 (below), the modal quality of this piece is established which indicates religious musical intent. The flat seventh in the melody establishes the Mixolydian mode in D and this later undergoes a Phrygian (semitonal) shift. In medieval sacred music, twelve modes were heavily used and indeed continued through until the end of the renaissance (Spencer, 1846, p.7).⁶

In Ex 1.0 below, the I-VII movement is a typical Renaissance progression as vii°b-I. The i-iv-I movement later establishes the music in Phrygian mode. There are two exceptions in Ex. 1.0: in bar two the C is sharp instead of flat, and in bar six the same issue occurs in the viola line. Modalism (evocative of medieval music) is employed in *The Star of Bethlehem* cue for an implied religious topos.

Example 1.0 - Miklós Rózsa, *Ben Hur*, 'The Star of Bethlehem,' Bars 1-8

Example 1.0 shows the musical score for Miklós Rózsa's *Ben Hur*, 'The Star of Bethlehem,' Bars 1-8. The score is for Soprano, Alto, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The tempo is 70, and the marking is 'Smoothly'. The key signature is D major. The score shows a progression from D major (I) to D minor (VII) and then to D Phrygian (i-iv-I). Red annotations highlight the Mixolydian mode in the first four bars and the Phrygian mode in the last four bars. A red circle around the sharp C in bar 6 is labeled 'Phrygian Shift - see Tallis'.

Example 1.1 - Miklós Rózsa, *Ben Hur*, 'The Star of Bethlehem,' Bars 9-16

Example 1.1 shows the musical score for Miklós Rózsa's *Ben Hur*, 'The Star of Bethlehem,' Bars 9-16. The score is for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The tempo is 70, and the marking is 'Smoothly'. The key signature is D major. The score shows a progression from D major (I) to D Phrygian (i-iv-I). Red annotations highlight the Phrygian mode in the last four bars. A red circle around the D-Eb-F# interval in bar 16 is labeled 'Resemblance to Jewish Folk (D - Eb - F#)'.

⁵ The birth of Jesus signifies a pivotal event in the Christian faith.

⁶ Modes reappeared roughly 200 years later with Beethoven's quartet in the Lydian mode (Opus 132, third movement).

The Phrygian shift in Ex. 1.0, bar five is often associated with religion because Thomas Tallis used this mode in his music, specifically his *Third Mode Melody* (see Ex 1.2). *The Prince of Peace* cue sounds almost exactly like the beginning of Ralph Vaughan Williams orchestral work *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis*.

Example 1.2 - Thomas Tallis, *Third Mode Melody*, Bar 1-6 (Music Files Ltd, 2019)



The Star of Bethlehem cue interestingly seems to be of more Jewish than Christian nature melodically speaking. It also has a folk influence because of the seventh flattened mode (see Ex 1.1). The melody in *The Star of Bethlehem* cue is remarkably similar to the traditional Jewish piece *Hava Nagila* (see Ex 1.3 and 1.4 below for comparison). *Hava Nagila* is one of the most recognised Jewish folk tunes in the world and is a staple piece of every Jewish marriage celebration. The tune stems from an old Chassidic Nigh, with the words saying; “Be happy!” (Klepper, 2002, p.17). *The Omen* also uses the Locrian mode with diminished fifth’s, which in theory could also be considered to be Hebrew and Jewish folk. *The Star of Bethlehem* cue is, therefore, a mix of Hebrew folk melody (see Ex. 1.4), and Christian religious elements with modes that are evident in Thomas Tallis’s music.

Example 1.3 - ‘Hava Nagila’ (Balent, 2019)



Example 1.4 - ‘Star of Bethlehem’ Melody Comparison to ‘Hava Nagila’



King of Kings

After *Ben Hur*, Rózsa became known as the „Hollywood composer best for Biblical films“ (Deutsch, 1999, p. 17). The film *King of Kings* is a “dramatic retelling of the story of Christ,” and provided Rózsa with extra difficulty since the story essentially covers the same grounds as *Ben Hur* (Deutsch, 1999, p. 299). Rózsa introduces new Jewish themes in the *King of Kings* score to “augment the Roman themes he had previously created for *Ben Hur* and *Quo Vadis*” (Deutsch, 1999, p. 299).

The final musical movement of *King of Kings* begins with the *Resurrection* cue which plays until the end. Towards the end of the *Resurrection* cue, it transitions into a slightly altered version of the *Epilogue* cue (Filmscoremonthly, 2009). The *Epilogue* cue technically ends the *Resurrection* cue and the movie with a final cadence and big timpani roll. While the *Resurrection* cue celebrates the resurrection of Jesus, *The Omen* celebrates the resurrection of the antichrist. As was evident in *Ben Hur* (*The Star of Bethlehem* cue combining with the *Balthasar* theme), there are also two overlapping cues in the *Resurrection* cue. It is consequently important to analyse the cue which eventually takes over the track: *Epilogue*.

⁷ 'Hosanna,' in the context of the film means “save, rescue, saviour” (Bible Fellowship Union, 2019). Its definition can be compared to ‘Hallelujah,’ since both terms are religiously celebratory. This ties in with *The Omen III*, which also has a celebratory Hallelujah chorus.

Example 1.7 - Miklós Rózsa, *King of Kings, Resurrection*, Bars 17-24

A
♩ = 70
Quicker Main Melody

Chromatic movement

*The word Hosanna (Latin osanna, Greek ὁσαννά, ὁσιαννά) is from Hebrew הושיענא (hōšī'ā-nā and related to Aramaic אושענא (ōsha'nā) meaning "save, rescue, savior".

Example 1.8 - Miklós Rózsa, *King of Kings, Resurrection*, Bars 33-40

Percussive section is utilised.

Suspended Cymbal (sult mallets)

C
rit. **Epilogue Cue** **Slower**

Horror Music Tropes

We can't cover our ears with the same certainty of muting the unwanted sounds as we can avert our gaze to stop seeing something. - Robynn Stilwell (Lerner, *viii*)

Horror films are identifiable “via the representation of disturbing and dark subject matter, [and they] seek to elicit responses of fear, terror, disgust, shock, suspense, and, of course, horror from their viewers” (Kuhn and Westwell, p. 211). Horror also spawns many subgenera.⁸ Narrowing *The Omen* down to the subgenus of devil worship is therefore essential when taking into account the myriad of genres that exist and the striking differences separating them. Horror film music contains a myriad of tropes: unprepared dissonances, lullaby, or childlike eerie high-pitched melodies (sometimes distorted), rumbling basses, bell-effects (which crossed-over with religious tropes), avant-garde instrumental techniques (such as harmonic glissandos), spectralism, large brass sepulchral pitches (again there is cross-over with religious music), and heartbeat rhythms.

The tropes of devil worship are important to examine because they formed a large part of the conceptualisation of *The Omen* score — essentially the little boy Damien is Satan made flesh! Through analysing the music of *The Devil Rides Out* and *The Mephisto Waltz*, horror music tropes are determined. These movies are chosen to represent horror music tropes *before* the release of *The Omen*, and to draw an authentic portrayal of the horror genre.

The Mephisto Waltz

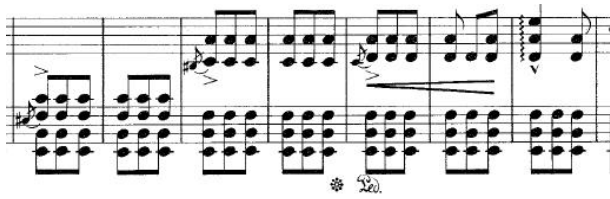
Goldsmith composed a blatantly avant-garde, visceral score for *The Mephisto Waltz*, a movie about devil-worshipping cults. This score is unquestionably meant to unsettle and to complement the visual narrative. *The Mephisto Waltz* is like *The Omen* because it, too, uses avant-garde and experimental compositional techniques. The release of *The Mephisto Waltz* happened five years before *The Omen* and was amongst the first scores that used such avant-garde techniques within the new surge of surfacing modern supernatural thrillers (Huckvale, 2013, p. 61).

According to Huckvale, Goldsmith's approach to this score “differed vastly from previous occult thrillers such as Hammer’s *The Devil Rides Out* with its contemporary setting and Gary McFarland’s jazz-influenced symphonic score” (2013, p.61). In *The Mephisto Waltz*, Goldsmith quotes liberally from Franz Liszt's piece and the *Dies Irae*, “But by and large, this is 100% Goldsmith” (Southall, 2004). A traditional orchestra is used and “terrifying noises from unusual instruments, from screeches and scratches to crashes and bangs” are used (Southall, 2004).

The Mephisto Waltz begins with the imitation of a violin player tuning their instrument. Moments later, the piano starts to play in heaped fifths (see ex. 2.0) with a driving 3/8 rhythm. The open, consecutive use of the fifths, was, at the time, seen as problematic. “Because this sonority was largely ‘forbidden’ it acquired a connotation of the demonic when composers lacked to use it” (Huckvale, 2013, p.59). Furthermore, according to Huckvale, “*The Mephisto Waltz* is the apotheosis of the tritone, particularly in its central erotic section when the tempo slows down somewhat, and the mode becomes lugubriously amorous” (Huckvale, 2013, p.59). To expand on this, the tritone is often associated with the devil (Huckvale, 2013, p.45), because it does not belong to any particular tonality (except for the Locrian religious mode) (see Sadie, 2001, p. 461). The tritone is used as a vessel for creating an icon of evil or negativity.

⁸“Gothic horror, supernatural horror, monster movies, psychological horror, splatter films, slasher-films, body horror, comedy horror and postmodern horror” (Kuhn and Westwell, p. 211).

Example 2.0 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Mephisto Waltz*, 'Opening'



The Mephisto Waltz - *New Miles* Cue

The score for the *New Miles* cue shown in the examples is one of the first versions produced with the composer's notes still on it. Goldsmith was very particular about what he wanted and accordingly left many supplementary notes. Evident in this cue is the application of 'Echoplex'⁹ which gives the music a spacious feeling due to the soft echoing. As shown in Ex. 2.0 and 2.1, Echoplex is also used on the electric bass and alto flutes. In Ex. 2.1, the use of another conventional guitar pedal is evident in the form of a 'Wah-Wah'. The name Wah-Wah is used to describe the guitar pedal as a form of onomatopoeia for the sound it produces by altering the tone of notes which sound much like a human voice pronouncing the syllable 'Wah'.¹⁰

The *New Miles* cue has a reoccurring direction for instrumentalists to play the "highest note possible" on their respective instruments (usually fiddle players), violins playing between the bridge and the tail-piece, and something Goldsmith calls 'High White Sound.' With instrumentalists playing high, soaring noises on their instruments, an uncomfortable and thin sound is created. Our inherent nature determines why the discussed musical outcomes unsettle us. According to Zarelli, high pitches (or unusually low pitched notes, respectively) are not "always unusual; but their deep rumblings or high-pitched squats signal danger almost (if not actually) instinctively." These types of sounds exist in nature in association with circumstances that trigger our natural fight or flight response (Zarelli, 2016).

In Ex 2.1, violas, violoncello and contrabass 'play chromatics between indicated notes as freely and rapidly as possible'. A wave-like, rumbling effect in the bottom notes register results. This storm like quality is particularly contrasting to the high-pitched, shrieking melody. In Ex. 2.2, Goldsmith gives woodwind players instructions to produce a "low guttural sound in the throat" and to "bend [the] sound down in the woodwinds high reciter". In Ex. 2.1, Goldsmith directs violas, violoncello, and contrabass instrumentalists to "hum with mouth closed a note closest to the bottom of H16" while simultaneously also performing chromatics on their instruments. These instructions signify that Goldsmith in 1971 recognised the value of the voice to deliver scary effects.

⁹ Echoplex is a tape delay effect (usually used on guitars) and is a "tape recorder with a second, adjustable playback head that slid on a track, allowing adjustment to the echo spacing" (Hunter, 2013, p. 74). Echoplex is created for guitar use, but Goldsmith uses this effect mainly on the piano tracks to deliver a ghostly sound (Hagen, 1990, p.50).

¹⁰ The musical genres of Rock, Pop, as well as several avant-garde jazz artists (Shepherd, 2003, p.175), use the 'Wah-Wah' pedal. In Ex. 20, the Wah-Wah has been combined with the Echoplex and a fuzzy effect on the bass flute. With Goldsmith merging traditional classical instruments with guitar pedals and overlay effects, a very unnatural sound emerges. The reason this is so impactful is that it combines 'real' sounds with effects not customarily combined with such instruments. The 'alien' quality of the score, is therefore successfully generated.

Example 2.1 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Mephisto Waltz*, New Miles, Bar 92-95 (Hagen, 1990)

4:35

SAL. FL. ECHO PLEX
BASS FL. FUZZ WAA-WAA
MAESTRO + ECHO PLEX

Y.C. 30 SIDE BAND PITCH VARIATION AD LIB
SEMPRE PP

PIANO

EX. 42 HIGH WHITE SOUND

HARP ECHO PLEX
(B BASSO)

HIGHEST NOTE ON INSTRUMENT

CON. SORD. PROTECTOR

VLNS. 2 STRS
4 STRS

VLNS. BETWEEN BRIDGE + TAILPIECE

SOLID VLN

VLAS VC CB - PLAY CHROMATICS BETWEEN INDICATED NOTES AS FREELY AND RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE
CLOSEST TO THE BOTTOM OF HIS VOCAL RANGE SEMPRE PP

SWELLY
DANKA-DE-BELO AD LIB

SEMPRE PP

DR.

Example 2.2 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Mephisto Waltz*, New Miles, Bar 64-67 (Hagen, 1990)

ECHO PLEX
ELEC. BASS + ALTO FLT.
LOW GUTIERREZ SOUNDED
IN THROAT, BEND SOUND DOWN

2 EL. FLTS BLOW AIR (HIGH REGISTER)

EX. 42 BUTTONS (WHITE SOUND)

PND. CLUSTER

HARP INDEFINITE PITCHES

VLAS NON DM. CONT. +
VC DM. CONT.

VLAS GLISS

VC

CB (BASSO)

DEATH TOLL

The Devil Rides Out

The Devil Rides Out score was composed by James Bernard. The film tells a story of how the character Duc saves his friend Simon from a black magician. The story involves satanic baptisms and bloody, terrifying imagery. According to David Huckvale, Bernard's friend and biographer, Bernard's score is "certainly meaty, not so much dripping with blood as rippling with muscular demonic energy" (Huckvale, 2012, p.182).

Example 2.3 - James Bernard, *The Devil Rides Out*, Main Title, Bars 1-2 (Huckvale, Page 183)

James Bernard, *The Devil Rides Out* 1M1, bars 1-2

Andante $\text{♩} = 60$
stopped throughout

stopped throughout

senza sord.

f senza sord.

f senza sord.

soft sticks

p

f sul pont.

f sul pont.

("The De - vil Rides Out")

The title sequence for *The Devil Rides Out* was one of the most intricate Hammer has ever produced (Huckvale, Page 183). As the credits roll, occult symbols drift around in red smoke. The music reminds of Bernard's previous *Dracula* march, primarily through the Dra-Cu-La theme, which makes a modified appearance for *The Devil Rides Out* credits. The difference the *Dracula* theme has to *The Devil Rides Out* theme is that it *falls* an augmented fourth rather than the rising octave in *Dracula*. Also evident in the score is the unending use of diabolic tritones, Bernardian major and minor seconds (Huckvale, Page 183), and the use of a brass-heavy orchestra.

Example 2.4 - James Bernard, *The Devil Rides Out*, 'The Fear of Evil', Bars 7-8 (Huckvale, page 184)

Andante $\text{♩} = 60$

mp

mp

mp

with both pedals

The Fear of Evil cue has a feeling of shaking agitation. With the combination of two vibraphones and a piano in unison, an unnerving resonant sound results; almost as if the piano is playing in a "vast echoing chamber" (Huckvale, page 184).

Example 2.5 - James Bernard, *The Devil Rides Out*, 'Jesus Is His Name', Bars 1-2 (Huckvale, Page 185)

James Bernard, *The Devil Rides Out*
2M2, bars 1-2

Andante $\text{♩} = 60$

pp

This cue uses alternating consecutive triads. Claude Debussy has used similar approaches to triads in *La Cathédrale Engloutie*. Bernard enhances Debussy's original idea for *The Devil Rides Out* by scoring them for vibraphone together with tone clusters on the piano, performed with an arrangement of percussive effects. These include tubular bells, cymbals and tam-tams, adding a glimmering quality to the music.

Claude Debussy, *Préludes*, Book 1, No. 10, *La cathédrale engloutie*

pp comme un écho de la phrase entendue précédemment

Flottant et sourd

Example 2.6 - Claude Debussy, 'Préludes, Book 1, No.10, *La Cathédrale Engloutie*' Reduction (Huckvale, Page 185)

Example 2.7 - James Bernard, *The Devil Rides Out*, 'The Sign of Osiris slain; the Sign of Osiris Risen', Bars 44-45 (Huckvale, p. 189)

Handbells I, II, III, IV: soft sticks, *pp cresc.*

Celesta: *pp cresc.*

Violins I, II: *cresc.*

The four handbells playing an E major triad chord while high-pitched violins and the celesta trill, produce a sparkling effect. Also, the tremolo in the celesta and violins give the impression of the E major triad chord having an added sixth (C sharp). The sixth, therefore, adds a powerful mystical aura to the scene.

Example 2.8 - James Bernard, *The Devil Rides Out*, 'The Raising of the Demon', Bars 44-45

Traps I, II: *Double speed ♩ = 120*

Vibes I, II: *Double speed ♩ = 120*

Marimba: *Double speed ♩ = 120*

B.D.: *Double speed ♩ = 120*

Piano: *Double speed ♩ = 120*

Violins I, II: *Double speed ♩ = 120*

Viola: *Double speed ♩ = 120*

Violoncello: *Double speed ♩ = 120*

Double Bass: *Double speed ♩ = 120*

All ritual scenes in the movie are really just extended ostinati, which lends the required sense of 'Primitivism,' along the same lines as the master of the ostinato, Sibelius, when in his mythic mode. I'd say that *The Omen* theme also has that quality in its accompanying figure.-David Huckvale remarks.

The *Raising of the Demon* cue is a ritualistic scene and a pivotal musical point in the movie because it is the first time Satan is shown. The word 'ritual' is important because it has tie-ins with the Christian ritual- it could perhaps be seen as the key word which ties Horror and Religion together. Rising anxiety by repeated patterns, chromaticism, and extreme levels of dissonance are apparent in this cue, too. The build-up of tension never resolves; in fact, Bernard extensively uses this technique of not resolving the tension in other cues including *Hypnosis* and *Magic Circle* (which are also ritualistic scenes).

Example 2.9 - James Bernard, *The Devil Rides Out*, 'The Raising of the Demon', Bars 44-45 (Huckvale, Page 189)

The image shows a handwritten musical score for 'The Raising of the Demon' from the film *The Devil Rides Out*. The score is written on multiple staves with various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Key markings include 'PP cresc. poco a poco', 'p cresc.', 'mf cresc.', 'slow gliss.', 'sempre sul pont.', and 'WITH VCL'. The score is divided into measures numbered 15, 19, 21, and 25.

The Raising of the Demon cue also features a Bernard's hallmark glissando effect, first used in *The Quatermass Experiment*. The glissandi that continuously grow and fall create a graphic musical equivalent of spine-tingling apprehensive excitement. Also, both the strings and the brass section (at one point) employ the mute. The mute used in the trombones-while they play in seconds-produces a subdued tone lingering beneath a sheath of string glissandi and tremolos together with both vibraphones and marimba; this builds a complex tonal assemblage. Bernard often employed avant-garde and tone cluster effects similar to the works of Penderecki and Lutoslawski.

The Omen

Since the two musical tropes of religious and horror music have been extracted and discussed, their combined use is now examined in *The Omen*. *The Omen* is a supernatural horror film directed by Richard Donner with a musical score composed by Jerry Goldsmith. Goldsmith had previously composed music for *The Mephisto Waltz* which also contained elements of horror tropes (rumbling basses, high pitched sounds and extended instrumental techniques) and religious overtones (plainchant melodies such as the *Dies Irae*, the Diabolus in music — the tritone and large bell effects). The 1970s were also a notable point in horror film history because *The Omen* was connected with the rise of the exploitation film genre and its acceptance by the burgeoning postwar youth market (Kuhn and Westwell, 2012, p. 212).

The Omen marked a high-point in staple horror music by utilising sacred music components together with decontextualised, avant-garde composition techniques. For *The Omen*, Goldsmith had tremendous artistic freedom and the only request from the director, Goldsmith recalls, was based on “a simple ploy to convey the mounting tension in the plot” (Page 72, Dupuis).

The whole picture allowed me to do... I don't mean avant-garde, but some freedom musically, pushing some more avant-garde style since I had done *Planet of the Apes* ten or nine years previous. Maybe those two (*Planet of the Apes* and *The Omen*) are the most avant-garde for me, for film music, that I've ever done. Not that I haven't tried in others, but I had less chances. That's why I liked it; it gave me the power really to do that I wanted to do. - Jerry Goldsmith (Dupuis, 2004, p. 74)

Before *The Omen*, Goldsmith composed for other horror film scores including *The Mephisto Waltz*, *The Other* (1972), and *Poltergeist* (1982). All scores use avant-garde, heavy timbre motifs, traces of plainchant and the *Dies Irae* theme (from the Good Friday liturgy) (Dupuis and Martini, 2014, p.103). Therefore, before *The Omen*'s release, innovative techniques rooted in 20th-century compositional experimentation with “cutting-edge atonalism and aleatoric music, not only in certain sequences but in the score as a whole” (Dupuis and Martini, 2014, p.103), were manifested in Goldsmith's work. The following cues are representative of the film score as a whole. The cues develop throughout and are crucial in displaying the experimental use of the voice. They are also chronologically chosen to analyse musical progression; from the beginning *The New Ambassador*, the middle *The Killer Storm*, and the end of the film *The Demise of Mrs Baylock*.

Note that *The Omen* not only changed other film composer's music in subsequent years but also that Goldsmith's own music evolved throughout the trilogy. In *The Omen III*, the cues *The Second Coming* and the *Final Conflict* (see Ex. 5.1), both have Hallelujah choruses. Hallelujah type choruses also appear in *Ben Hur* and *King of Kings*. Goldsmith's music follows Damien as he grows up and becomes more evil. In the first film, the themes are more basic and raw because Damien is still a child and new to the world of evil. In *The Omen III*, Damien is a politician in power of numerous lives; a more sophisticated version of his younger self. While the earlier movie titles are (musically) more infantile, the music of the later film is advanced, thorough and grandiose, connecting Damien's personal growth in the world of evil.

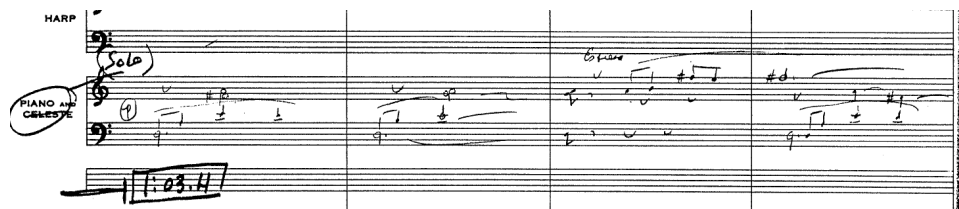
The New Ambassador Cue

Lee Remick and Gregory Peck are walking in the countryside, and the theme is very pretty, it's very bucolic and lovely (...) that's one of the few romantic moments in the film (...) - says Goldsmith (Dupuis and Martini, 2014, p.74)

The New Ambassador cue, which plays at the beginning of the movie, is the only cue which uses Romantic, dreamy music in the film. The scene is portrayed to be idealistically happy. The contrast this forms with the film's horror plot, produces an unnatural, uncanny feeling due to the scene's exaggerated happy nature.

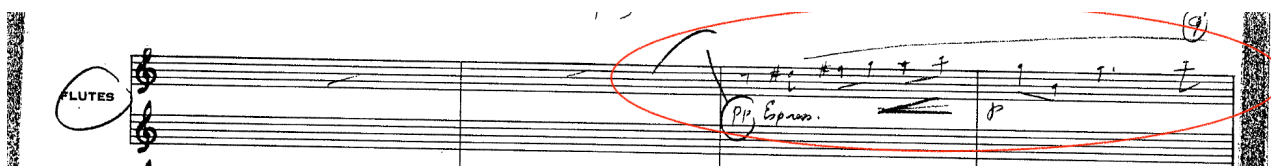
Freud's essay on the '*Unheimlich*' ties in with the feeling in *The New Ambassador* cue.¹¹ In the next scene, the demon-to-be child is missing. His parents are alarmed, and the music follows this scary feeling. Damien suddenly reappears, and as the parents are relieved, the music returns in its entire 'Hollywood' brilliance. Incipently, Goldsmith had written the theme in song-shape (with his wife writing the lyrics, and even singing on the track). However, this version was too cheesy for the director. The song-structure nonetheless, persisted, and the famous seven-note refrain of the love theme (now in a haunting solo piano arrangement) was used rather than Goldsmith's wife singing (see Ex. 3.0).

Example 3.0 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Omen*, 'The New Ambassador', Bars 17-20



Unexpectedly, *The New Ambassador* cue applies in darker contexts, too. The Damien motif for example, which is the short piano snippet heard in the main titles, makes an appearance in *The New Ambassador* cue. The real derivative version of this theme appears at bar seven in a flute solo (see Ex. 3.1). These themes entwine throughout the whole score, shifting the focus on onto family as well as the idea of the family falling apart, therefore Juxtaposing these ideas.

Example 3.1 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Omen*, 'The New Ambassador', Bars 35-36



The New Ambassador cue uses vibrant major-sixth chords and colourful, string-heavy orchestration resulting in a remarkably rich and downright gorgeous theme. The fact that the cue is so Romantic and elegant enables a stronger musical narrative because it forms a contrast with the darker cues such as *The Killer Storm*. This presents the darker musical cues (for example *The Killer Storm* and *The Demise of Mrs Baylock*) with a greater effect.

Contrast is evident in the music within the first two musical cues. *The New Ambassador* cue plays shortly after the first *Ave Satani* cue which begins *The Omen* with a Black Mass chant. The *Ave Satani* cue is essentially a choir chanting a satanic prayer and the orchestra lingers in the brass registers. On the other hand, *The New Ambassador* cue is an over-glorified, Romantic, Hollywood-like tune. The mere existence of this jarring contrast makes *The New Ambassador* cue seem more 'uncanny,' than it would have been without satanic chanting before it. Contrast is also evident in the instrumentation representing the melody in *The New Ambassador* cue, which finds itself reflected in various textural instruments, including the violin (see Ex. 3.2), clarinet (see Ex. 3.3), and piano (see Ex.3.4). The melody in the piece is, therefore, very malleable. Malleability of this main tune is important so that it can be applied throughout the score to draw thematic connections, and provide the film with homogeneity throughout. The melody and harmony in *The New Ambassador* cue are lush, full, and Romantic, relying heavily on golden-age strings.¹² This cue is

¹¹ In his essay, Freud explains his definition of the "uncanny" as something that is at once terrifying, yet familiar (see Freud, 2003).

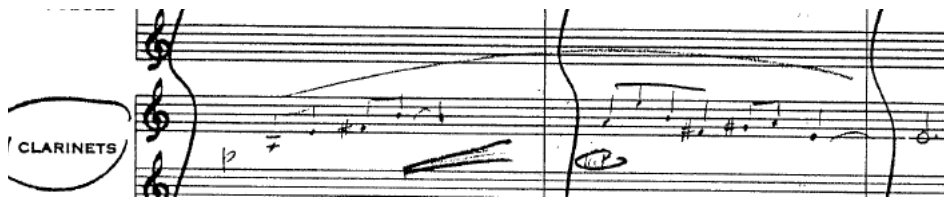
¹² Hollywood-style playing from the 1930-50's.

embellished throughout, as demonstrated by techniques such as the downward harp glissandi (see Ex. 3.5). It also shows Romantic era hints such as the free, unrestricted type of writing, as well as lush unrestricted form of orchestration.

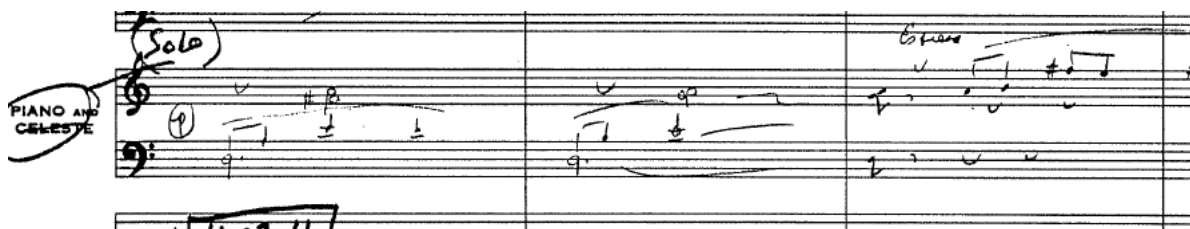
Example 3.2 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Omen*, 'The New Ambassador', Bars 35-36



Example 3.3 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Omen*, 'The New Ambassador', Bar 1-2



Example 3.4 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Omen*, 'The New Ambassador', Bars 17-19



Example 3.5 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Omen*, 'The New Ambassador', Bar 2

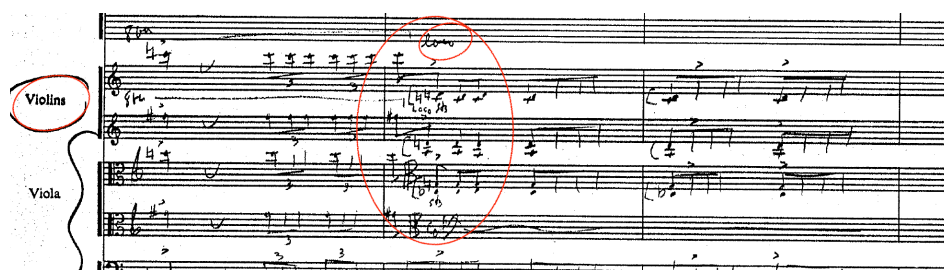


The Killer Storm Cue

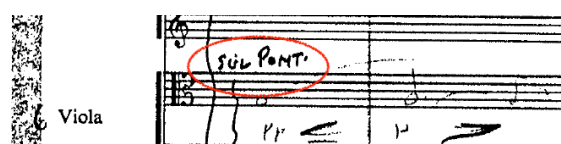
The Killer Storm cue intensifies its use of the voice with the choir exploring different religious elements and avant-garde techniques. This cue features the death of Father Brennan, a priest and former Satanist who tried to warn Robert that his son Damien is the embodiment of Satan. After warning Robert one too many times, Satan has had enough, and in this scene, brutally kills him for talking too much. The scene in the film, visually, is characterised by an unassailable, mighty storm which builds in force with lightning bolts and rain. The storm is hunting Brennan down with the clear intention of killing him. *The Killer Storm* cue incorporates shrieking strings and pulsating trumpets. Chanting voices sing a dark and harsh, discordant mixture of texturally diverse sounds. As Brennan tries to seek refuge in a church but fails to get inside, a strong ostinato in the strings combined with chanting *Ave Satani* rises in a crescendo. Towards the end of the crescendo, warlike woodwind and horns join in. At this point of the shocking climax, a lighting bolt hits the church tower, hurling a post down to pierce Brennan through his chest.

The violin lines follow strict rhythmic, repetitive patterns of thirds or eighth notes in pairs of four, usually accented on the second note (see Ex. 3.6). Ostinati form that repeat in cycles throughout the piece. The unnatural accenting of notes also adds to the uncanny feeling of the cue and highlight the storm-like quality of the scene. Goldsmith also employs various textural techniques in the form of commands such as *Sul Ponticello*¹³ (see Ex. 3.7). It adds to the texture of the scene by adding harmonic content as well as the thin ghostly texture which has a whistling-wind quality to it-therefore fitting in perfectly with *The Killer Storm* cue.

Example 3.6 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Omen*, 'The Killer Storm', Bar 41-43



Example 3.7 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Omen*, 'The New Ambassador', Bar 1



The Killer Storm cue is the first which features male chanting in *The Omen*. It possesses a raw, ritualistic, quality. This cue is the first time that the choir goes to the greatest extent of experimental, avant-garde techniques (thus far). It is apparent that the use of choir develops significantly as the movie progresses with the plot. The religious chanting begins conventionally (conventionally meaning that the choir truly speaks out full words, and traditionally sings in chant) in the first cue of the score, *Ave Satani*.

Goldsmith's use of the choir at his disposal adds an extra element of Gothic frisson, inverting the heavenly choir convention of previous Hollywood Biblical epics. (Huckvale, 2018, p.127)

These days, most horror movie studios emphasise the effectiveness of a "demonic" choir. According to Spencer, "*The Omen* established that tradition" (Spencer, 2008, p. 243). The use and treatment of the human voice were the most pivotal aspects of sacred music adaptation on screen. The majority of religious music comes in a chant or voice form due to its traditional history.¹⁴ Using the inverted satanic version of traditional Gregorian chant illustrates religious elements due to the Christian background. Furthermore, Goldsmith collaborated with choirmaster John McCarthy (director of the Ambrosian Singers) to make the use of his choir as effective as possible.¹⁵ McCarthy supported Goldsmith by "inverting Latin phrases from the traditional Latin Mass" and assisted in formulating the chants lyrics.¹⁶ The choral music exhibits similarities to authentic Christian choral works.¹⁷

¹³ *Sul Ponticello* is a method where violinists play with the bow kept near the bridge, thereby producing a type of nasal tone and also bringing out higher harmonics.

¹⁴ The singing and chanting of church tunes during communal worship is a tradition which has persisted for centuries.

¹⁵ McCarthy assisted Goldsmith to make the chant as close to traditional plainchant as possible (moviemusicuk, CraigLysy).

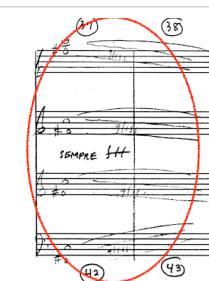
¹⁶ These translate to "we drink the blood, we eat the body, consume the body of Satan, Hail Antichrist, Hail Satan!" (Lysy, 2016).

¹⁷ The choir and lyrics combination was so effective in *The Omen* that 16 years later (1992) Bram Stoker's *Dracula* film composer Wojciech Kilar similarly used the choir chanting "sanguis vita est," which translates as "Blood is life."

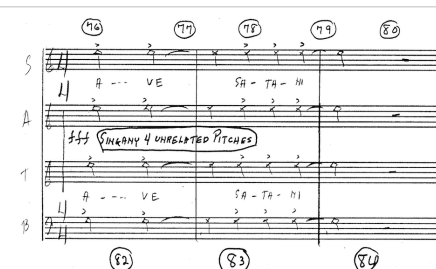
Influence from late Romantic tradition is present in *The Killer Storm* cue.¹⁸ Romantic influence in Goldsmith's [choir] music suggests free expression, without being restricted by rules.¹⁹ *The Killer Storm* is innovative in its ways of achieving a particular sound to translate characters feelings and symbolic surroundings. Finally, Romanticism and religious music generally also use much chromaticism, which is the same case in *The Killer Storm* cue (see Ex. 4.2) (Huckvale, 2018, p.127).

The avant-garde, experimental techniques performed by the choir include dissonant glissandi and unrelated pitches (Ex. 4.1), chromaticism (Ex. 4.2), rhythmic/melodic ostinato's (Ex. 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3), and emphasis on pronunciation and accents (Ex. 4.1, 4.2). In *The Killer Storm* cue, rhythmical ostinati in the voice with accented words in fortissimo result in "one of the most effective methods for creating anticipation and anxiety" (Huckvale, 2013, p.44). The use of chromaticism in *The Killer Storm* cue combined with minor second stepwise movement in the parallel voice, is evident usually in association with the word 'Satani.' The relationship that chromatic movement has with the word 'Satani' is plausible in association with the fact that, "In Wagner's music 'the demonic' is associated with chromaticism" (Huckvale, 2013, p.44).

Example 4.0 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Omen*, 'The Killer Storm-Voices', Bars 37 and 38 (below)



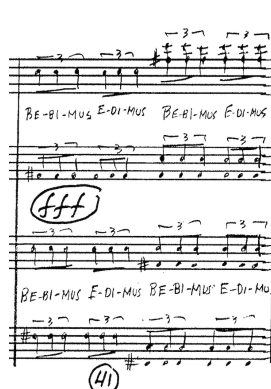
Example 4.1 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Omen*, 'The Killer Storm-Voices', Bar 76 to 80 (below)



Example 4.2 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Omen*, 'The Killer Storm-Voices', Bar 9 (below)



Example 4.3 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Omen*, 'The Killer Storm-Voices', Bar 41 (below)



The use of the choir subverts religious invocation by imploring the devil to be incarnate. The middle ages thrived in religious practices and beliefs (and therefore the use of modal writing). Defining the music so clearly into the Phrygian mode thus confirms Goldsmith's subversion of religious elements to *The Omen* score. Lastly, the tritone is evident throughout the score. Tritones in parallel seconds (see Ex. 4.4) are another clear intent to add satanic elements.

¹⁸Romantic music defined by the precise aim for "powerful expression of emotion, often revealing (...) innermost thoughts and feelings"(Fuller, 2014).

¹⁹Additionally, many Romantic composers took an interest in art and literature, but also "dreams, pain, the supernatural, and magic"(Fuller, 2014).

Example 4.4 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Omen*, 'The Killer Storm-Voices', Bars 1 to 12 (below)
Example 4.5 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Omen*, 'The Killer Storm-Voices', Bars 9

The central word 'Satani' becomes clear in this cue. The performance of the word 'Satan' is arranged in three-quarter notes with the last tied to a half note; all notes are on the same pitch. By heavily accenting the word 'Satan,' with a rhythmical quality, gives the cue a ritualistic feel. It also makes the word 'Satan' heavily contrast and stand out from the rest of the music.

The Demise of Mrs Baylock

In *The Demise of Mrs Baylock* cue, Mrs Baylock, who is Damien's wicked nursemaid and apostate of hell, attacks Damien's father. As Damien's father fights for survival, violent shearing strings accompany a choir chanting which generates a genuinely terrifying ambience. An immense crescendo builds as Damien's father decisively stabs Mrs Baylock to death in self-defence. *The Demise of Mrs Baylock* cue displays elements of a non-strict application of the twelve-tone method. Goldsmith explains:

That's an example where I took the [original] ostinato motif out of it and changed it by transposing the intervals and changing the rhythm and treating it in a quasi-serial way (Karlin, Wright and Brinkman, 1990, p. 236).

Example 4.6 shows the ostinato in the bass aforementioned in Goldsmith's quote. The original ostinato in the bass voice is tonal, starting with a C-minor tonality, and then B-flat minor before promptly returning to C-minor. "But within the original ostinato line are several half-step intervals (E flat to D in bar 11, B to C in the harmony above in bar 12, D flat to C in bar 18) all of which he [Goldsmith] uses as intervallic elements in his music for the fight with Mrs Baylock" (Karlin, Wright and Brinkman, 1990, p. 236). The minor-second intervals are in their minor-ninth and major-seventh inversions and extensions including the original minor second interval (Karlin, Wright and Brinkman, 1990, p. 236).

The most disturbing feature of this cue are the avant-garde techniques used in the choir by uncanny voice effects. The application of the choir is continually evolving and becomes more experimental as the film progresses. *The Demise of Mrs Baylock* is the highpoint of *The Omen's* ending, and thus a valid representation of the music at its final growing stage. The cue shows a fractured, less thematic version of the music. There are several, slightly weird, requests Goldsmith has for his choir for sound effects. These include whispering and free rhythms (see Ex. 4.8 and 5.0), unrelated pitches (see Ex. 4.9) and covering the mouth with the hand (to produce a muffled, inhuman sound) (see Ex. 5.0).

Example 4.6 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Omen*, 'Ave Satani, Bars 11 to 20 (Orchestrated by Arthur Morton)

[♩ = MM 80] (Gravely)

Men's Voices *mf*
San - guis be - bi - mus cor - pus

Mahler Chime
Poo. col 8va
Strs., WW

Organ

Women
e - di - mus tol - le cor - pus A - ve

Vlas. (Hns.)
Strs.

Example 4.8 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Omen*, 'The Demise of Mrs Baylock-Voices', Bars 40 to 44

S
H
A
T
SAN - GUIS BE - BI - MUS COR - PUS E - DI - MUS

mp - WHISPER WORDS IN FREE RHYTHMS

Example 4.9 - Jerry Goldsmith, *The Omen*, 'The Demise of Mrs Baylock-Voices', Bar 51

Conclusion

This paper has addressed the fusion of horror and religious music tropes. *The Omen* marks an essential point in film music history because it has merged previously separate genres in significant ways. Goldsmith combined the ritual elements of Judeo-Christian music and horror music to characterise the Satanic aspects of the film. It is unsurprising therefore that this music and his music had such an impact on other composers' output. Through analysing the music from *Ben Hur* and *King of Kings*, religious music tropes were extracted and examined. The religious tropes that were identified include modal writing (e.g., the utilisation of the Mixolydian mode in *The Star of Bethlehem* cue), Renaissance chordal progressions (e.g., I-VII, vii°b-I., and i-iv-I) as well as the application of the choral and religious text. Horror tropes were also extracted from the films *The Devil Rides Out* and *The Mephisto Waltz*. The horror tropes that were examined included unprepared dissonances, avant-grade instrumental and vocal techniques, and electronic alterations to instruments (e.g., the Wah-Wah pedal in *The Mephisto Waltz*). *The Omen* built on this discussion because it combined the use of both religious and horror music tropes. *The Omen* score provided evidence of avant-garde and heavy timbral motifs, plainchant, atonalism, hallelujah choruses, experimental and religious choral elements, inverted Latin phrases, chromaticism and modal writing (e.g., the use of the Phrygian mode in *The Killer Storm* cue). *The Omen* synthesised both tropes through which, I would argue, Goldsmith, set in motion his own musical genre.

Goldsmith recognised that what intrinsically frightens us correlates with the relationship we hold to the supernatural or the unknown (and the idea of this spiritual relationship going wrong). He appropriated this idea and inculcated it into his music to generate an unsettling experience. Mixing the inconceivability of God with visuals of the demonic and music is perhaps what makes occult horror in *The Omen* so terrifying. By using the idea of the sublime, we can understand how horror and religious music tropes correlate; they both express matters that lie beyond our imagination. While horror music displays the effect of the sublime in demonic ways of inconceivability (resulting in feelings of terror), religious music displays the consequence of the sublime through the inconceivability of God (resulting in feelings of awe).

This topic could be extended by using a more psychoanalytical lens as well as applying more film theory. These additional critical purviews would help to illustrate and elaborate on points raised in this study by providing a broader explanation. Therefore there are several ways in which this paper could be extended, but due to lack of space, there was no room to elaborate on these other avenues. The strengths of this paper are that the original materials were used to illustrate the points (original scores). By using primary research (which is not in the public domain), this paper can also claim originality.

In conclusion, although horror techniques (such as dissonance) endured long before the first horror films were made (see *Listening to Fear*), more progressive techniques such as incorporating the overlap of human vocal components and religious music only began in the 1970s with the release of *The Omen*. While horror scores like *The Devil Rides Out* are full of powerful, demonic energy; religious epics often evince a similar sense of mighty power. Both tropes glorify the supernatural from different extremes. While horror and religious music approaches may vary, their aim is identical and intends to evoke an aesthetic idealisation that emulates a "primitive" experience. Goldsmith's contribution to film music was to recognise these similarities and combine them to blur the line between religious and horror music.

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