**From Stage to Screen: Exploring Directorial Approaches on Adapting Musicals to Film**

**Abstract:** This study examines contemporary directorial practice in adapting stage musicals to film, often leading to a direct and mechanical approach to transforming one art form into another. The study suggests improving directorial methods by integrating experimental and auteur cinema aspects. Furthermore, it aims to advocate for a directorial "laboratory," leveraging ideas from avant-garde theories and practices prevalent in 20th-century cinema, theater, and music.

The musical is a multifaceted, multi-stylistic, and multi-plot phenomenon with an unclear and fluid definition, constantly undergoing artistic mimicry. Born on the stage, it feels most "at home" in that environment. Its "migration" into the cinematic space is a risky creative process filled with uncertainties. Creating the "film musical" hybrid—an intricate synthesis of music, cinema, visual arts, ballet, and literature—becomes a battleground of different perspectives and a space for experimentation.

The late 20th and early 21st centuries marked a crisis for the film musical genre, driven by directors' persistent tendency to employ the forms of traditional realist cinema. Successfully blending and correctly positioning the components of this "hybrid" demands the deliberate use of aestheticization and an "artificiality" of form in its various manifestations. These characteristics remain predominantly within the domain of avant-garde and experimental cinema. However, their partial incorporation (in isolated scenes of film musicals) is insufficient to elevate the genre to the ideal purity of form. This suggests that the construction of a film musical's narrative is entirely dependent on the dominance of the musical line, which compels the director to introduce "non-realistic" forms of in-frame space borrowed from other art forms.

However, incorporating alternative expressive techniques remains partial and has not been fully established as a guiding principle for creating such films. The expressive screen techniques used by American independent filmmakers—such as extreme angles, axis-breaking camera movements, jump cuts, cadence-based filming, overexposure, and extreme close-ups—are primarily employed in Hollywood as "special effects," making them exceptions rather than the norm in conventional storytelling. Moreover, these elements represent only a tiny (arguably already exhausted) fragment of avant-garde film language. More fundamental discoveries remain unexplored, such as the "theatricalization" of space, the manipulation of time and space, the inclusion of painting, sculpture, and photography in visual storytelling, and the use of performance as an expressive mode extending beyond theater and cinema.

What is needed are directorial techniques that demystify the "illusion" of realism and align with the inherent theatricality of music as an art form, thereby legitimizing the "singing character" on screen. Music, as a medium, reflects the internal world of emotions through

abstract forms more so than any other art. Musical imagery is the least concrete, free from a visible shell, and consequently detached from the tangible features of the visible world, which are an integral part of cinematography. By its nature, cinema struggles to embrace the conventions of poetry, theater, music, and painting, as their complex and unique expressive logic does not seamlessly align with the traditional visual language of the screen. However, this very challenge presents a vast field for experimentation—one that could ultimately lead the film musical to achieve the purity of its form.

The film musical genre is systematic, where the canonicity of the form combines with the endless renewal of traditions. This category is alive and highly dynamic—because time, characters, and expressive means constantly change. However, the principles of genre formation and the meaning of using a specific methodology in its construction—are essential pieces of knowledge without which the genre cannot be studied, nor can one work within it. The film musical follows specific canons, and despite the many peculiarities of genre formation dictated by a given historical aesthetic period, universal approaches can be found in the methodology of a director engaged in this type of art.

A film musical is successful when the musical dramaturgy and its transformation on screen are unified in style. Due to its fragmentary nature (alternating dramatic parts with vocal-choreographic ones), the illusion is created that music should dominate only in the numbers, where a utopian world is created alongside the real world, the world of dramatic action.

However, the leading role of music is not limited to what is contained in these numbers. The "real" plane, even if it is entirely non-musical, must be constructed by the director as a "pause" (using Sergei Eisenstein's definition), i.e., within the strict internal tempo-rhythm of the music—depending on the location of this "pause" in the overall musical fabric of the whole. This applies both to the use of cinematographic means—angles, shot changes, type of editing—and to the intra-frame organization—lighting, dynamics, and internal rhythm in the performers' movements, the intensity of the actor's emotional life and its changes—sharp drops, outbursts, climaxes.

As can be seen, the unification and unity of the two planes—the "realistic" and the "musical-choreographic"—is possible based on rhythm and all kinds of "play" with it. T. Grodal, a Danish film professor, points to its universal significance: "Rhythm," he writes, "is traditionally one of the most characteristic features of songs and poetry, and it is also characteristic of the function of many processes regulated by the autonomic nervous system, such as pulse and breathing."[1] The director's ability to subject the entire structure of the film musical to a unified tempo-rhythm, without ignoring the narrative parts but "incorporating" them into this overall "sounding" film material, should be the starting point for all the director's searches.

Here arises the main question: What cinematographic means should the director use to visualize a musical (vocal, vocal-choreographic, or choreographic) performance? This is the most essential task in the film musical, containing the potential peculiarities of this type of

[1] Grodal, Torben. Moving Pictures: A New Theory of Film Genres, Feelings andCognition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. C. 55. cited in Wiessinger Scott, Film and Music: An Overlooked Synthesis, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana, 2009

direction. The film director operates with time, with the temporal component of space-time relations. Time is the sphere of improvisation in film art; its presented quality determines the independence of the art form (unlike theater, where it is the opposite).

In transforming music onto the screen, it is necessary for the linear, real-time flow encoded in the musical score to be converted into cinematic time. However, if this is done so that the time in music (as an art) becomes the perceptual time of the film viewer, the result will be a filmed concert. The goal in adapting a stage musical to film is to create a final result with the typical (ontological) features of film art without ignoring the stage conventions and the conventions encoded in the musical score. Alternatively, all the above conventions must be transformed into conventional cinematic time.

Thus, a problem arises—since external musical stasis must be compensated for by an intensified visual flow, the director often resorts (primarily) to elementary dynamic editing, expressed in the relationship between musical dynamics and the cinematographic plan. But it is clear that in a complex genre to realize as the film musical, the director must seek provocations beyond the realm of traditional cinema.

It is advisable to reconsider the experience of experimental cinema, created not merely by directors but by film artists such as Maya Deren and her successors—Stan Brakhage, Jonas Mekas, Kenneth Anger, John Smith, and Michael Snow. These filmmakers refer to their work as art-cinema—mythopoetic and lyrical films, "structural," and "trance-like," in which the aesthetics of surrealism, abstract expressionism, pop art, and minimalism can be observed.

Paradoxically, it is in the musical genre, traditionally placed in the context of mass art, that the necessity arises to use the refined "auteur" techniques of the experimental or avant-garde cinema toolkit. As the prominent Russian-Estonian linguist, semiotician, cultural historian, and literary scholar Yuri M. Lotman points out, one must seek models for "meta-linguistic mechanisms in contemporary culture,"[2] as well as from avant-garde models in cinema itself, such as the films of the French Dadaists from the 1920s and 1930s (Cinéma Pur)—René Clair and Marcel Duchamp, from the German "absolute cinema" of Hans Richter, Walter Ruttmann, and Viking Eggeling, from the film examples of the 60s and 70s—underground cinema, structural cinema, and Fluxus to Jim Jarmusch, John Cassavetes, and Maya Deren. Maya Deren experimented not only with expressive means but also with the space and time of the film, noting that "working with space and time becomes part of the natural structure of the film."[3]

A provocation must occur against the established model of the film musical as part of the mainstream—a provocation with a clearly expressed modernist position, in which form must dominate over content. This is how one can achieve the "blow to the solar plexus" that, in particular, one of the most prominent producers of film musicals, Cameron Mackintosh, strives for. Such an alternative is offered precisely by the American avant-garde, which views form not as stasis but as processual, born in work on the film and perceived as a process of creativity,

[2] Lotman, M. Mesto kinoizkustvo v mehanizme kultura. Trudai po znakovim sistemam. Vip. 8. Tartu, 1977 p.148

[3] Deren. M.. Opredelenie tvorcheskovo protsesa i rabota s prostranstvom i vreme . Hrenov. A. Evolutsia amerikanskogo eksperimentalnogo kino. - M.: EGSI, 2000. C. 15.

114  fantasy, play, and theatricalization, and as a sensual activity that corresponds with music. "What
115  is needed is not the ability for mimesis, or for creating a 'double of reality,' but a special form of
116  subjectivity, analogous to dreams, to the state of dreaming."[4] Or - achieving the quality of
117  "poetic" cinema. In his 1927 article "Poetry and Prose in Cinematography," the Russian theorist
118  V. Shklovsky notes that poetic and prosaic cinema "differ not only in their rhythm but in the
119  predominance of technical-formal moments (in poetic cinema) over semantic ones, with the
120  formal replacing the semantic."[5]

121  Of course, both methods can coexist—in every traditional narrative, there are elements of
122  the poetic, and many avant-garde films contain elements of plot. However, it is undeniable that
123  the cinematic avant-garde, which broadly represents metaphorical cinema, seeks to expand the
124  possibilities of poetry. At the same time, conventional narrative, in its striving for illusionism
125  and literary plot, muffles them. Suppose we delve deeper into the territory of the American
126  avant-garde. In that case, we must point out above all the explorations of Maya Deren (her real
127  name was Eleanor Derenkowska)—an American independent film director, choreographer, and
128  theorist. Maya Deren elevated the unique philosophy of this cinematic movement. She even
129  proposed a "method" in which she attempted to systematically arrange the problem of recording
130  nature and transforming it into a "non-realistic environment."[6]

131  Synthesized as "An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film," this method is valuable
132  because it links "the state of nature," "the forms of art," and "the forms of film" with "the tools of
133  invention." Describing her explorations, Maya Deren notes that her "insistence on the creative
134  attitude and on 'non-realistic' forms that it must create is an attempt to analyze Hollywood films,
135  which have an artificial form. Nevertheless, film has access not only to the elements of reality
136  but also—these elements as part of reality—to the ready-made forms of other arts. Moreover, the
137  degree of realism with which Hollywood confronts these realities of art—literature, drama,
138  dance, and others—and the degree of fidelity to their original components is such with what
139  degree the documentary film confronts social reality."[7]

140  Deren shot six films, five made between 1943 and 1948. One of the films that most
141  vividly represents her explorations is Meshes of the Afternoon (1943), which won the award for
142  experimental film at Cannes in 1947. This is a kind of "poetic psychodrama," trance cinema.
143  Maya Deren uses play with light, mirrors, sharp optical angles, and ritualistic rhythm—all to take
144  the viewer out of the framework of real space and time and immerse them in a state of hypnotic
145  enchantment.

146  The Bulgarian film researcher Maya Dimitrova characterizes the film with "...the
147  presence of a dream reality, in which the authentic author herself plays her imaginary self. It is
148  populated with Freudian symbolism and oneirically immersed in sensual reverie. The erotic

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[4] Hrenov, A. Magi i radikali: vek amerikanskogo avangarda. – M. Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2011. p. 69

[5] Shklovski, V. Poezia i proza kinematografii. Poetika kino. Tsitati po: Hrenov, A. Magi i radikali: vek amerikanskogo avangarda. – M. Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2011. p. 89

[6] Deren, Maya. "An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film", Outcast Series, Number 9, Alicat Book Shop, p.37-38 http://monoskop.org/images/3/31/Deren_Maya_An_Anagram_of_Ideas_on_Art_Form_and_Film.pdf

[7] Ibid

149 undertone of the dream reality is dissonantly mixed with signs of the beyond—a figure in a black
150 cloak with a mirror face disappears in the light of day, casting a blinding 'glance'—a flash into
151 the eye of the camera."[8] Dimitrova (2009) also emphasizes the theatrical elements involved in
152 this specific cinematic vision, namely: "...clown glasses, from which the 'eyes' of the woman pop
153 out on springs, but intriguingly have the shape of a hypnotic spiral. Subject to the game, we, the
154 enchanted viewers, see only a light skipping in the style of clowning with an expressionist flavor
155 and the eccentricity of Clair…"[9] And finally—but not least—the entire cinematic structure of
156 Maya Deren is organized according to the laws of music. "Over time, the film undergoes
157 metamorphoses," namely—later, sound by Japanese composer Teiji Ito was added to it. But M.
158 Dimitrova rightly points out that even without this musical addition, initially "...the film is
159 conceived editorially as visible music," in which she sees "a resemblance to the experiments of
160 Germaine Dulac from the second half of the 1920s."[10]

161      Maya Deren's creative style is also connected to the cinematic experiments of the
162 surrealists and Jean Cocteau, and it also became a source of inspiration and ideas for the next
163 generation of American avant-garde artists—Stan Brakhage, Jonas Mekas, Kenneth Anger, and
164 John Smith. The development of her ideas, in particular, is noted by director Jonas Mekas, who
165 says: "For the previous generation, film art (I use the literal translation 'film art' to distinguish it
166 from the concept of 'the art of cinema,' which includes the mainstream—note P.O.) was
167 something new and exotic. But for this generation, it is part of our life, like bread, music, trees,
168 steel bridges."[11]

169      A unique variant of a qualitatively new visual experience is the film practice of American
170 filmmaker, theorist, and one of the leaders of experimental cinema, Stan Brakhage, who
171 demonstrates in his films the endless possibilities of a multifunctional, convention-free gaze,
172 breaking the automatism of perception. Debuting in 1952, Stan Brakhage shows the influence of
173 Eisenstein's concepts and Cocteau's films. He shoots metaphoric films (or poems), applying
174 collage techniques that disrupt the narrative sequence and special ways of processing the
175 filmstrip, which conflict with the "realistic" nature of the image. The content and form of
176 Brakhage's film poems become not the character in front of the camera, as in the surreal "trance
177 films," but his consciousness behind the camera, seemingly transmitting its sensations and
178 emotions to the viewer. In his striving for ultimate cinematography, or—for purity in the
179 movement of images, Brakhage reaches "moving painting." With shades, flashes, explosions—
180 the music of color and movement again and again generates a new melody, rhythm—it is
181 obvious that this is a cinematic space where there is no place for voice or logos.

182      Another director who fought for the conscious deconstruction of the illusion of cinematic
183 time is the experimentalist Mary Ellen Bute. With her films *Rhythm in Light* (1934), a visual

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[8] Dimitrova, M. Evropeysko kino v epoha na globalizatsia. Sofia, Institut za izsledvane na izkustvata, 2009, p. 32

[9] Ibid, p.33

[10] Ibid, p.33

[11] Mekas, Ionas. "The Experimental Film in America", Film Culture 1, no. 3. (May-June, 1955). As cited in: Horac, Jan-Christopher , "The First American Fim Avant-Garde, 1919-1945; „Experimental Cinema: The Film Reader", edited by: Wheeler W. Dixon,Gwendolyn Audrey Foste, 2002. Routlegde, 11 New Fetter lane, London. p. 19-20

184 interpretation of Edvard Grieg's "Anitra's Dance," *Synchrony No. 2* (1935), *Parabola* (1937), and
185 *Tarantella* (1940), Mary Ellen Bute attempts to visualize the musical score by incorporating
186 painting into the cinematic text, identifying it with "frozen music," and also experiments with
187 "painting with light." In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the ideas of "structural" film emerged,
188 which also fought against the illusionism of the mainstream but at the same time opposed the
189 mystical avant-garde of Brakhage, Mekas, and Deren. "Structural film," represented by Michael
190 Snow, Hollis Frampton, and George Landow, even more sharply views cinema from the
191 perspective of other visual arts, experimenting with the space and time of the image, with the
192 paradoxes of movement, its direction, continuity, and its wholeness.

193 To the sensually innovative experience of the cinematic avant-garde, which "opens a
194 window" to the coexistence of the screen with other arts and thus could give the cinematic text of
195 the film musical (if used) greater flexibility to absorb music, we must add the experience of
196 cinema experimenting with the "theatricalization" of screen action. The return of theatrical
197 convention to cinema is connected to the search for new linguistic expressive means, which
198 undoubtedly leads to elitism—at least for the individual film—and may seem alien to such an
199 inherently "mass" product as the film musical. At the same time, the priori theatrical code in this
200 genre requires the director to seek ways to interpret the screen action in a scenic way.

201 Such approaches can be found not only in the film operas of the 1970s but also in
202 Federico Fellini's And the Ship Sails On (1983) and Luchino Visconti's White Nights (1957).
203 Nevertheless, the most distinct searches are those of the French director Alain Resnais, who says:
204 "I am a formalist. I am interested in the very construction of the narrative. And in this sense,
205 cinema can still offer many undiscovered possibilities. Cinematography is the art of spectacle
206 and performance like theater, music hall, or circus. And it seems to me that performance by its
207 nature requires the development of some action. And here there are many options."[12]

208 A similar approach is used by Alain Resnais in his film *Mélo*, based on Henri Bernstein's
209 1929 play. The film's prolonged exposition unfolds in Romain's garden, within a beautiful
210 gazebo where the three protagonists finish their dinner around a small round table. Strangely, this
211 setting is positioned on what resembles an indoor street—on either side, artificial façades are
212 constructed in an unnatural perspective, much like diagonal wings in theater design used to
213 create a sense of depth. The nighttime lighting is distinctly theatrical, dominated by inky hues. In
214 the background, where the converging streets meet at an angle, Resnais presents a section of a
215 dark blue sky, adorned with exaggerated golden stars and a large moon—frozen in place like a
216 painted backdrop. This stylized depiction of the night sky is reminiscent of Baz Luhrmann's
217 *Moulin Rouge!* and its similarly theatrical visuals.

218 An example of the theatricalization of film action is Resnais's later films—for example,
219 *Mélo* or *You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet*. The latter is based on two plays by Jean Anouilh: *Dear
220 Antoine* (1967) and *Eurydice* (1941). If in *Mélo* (1986) cinema strives toward theater (even the
221 film narrative is divided into theatrical acts, at the beginning of which a theatrical curtain rises),
222 *You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet* (2012) turns theater into cinema within cinema. (In the film's trailer,

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[12] Rene, A. Skoree remeslenik-lubitel, izkustvo kino, 2012, Noemvri, №11

223  the same theatrical curtain is seen, which also exists in *Mélo*.) Thus, in this film, Alain Resnais
224  uses the semiotic model of "text within text," emphasizing that the text of *Eurydice* is subjected
225  to multiple encodings. The mythological paradigm turns the train station and hotel—attributes of
226  20th-century reality—into signs and fixes the viewer's attention not on their authenticity but on
227  their "timelessness."

228      To achieve his goal, Alain Resnais creates an almost conventional theatrical
229  environment—the viewer, along with the film's characters, enters a vast and strange space—
230  Antoine's house, which looks (artists Jacques Saulnier, Mathieu Beot, Fabrice Bourdieu,
231  cinematographer—Eric Gautier) like a cardboard set, turned frontally toward the viewer. Behind
232  the vast glass door "blows" a theatrical wind, and when it opens, along with the entering couples,
233  piles of "theatrical" autumn leaves fly in. The lighting that floods the living room also contains
234  "artificiality"—its source (as it would be in a natural setting) is not indicated—it comes from
235  above, which unmistakably creates an association with theatrical spotlights. The functions of the
236  camera in this episode are minimal: long static shots, occasionally panning behind the seated
237  characters like in a theater auditorium. The editing possibilities are minimized, and the shot scale
238  changes intra-frame due to the movement of the actors toward the camera. Particularly
239  noteworthy is the technique of repetition, which is used at the beginning of the film quite
240  emphatically—with the prolonged phone calls with the exact text to different people, with the
241  same image of parts of the speaker's face (a vision that strongly resembles the beginning of
242  Ingmar Bergman's The Magic Flute). This technique continues in the realization of the shots of
243  the characters arriving at Antoine's house, repeating the same mise-en-scènes with minimal
244  individualization. All this creates the effect of a ritualized rhythm and a special conventionality.

245      The principle of play between screen and theatrical action can be seen in the strange
246  communication of the screen characters (the guests are offered to watch a filmed performance)
247  with the guests themselves—former performers of the same roles. The planes mix—the viewers
248  of the home film begin to utter the lines of their screen counterparts and play the following
249  episodes, but now in the living room, which expands the theatrical field and turns the cinematic
250  reality into "non-reality." Alain Resnais emphasizes this aesthetic move by introducing the
251  principle that suddenly, one of the living room's wings turns into a restaurant wing, a railway line
252  wing, or even a wing denoting a hotel room. All these spaces are created by the film's authors
253  with deliberate "artificiality," creating a feeling of either poorly drawn 3D graphics or poorly
254  rendered 2D images.

255      However, the true impact of this heightened theatricality in space, in both of Resnais'
256  films, comes from its fusion with a microscopic focus on details and nuances in the actors'
257  performances. The director shapes his modernist vision by experimenting with space and
258  "playing" with time—expressed through the actors' performances in a way reminiscent of
259  theater. His actors are also highly "theatrical," though not in the conventional sense of
260  exaggeration typically associated with the term. Instead, their performances exhibit an extreme
261  processuality, far exceeding the conventions of traditional cinema. This fusion of a deliberately
262  stylized environment with hyper-real human presence creates an unusual cinematic image that

263 resonates with theater, where "living people" are physically present on stage. It represents a
264 distinct model for transforming stage reality into cinematic reality—carefully conceived and
265 meticulously executed through harmonizing all its components.
266       The overview of alternative directorial approaches in the context of cinematic practice
267 gives a clear idea of this genre's difficulty and capricious uniqueness, as well as the risks taken
268 by a creative team led by the director. The good examples of this cinema increasingly belong not
269 to mass culture but to the realm of art, becoming a fashionable fascination of the "initiated." Is
270 the film musical changing? Absolutely! It has changed since Offenbach made his first adaptation
271 in the 1850s. Moreover, change is the clearest sign that the musical is still a living and growing
272 genre. The popularity of the musical may persist due to its resonance with the "clip-like"
273 consciousness of the modern viewer, which allows for the active perception of the dynamic,
274 bright, and enchanting spectacle of this type of cinema with its intense internal energy. As it
275 turns out, the film musical is a genre in which the mere display of singing and dancing on screen
276 possesses immense emotional power. The opportunity that cinema provides to observe a person
277 singing and dancing is unique. Such opportunities are not available in dramatic theater, opera, or
278 ballet. Will this genre return to its so-called "golden age," when musicals were central to popular
279 culture? Unlikely. The audience's taste has changed fundamentally; commercial art can only flow
280 where the paying audience allows it.
281       It is evident that the question does not rely solely on the director's special skills but also
282 on their combination with particular sensitivity and even sensuality—such as that possessed by
283 the classics of the genre, Vincente Minnelli, Bob Fosse, and Baz Luhrmann—who are capable of
284 creating that imagination-arousing and intoxicating mix of passion, humor, sadness, music,
285 bursting song and dance, based on musical dramaturgy, provoking creative imagination and, at
286 the same time, the practical ways of realizing the musical-stage work on screen.
287       Immediately, the question arises: What does the synthesis of music and screen manifest?
288 It is necessary to emphasize that this is not about the musical arrangement of the action, the
289 musical explication of the action, the musical-dramaturgical accompaniment of the action, or
290 even the "phraseological" addition to the screen sequence. In this case, what is sought is the
291 formula by which the director can achieve harmony in visual expression, preserving the depth
292 and meaning of the author's concept (in this case, the composer and dramatist) and achieving a
293 powerful impact on the viewer.
294       The answer to this question lies in musical dramaturgy and, accordingly, in its written
295 equivalent—the score. A practical method for the director's work, combining elements of
296 analysis of musical dramaturgy and its artistic transformation on screen, is the active analysis of
297 the musical's score. The musical score reveals the multifaceted world of the musical stage image,
298 created based on the complex interaction of narrative and music. In the score, the composer
299 "encodes" the character's personality, the meaning of what they utter (sing), the character's
300 emotional attitude toward the dramatic event, and the evaluation of their actions. The score fixes
301 all levels of the narrative and musical text, containing "codes" of emotional and active
302 relationships, providing a visual-auditory representation of the simultaneous sounding of spoken,

303 vocal, choral, and orchestral parts through notation, in which each part is arranged
304 "horizontally," one below the other, so that the bar lines coincide vertically.

305       To penetrate the secrets of the nature of the musical score, the director must not only
306 possess musicality but also be able to "read" the score or use the services of a musically educated
307 consultant. The director must "foresee" the drama and, on this basis, create an active logic of
308 events. Different directors may find the same "riddles" in the notation, but their "solving" will
309 differ. This depends mainly on the director's imagination, which must accompany the analysis
310 process and be provoked by it, leading to specific "visions."

311 The method of screen visualization of the musical score involves not only "reading" the notes,
312 tempo, and tonal relationships and mentally "listening" to the music but also "seeing" the action,
313 identifying the aesthetic conflict points in transforming the musical dramaturgy on screen while
314 preserving the conventions arising from it. The director's task is to find those screen symbols that
315 will most successfully perform the translation from stage to screen, creating a unique cinematic
316 intrigue through the opposition of sound and image. Analogously, just as each musical part is
317 arranged "horizontally," one below the other, with vertical alignment of bar lines, so too can the
318 visual "part" be superimposed, with the beginning of the editing sequence coinciding with the
319 strong beat of the first bar of the musical score. In this way, through the means of pre-
320 visualization, all turning points and accents in the future visual-editing sequence can be outlined
321 in direct interaction with the accents from the score analysis, projecting the shots that will be
322 used in constructing the scene, taking into account the specifics of the two types of conventions.
323 The starting point of "fantasy" must be sought precisely in the musical score.

324 Just as there is the concept of a "synthetic actor," it could be assumed that the professional
325 director of a film musical is a "synthetic director." Their toolkit must include theater, music, and
326 cinema knowledge and skills. Based on the musical score, the director of the film musical must
327 create a stylistically coherent screenwork with a "mathematically" precise composition that does
328 not fall apart into constituent parts: dramatic-plot and vocal-choreographic, realism and
329 individual conventions, psychology and musicality, theatricality and cinema. They must find the
330 "spring" of internal harmony between the multidirectional elements constituting the screen work
331 so that it entirely "submits" to the musical score.

332       Thus, the director faces the complex question of the nature and composition of his
333 analytical method in deciphering as a basis for future practical work on the film. It is evident that
334 the specificity of the musical, arising from the fusion of various arts, excludes the possibility of
335 using the method of action analysis (adopted in theatrical directing as a means of decoding the
336 dramaturgical fabric) as the sole approach—it is an important part, but only a "part." Moreover,
337 its place must be determined according to the established aesthetic law of the music-drama ratio,
338 in which the "musical" dominates over the "dramatic."

339       In analyzing this issue, we do not refer to the opposition between the musical score and
340 the libretto. It is indisputable that the directorial practice of perceiving the libretto as the primary
341 material for analysis is flawed. Today, it is unlikely that any director would be guided solely by
342 the framework of the dramaturgical structure of a work. The question of interpreting the musical

score—as an already unified, synthesized matter—is much more complex. From what perspective should the director view it—music or drama? With what professional "tools" should it be deciphered—those of musical analysis or action analysis? Where is the intersection between the analytical methods serving different "muses"?

The development of the dramaturgical line in the score falls mainly within the director's competence, while the musical development lies within the conductor's competence. However, is this the case? After all, isn't it a synthesis?

Today, every director knows that a musical is a synthesis of theater and music, but this phrase has become a shallow cliché and dogma. The "synthesis" is often understood as "both together," which has nothing to do with the true nature of musical theater art. The directing profession is interpretative. Moreover, every interpretation inevitably means delving into the "foreign." The question arises: how much and in what way? From what position? With what artistic measure? Nevertheless, this measure has no objective criterion—it is a matter of inner hearing and sensitivity, a natural sense of harmony and proportion, and ultimately—simply a matter of culture.

Modern practice in film musical directing raises numerous questions about the genre's complexity, often leading to a direct and mechanical directorial approach in transforming one art form into another. The film musical in contemporary cinema spans from auteur masterpieces to commercial entertainment productions. Several arthouse films emerged at the beginning of the 21st century, significantly changing the genre. This "colorful" picture and the looming clichés from conventional cinema, theatrical space, and broader cultural stereotypes that inevitably accompany the musical film genre stifle the director's imagination. His task is further complicated by the fact that the uniqueness of the screen musical is characterized by such a state of cinematic synthesis in which the musical element becomes dominant. This alters the traditional role of the screenplay in structuring the cinematic narrative, thus making the film musical fundamentally different from a "regular" feature film.

To conclude, let us quote the statement of the renowned American librettist Oscar Hammerstein: *"It is pointless to say what a musical should or should not be. It should be anything it wants to be, and if you don't like it, you don't have to watch it. There is only one absolutely indispensable element that a musical must have. It must have music. And it must be just one thing—it must be good."[13]*

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