

## A SHORT ABSTRACT:

This article examines the paramusical field of connotation surrounding Arvo Pärt's *tintinnabuli* music in the contemporary Western culture of musical multimedia. The expressive meanings that *tintinnabuli* music is perceived to communicate are remarkably consistent, as well as can be argued to conform with the ideas the composer has wished to convey with his music.

## Arvo Pärt's *tintinnabuli* music in film

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"I wanted very simple melodies. I didn't want symphonic music. I wanted something liturgical. So I tried many different musics, and when I found Silvestrov and Arvo Pärt, I thought it was the right way to follow the character, to be with him and not to, how do you say it... Not like in the American movies where, when it's sad, there is the violin, these kind of things. I had the feeling with this music that it could let the audience have its own feelings and not to push the sentimentality too much. To be more emotional without being sentimental." (director François Ozon on *Le temps qui reste* [2005], featuring *Für Alina* and Symphony no. 3; cited from Eaves 2006)

"[Pärt's] music came up during the production phase when director's assistant Sebastian Fahr played me the new record by Arvo Pärt, "Alina". I liked it a lot but I was worried that it might make the film too 'soft'. It was only when we were cutting that I realized that the works by Arvo Pärt, while graceful and tender, are also very strict with regard to organization and structure. That's exactly what we were aiming at in the film, to make it tender, emotional and human but also give it very clear contours. We noticed that Pärt's music helped us keep a clear overview and not lose that clarity, which the music in fact intensified. In the cutting room we used the music to such an extent that it became obvious that no other music could even begin to compete." (director Tom Tykwer on *Heaven* [2002], featuring *Für Alina*, *Spiegel im Spiegel*, and *Variationen zur Gesundheit von Arinuschka*; cited from Schultze 2001)

## Introduction

Since the 1980s, more than twenty-five concert compositions by Arvo Pärt (b 11 Sep 1935) have been used in over one hundred film soundtracks. By "concert composition" I mean the music that the composer originally created for a concert stage, not as a film score<sup>1</sup>, and that exists independently from and predates any one film in which it appears. Directors who have made use of Pärt's concert compositions include Paul Thomas Anderson, Denys Arcand, Bernardo Bertolucci, Julie Bertucelli, Jean-Luc Godard, Werner Herzog, Michael Moore, François Ozon, Carlos Reygadas, Gus van Sant, Tom Tykwer, and Andrei Zvyagintsev, among others. Most often, filmmakers<sup>2</sup> have preferred Pärt's

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<sup>1</sup> Pärt has also composed original film music. In 1962–78, while still living in Soviet Estonia, he supported himself and his family by writing music for around 40 films (feature and experimental films, documentaries, cartoons and other animated films).

<sup>2</sup> In this article, I will use the term "filmmaker" as a metonymy for the complex collaboration and decision-making process involving director, cinematographer, editor, screenwriter, music designer, sound designer, etc.,

early instrumental *tintinnabuli* works – especially those that deliver a sense of quiet, are slow in tempo, feature a small number of explicit musical events, afford instant comprehension of compositional structure, and whose musical parameters tend to remain constant throughout the piece. For example, when the music is slow, features *legato* articulation, or has bright timbre, it will do so throughout the piece. In particular, *Für Alina* (1976), *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978), *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (1977) and *Fratres* (1977) stand out as the most popular of Pärt's works heard in film soundtracks. These signature *tintinnabuli* works have been used not only in dozens of film soundtracks, but also in numerous dance performances and theatrical soundtracks (not to mention the large number of amateur video clips and photomontages one could find on social media platforms like YouTube or Vimeo). In fact, some now claim that invoking these compositions is cliché, the sign of lazy directing and music editing.<sup>3</sup>

The starting point of the present article was an observation that, from film to film, there seemed to be something very similar in manner and circumstances in which Arvo Pärt's concert compositions tended to appear in films, as if there was an intersubjective agreement between filmmakers on which expressive meanings are most appropriate to communicate with *tintinnabuli* music, and how to pair this music with other filmic means of expression (image, speech, non-musical sounds, silence, etc). Therefore, the general aim of this article is to explore *tintinnabuli* music from the receiver's end and to demonstrate how this music is perceived and used by average listeners (incl. filmmakers and viewers) in contemporary contexts of Western culture of musical multimedia<sup>4</sup>.

In order to find out what kind of responses Pärt's *tintinnabuli* music is capable of eliciting, I searched for listeners' verbal reports<sup>5</sup> on experiencing this music, and analyzed their vocabulary. These free descriptions I have extracted from published previews and reviews of concerts, recordings, films, dance and other multimedia performances featuring *tintinnabuli* music; from scholarly analyses of music and films; from interviews with the musicians (e.g., performers) and filmmakers; CD-inlays; concert programmes; blogs, forums/message boards, and social networking

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but which is ultimately shaped and controlled by the director for film or television, to whom the responsibility for the final decision falls.

<sup>3</sup> A film journalist Samuel Wigley has hit the nail on the head: "Where once film directors in need of some mournful gravitas would reach for Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* – famously, in Oliver Stone's *Platoon*; recently, in Michael Moore's *Sicko* – it now seems that Pärt is first in line, not only for arthouse authors but in Hollywood too. [...] Lest Pärt's sound begin to work in the opposite direction, jolting us from our involvement with a film as we recognize what a cliché its use has become, it is I think time to give it a rest. [...] filmmakers of the world, before the allure of pieces like *Spiegel im Spiegel* is lost, let's have an Arvo armistice." (Wigley 2008)

<sup>4</sup> In this article, "multimedia" is defined as the 'perceived interaction of different media', wherein the mediums do not just communicate meaning, but participate actively in its construction (Cook 1998: 261). 'Musical multimedia' refers to music being one medium in this interaction: Any genre that combines music with at least one other medium (words, pictures, body movements, non-musical sounds) can be analyzed as musical multimedia. Films can be musical multimedia or not, depending on whether they feature any music or not.

<sup>5</sup> In music psychology, this type of verbal data is called 'free subjective descriptions' or 'personal reports' of listeners' musical experiences.

websites on the Internet (cf. Maimets-Volt 2009: 19–20). Since for the past decades Pärt’s music has been extensively performed and listened to all over the world,<sup>6</sup> there are hundreds of reports available.

Example 1 presents a collection of the most common verbal affective responses to those *tintinnabuli* compositions that have most often been used in multimedia productions (like film, dance or theatre performance). In an attempt to thematically organize these responses, I have placed the ‘intricate simplicity/simple intricacy’<sup>7</sup> in the middle and formed around it six entwined groups, labelled with umbrella terms ‘calmness’, ‘tenderness’, ‘comfort’, ‘melancholy’, ‘contemplation’ and ‘otherworldliness’.

*Für Alina* (1976), *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978), *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (1977), *Fratres* (1977), *Tabula rasa* [II part, *Silentium*] (1977)

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  | peaceful<br>calm<br>pure<br>serene   |   |
| ethereal<br>otherworldly<br>eerie<br>hypnotic<br>haunting                      | luminous<br>beautiful<br>crystalline<br>terse<br>sparse<br>quiet                               | delight(ful)<br>sweet<br>tender<br>gentle<br>smooth                           |
| floating<br>brooding<br>evocative<br>contemplative<br>reflection<br>meditation | simple/intricate<br><br>melancholy<br>sad<br>somber<br>mournful<br>painful<br>maudlin<br>elegy | comfort<br>safety<br>stability<br>hope<br>soothe/soothing<br>dream<br>lullaby |

**Example 1.** Listeners’ affective responses to the signature *tintinnabuli* compositions that have been most often used in films and other multimedia productions.

However, in terms of the ideational (as distinguished from emotional) content, the expressive meanings that listeners generally report the *tintinnabuli* music to communicate, are yet more specific. Interestingly enough, they are also remarkably consistent with the ideas the composer

<sup>6</sup> Cf. <http://www.universaledition.com/performances-and-calendar#composer=534>

<sup>7</sup> In descriptions of experiencing *tintinnabuli* music, the oxymorons like ‘bright sadness’, ‘tense calm’, ‘distanced intimacy’, ‘unfamiliar familiarity’, ‘presence in absence’ are quite characteristic. Grounded in the paradigm of cognitive studies of musical expression, I have discussed what musical structures make *tintinnabuli* music suitable for expressing/evoking the particular meanings which it can be argued to express/evoke in Maimets-Volt 2009: 54–74 (in a chapter entitled “Emotion and meaning in Arvo Pärt’s *tintinnabuli* music”).

himself has wished to convey with this music. These ideas are no secret, since Pärt has openly expressed:

“Tintinnabuli style is an area where I sometimes wander, when I search for a solution for my life, my music, my work. In my dark hours, I have the distinct feeling that everything surrounding the One, has no meaning. [In German *In schweren Zeiten spüre ich ganz genau, daß alles, was eine Sache umgibt, keine Bedeutung hat.*] The complex and many-faceted only confuses me, and I must search for the One. [*Vieles und Vielseitiges verwirrt mich nur, und ich muß nach dem Einen suchen.*] What is it, this One, and how can I find my way to it? [*Was ist das, dieses Eine, und wie finde ich den Zugang zu ihm?*] There are many appearances of perfection [*Vollkommenheit*] – and everything that is unnecessary falls away. Tintinnabuli style is something similar. Since here I am alone with silence. I have discovered that it is enough when a single note [*Ton*] is beautifully played. This one sound, the stillness, or the silence [of the highest concentration] comforts me. [*Dieser eine Ton, die Stille oder das Schweigen beruhigen mich.*] I work with little material – with one voice, with two voices. I build from the primitive substance – one triad, one tonality. The three notes of a triad sound bell-like. And that is why I called it Tintinnabuli.” (Sandner 1984, retranslated from German by Kaire Maimets-Volt)

According to Pärt’s own words, then, the very intention behind his *tintinnabuli* style, from its outset in the 1970s, has been to communicate the ‘One(ness)’<sup>8</sup> (in German *das Eine*) or the perfectness (*Vollkommenheit*) that is present in everything there is – however complex or disguised it may seem. To understand this idea, we should be reminded that, although the *tintinnabuli* style grew out of Pärt’s studies of Western plainchant and early polyphony, the roots of its aesthetics or mentality lie in the Eastern Orthodox Church, most notably in the hesychastic<sup>9</sup> eremitic tradition of meditative prayer.

I will proceed to show that sounding *tintinnabuli* music can indeed be argued to communicate the composer’s intent.<sup>10</sup> For that I will present representative examples of listeners’ free descriptions on experiencing *tintinnabuli* music, as well as discuss the use of Pärt’s pre-existing concert music in film soundtracks. Furthermore, I suggest that the purely musical structures allowing for mediating the ‘idea of One(ness)’ are indeed stylistic (i.e., having to do with the fact that on hearing this music we are able to instantly recognize: “It must be Pärt’s *tintinnabuli* work!”) and not idiosyncratic (i.e., the particular timbre, or the mode, or the mood, etc., of a particular composition). It is the *tintinnabuli* sound in general, not in particular, that evokes a specific state of mind, or a single “emotionally polyphonic” (Cohen 2001: 267) “connotative complex” (Meyer 1956: 262) in listeners.

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<sup>8</sup> An alternative name for the ‘Absolute’, ‘Source of Reality’, ‘The Good’ (in Pythagoreanism to Neoplatonism), the ‘Prime Principle’ (in Gnosticism), ‘The All’ (in Hermeticism).

<sup>9</sup> In short, hesychasm (Greek *hēsychasmos*, from *hēsychia*, “stillness, rest, quiet, silence”) is the Eastern Orthodox monastic tradition of meditative prayer, or an eremitic practice of silent contemplation, an integral part of which is the continual repetition of the Jesus Prayer (in extended form: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner”). This practice came to the fore in the 14th century among the monks of Mount Athos. It is a doctrine of mental asceticism: hesychastic practice involves the acquiring of an inner stillness and ignoring the physical senses in order to achieve an experiential knowledge of God. See also Hillier 1997: 6–10.

<sup>10</sup> See also Maria Cizmic’s (2008) discussion of Pärt’s early *tintinnabuli* works performing a ‘Neoplatonic Augustinian model of subjectivity’.

## The sound of music

The specific, immediately recognizable *tintinnabuli* sound can be described as a complex acoustic phenomenon which relies on compositional and performance features (including those pertaining to room acoustics). Constructionally speaking, *tintinnabuli* (from *tintinnabulum*, Latin: a small tinkling bell) is an original kind of (diatonic) polyphony<sup>11</sup>, which is created from tonal material outside “the hierarchical and teleological conventions of functional tonality” (Cizmic 2008: 69) and which uses silence and reverberation as musical elements. In order for the music to become alive, it has to be performed without romantic excesses like extensive vibrato or rubato, and with a restrained emotional stance. Since the original organization of musical material then blends into a consonant non-functional harmonic stasis full of in-composed<sup>12</sup> overtone reverberation, the *tintinnabuli* sound evokes fairly predictable associations in the Western culture of music and musical multimedia: The ‘pealing of bells’ turns out to be the most common connotative description evoked by this music:

“How is it that a simple chord or a two-part texture sounds ‘religious’? Perhaps this impression stems from the oscillating, vibrating sound of bells that Pärt repeatedly imitates in his music and that has become a hallmark of his style.” (Schäfer 1999)

“The bells are heard in the sweet, ethereal *Für Alina* (For Alina), which falls somewhere between the character of a minimalist Bach chorale and a lullaby.” (Swed 1995)

“The triad does indeed form the starting point of each work, and its pervasive presence yields a distinctive mixture of overtones and undertones which is highly suggestive of the sound of bells.” (Borg-Wheeler 1997: 6)

“Since the breakthrough to poetic musical expression which Arvo Pärt calls *tintinnabuli*-style, his scores have been pervaded by bell-like sounds.” (Conen 1991)

An other connotative description that listeners have commonly reported *tintinnabuli* music to evoke, is ‘incantation’:

“In Pärt’s music, what is unknown is summoned from what is known through the natural variance of incantat[i]on—of reciting something over and over—like the casting of spells and the saying of prayers.” (Giampietro 2004)

“At times, Arvo Pärt’s compositions are like the Hesychastic prayers of a musical anchorite: mysterious and simple, illuminating and full of love.” (Sandner 1984)

“Although a single tonal centre is often adhered to throughout a work, this relatively undramatic, essentially contemplative music is nevertheless constantly changing. Its compelling and hypnotic effect is achieved not through monotonous repetition but by continual renewal, with subtle variations in texture, chord-spacing or phrase-length.” (Borg-Wheeler 1997: 6)

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<sup>11</sup> Leopold Brauneiss (2004/2010: 130) applies a term “raised/exponentiated monophony” (*potenzierte Monophonie*) for this compositional technique, since the core principle of interweaving the musical lines or voices differs from those in traditionally conceived homophony or polyphony.

<sup>12</sup> That is, the reverberation is not added to a performance at the time of recording (through electronic amplification of sound) or postproduction (e.g., as studio reverb at mixing sessions).

“The old tradition of sacral music is first and foremost centered on word, on following the moderately elevated reciting-tempo of sacral texts. In Arvo Pärt’s music one can perhaps consider this restored suggestive reciting-rhythm to be even more important than the specific compositional system. [...] The model of persuasive, magical recital-speech has found different realizations in musical creations of Pärt’s epigones. Clarity, pronouncedly rhetorical surface, repetitions and moderate tempo of sound events are features that enable pursuance and identification.” (Arujärvi 2001: 113–114)

The latter connotative description can be traced back to Pärt’s specific manner of articulating musical material – of repeatedly, incessantly reciting its subject, with only subtle changes, in slow to medium tempo, reminiscent of persuasive sacral recital-speech, or of the saying of prayers. In more restrained terms, this diachronic organization of musical material can also be said to give *tintinnabuli* music its specific figurative quality of ‘floating’ (cf. Ashby 2000, Koob 2004, van Veen 2000) or ‘circling’ (Cizmic 2006, Curnutte 2003). In addition, on the basis of the content analysis of the vocabulary of listeners’ free subjective descriptions of experiencing *tintinnabuli* music (see Ex. 1), I can claim that at least the signature *tintinnabuli* works that are most often used in film and other multimedia productions, do express and evoke a sense of ‘purity and calmness’, and a remarkable sense of ‘somewhere else’ in time (e.g., ‘long ago’, ‘beyond’), in space (e.g., ‘far away’, ‘deep within’) and in state of mind (other than ordinary consciousness, e.g., ‘meditation’, ‘dream’).

For example, *Spiegel im Spiegel* is described as “evanescent meditation” (Ashby 2000); charting “paths to transcendence” (Eichler 2004); “lullaby [...] as if a prayer of deepest longing were just whispered into the still air” (Swan, s.a.); “music in all senses of the word ‘timeless’. [...] a work whose humble aspirations cast their gaze on eternity.” (Riley 2004)

Or on *Für Alina* the listeners have expressed: “every delicate cluster of notes shines like a distant star through a wintery black night” (Swan, s.a.); “the left hand persistently creates a twinkling effect [...] Pure consonance, which in *Für Alina* [...] [stands] for a kind of Arctic emptiness [...] there is in this music a strong sense of the distant past. [...] This tiny piano piece [...] summons echoes from across a millennium” (Griffiths 2006); “seemingly transcending time” (Conen 1999).

Add to those the *tintinnabuli* compositions’ general emotional inclination towards “bright sadness” (Nelson 2002) and it becomes comprehensible where the listeners’ senses of nostalgic yearning for something unattainable, forgotten, or lost – as a reaction to this music – come from.

In this light, it might not come as a surprise that among contemporary filmmakers there seems to be a strong intersubjective agreement on how to use *tintinnabuli* music in film.

### **Settling the score**

The empirical background of my research on Pärt’s pre-existing concert compositions in film soundtracks consists in watching and listening to the majority of the films listed at the end of this article. This empirical basis allows for the generalization that directors and music editors for film and television have found *tintinnabuli* music most appropriate to invoke in films that reflect upon Man’s relationship to Eternity, Love, and God, and that at the same time disentangle complicated existential

subject matters like the search for identity, dying of terminal illness, war, or the Holocaust. In these films, we find the protagonists on a metaphorical journey to “the narrow gate that leads to life” (Mt 7: 13–14), struggling with issues of humanity, mortality, and dignity. The films’ plot-level stories are full of pain, injustice, anguish, and loneliness, while on the other hand the recurrent topics can be said to be absolution, salvation through some kind of sacrifice, transcendence, or – less specifically – coming to the acknowledgement of kindness, compassion, love, and one’s place in Life (with a capital ‘L’).

Furthermore, I had noticed that regardless of a particular film’s actual plot-level story, or genre, and regardless of which particular *tintinnabuli* composition had been used, there seemed to be a strong tendency among filmmakers to invoke *tintinnabuli* music on similar occasions with a similar purpose in a similar manner. In particular: considerably many filmmakers have used *tintinnabuli* music as if it belonged to a specific musical mood category like there once used to be in the nomenclature of music-for-accompaniment-catalogues in the early days of cinema. The name of this *tintinnabuli*-musical mood category would be ‘numinous’, ‘supernal’, ‘spiritual’, ‘transcendence’, ‘sphere of the beyond’, ‘meaning of life’, or any other such concept used to convey an idea of an ineffable unconditional reality which transcends limited, conditional, everyday existence. And this happens to be well consistent with the results of my discussion above on how *tintinnabuli* music is generally perceived and interpreted.

However, unlike in the mainstream film music practice (a generic example of which would be a Hollywood movie; cf. Ozon’s words in the beginning of this article), I would suggest that Pärt’s *tintinnabuli* music is not primarily, at least not only, called upon in film to signify on the plot level, but to mediate narrative meanings from the authorial or conceptual perspective. It is a characteristic feature of narrative artistic texts to point to something universal (“take us back, either consciously or unwillingly, to myth”, Lotman 1973/1979: 172) through the telling of a specific story. Therefore, following the example of Jurij Lotman (1973/1981) I am distinguishing here between two levels of cinematic narration and, accordingly, two levels of narrative meaning. This allows for me to suggest that music in film can simultaneously participate in the construction of two types of narrative meaning (Maimets 2003). One of these meanings is associated with a particular story, and might be called the primary level of narration (the plot): it is the world of characters, the actions they take and the various events which take place. The other is associated with the filmmaker’s conception of the particular story: it is the “higher” (or “deeper”) level of narration where the author’s voice could become heard, expressive of certain beliefs, values, and ideological stances in relation to the story, as well as of attitudes towards people, events, things, etc. within the story. What the author considers worth communicating in relation to the story becomes revealed in the textual treatment of a story,

i.e., in case of a film text, through the particular composition of filmic means of expression.<sup>13</sup> In the case of *tintinnabuli* music in film, this is to say that the music is introduced not only to set specific moods suggested by characters' actions and other events taking place in the story, nor to emphasise the particular emotions of characters at particular points of time. Rather, this music is called upon to mediate a specific reflective point of view upon the characters, their actions, and plot events – that is: a view from the 'numinous', 'supernal', 'spiritual', 'transcendental' 'sphere of the beyond'.<sup>14</sup>

Some representative cases shall be described next.

### **Ways of worldmaking**

One of the first films ever to feature Pärt's pre-existing concert compositions was *Repentance* (Georgia/SU, 1984) by Georgian director Tenghiz Abuladze. Seventy-six minutes into the film, at 1:16:07,<sup>15</sup> we begin to hear the second movement, "Silentium", of Pärt's *Tabula rasa* (1977, double concerto for 2 violins, string orchestra and prepared piano). Paired with the music, we see images of women at a rail junction where lumber is unloaded from trains on a rainy autumn day. In the reign of terror, their husbands and sons, fathers and brothers have been sentenced to deportation to the Far North, where the men are forced to work in logging. On the unloaded lumber, the women are desperately looking for names scraped onto the logs – the only proof of life they can get from these men. The camera mostly looks at the *diegesis*<sup>16</sup> from above, i.e., the high-angle shots prevail in the cinematography. Except for one child's repeated exclamation ("Amiran Abashidze. I found him!"), there is no diegetic dialogue, and all other diegetic sounds have been eliminated, so that the sounds of people's steps in the mud and rain, of the logging machines, and dogs barking are totally absent.

"Abuladze himself has stated (cf. "Sovetskaja Muzyka" 1987, no. 10, p. 5): "We were filming the scene at the rail junction where women are looking for their imprisoned family members' names from the lumber transported from the taiga. [...] We recorded natural sounds and the phonogram turned out to be quite expressive. The rattle of the train wheels, sawmill, dogs barking, voices, steps. The actress Mziya Mahiveladze played very well, the entire team was crying... The composer Giya Kancheli watched the filmed

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<sup>13</sup> As Jurij Lotman (1973/1981: 67) has formulated: "In an artistic message [...] the very language carries information. The choice of a particular form of text organization is directly meaningful for the entire quantity of transmitted information."

<sup>14</sup> Hence the 'naturalness', suggested by Jeffers Engelhardt (2012: 30) of the "invocation of Pärt in particular cinematic and televisual moments of spiritual intensity, nostalgia, tragedy, mortality, and remembering, to name a few".

<sup>15</sup> The timings in this article are not time-code based; they provide the hours, minutes, and seconds, as read by a VHS/DVD/.avi file player. For example '1:16:07' should be read: "the sequence starts at 1 hours, 16 minutes, and 7 seconds".

<sup>16</sup> "Diegesis" refers to the narratively implied (fictive) spatiotemporal universe of the characters and actions. Diegetic music (a.k.a source music, real music) is that which is produced in the course of the filmic narrative itself: it is expected to be audible to the characters in the film and its source is either explicitly present or implied (e.g., music coming from a radio in the next room, the door of which is ajar). Non-diegetic music (a.k.a extradiegetic, functional, illustrative, background music; underscoring, soundtrack), on the contrary, is audible only to the film audience: its source is external with respect to the plot.

sequence. He said: "I have music which might suit you." And he delivered a tape. What it is, I do not know to this day.<sup>17</sup> Music? Background sounds? Moaning? This is what sounds in the film. For the first time in the lumber-episode. The sounds of the railway and the sawmill had to be left out. For the second time the same sounds are heard in a scene where Nino Barateli rushes to her friend Elen, and, after having seen the seal on her door and been told by the neighbors that Elen was taken away at night, she sinks in desperation on the stairs. It is the voice of anguish, the wailing of innocents deemed guilty."<sup>18</sup> (TMK 1988: 55)

Let us skip forward in time for almost 20 years.

Sixty-three minutes into Tom Tykwer's film *Heaven* (Germany/Italy/USA/France/UK, 2002), signifying the beginning of the film's second half in which the narrative style is shifted, there begins a scene where the two protagonists, Philippa (Cate Blanchett) and Filippo (Giovanni Ribisi), who have carried out a revenge murder of a drug baron, go on the run. From a railway station in Turin they catch a train that takes them through the Tuscan landscape. At 1:03:01, Arvo Pärt's *Spiegel im Spiegel* (♣Bezrodny & Spivakov 1999<sup>18</sup>) starts to unfold, and it is given plenty of time and space to resound. The entire musical cue lasts for 5 minutes and 17 seconds. In the cinematography, slowly spanning or steady high-angle overhead ("bird's eye") shots prevail, so that while the music sounds, the *diegesis* is prevaingly looked at from above. The duration of the shots tends to be long, and the on-screen movement small or altogether absent. In addition, slow dissolves are used. These, of course, are perhaps the most efficient visual means to convey an illusion of stopping time, or of timelessness. In the sound editing, other than the protagonists' voices in a slow, quiet dialogue, all the diegetic sounds (e.g., the train, people making preparations for a feast at the church square) are suppressed in volume. The dialogue between Philippa and Filippo can be best described as highly music-sensitive. Whether nondiegetic or diegetic, off-screen or onscreen, their voices maintain the dynamic level of *Spiegel im Spiegel* heard in the scene. Juxtaposed with the music, the melodic quality of Philippa's voice becomes particularly noticeable. The fugitives reach a church in Montepulciano where we witness an allegorical act of confession and absolution. They talk of serious matters, without any illusions for their future, being completely honest to themselves and each other. The slow tempo of the dialogue and abundance of pauses between speech phrases appropriately fits the musical structures. The protagonists' most important statements (Philippa: "I've ceased to believe"; Filippo: "I love you") are pronounced in-between the violin phrases of *Spiegel im Spiegel*; to answer Filippo's question "Ceased to believe in what?", Philippa utters her words "in sense... in justice... in

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<sup>17</sup> The film credits only state: "Musical pieces by classical composers are used in this film." However, even if Abuladze knew of the composer whose music he used in these episodes, explicitly crediting Arvo Pärt's music would not have been possible in any case – not in the film, nor in that interview cited in this quote –, since after his emigration from Soviet Union in 1980, Pärt had been officially deemed outcast, and publicly pronouncing his name would have meant sanctions for anyone who did so.

<sup>18</sup> References belonging to the category of "(identified) Recordings of music" are marked with the sign of loudspeaker preceding the name of performer(s). '♣Bezrodny & Spivakov 1999' signifies that the "Spiegel im Spiegel" heard in the given sequence in *Heaven* is performed by Sergej Bezrodny and Vladimir Spivakov, and that this recording is taken from the CD *Alina* (ECM New Series 1591) issued in 1999.

life..." congruously with the notes of violin's melodic voice (M-voice). Retaining its melancholic charge, *Spiegel im Spiegel* embraces them with soothing warmth, which is aided by the camera work: the gentle, almost unnoticeable back-and-forth swinging of camera has an effect of caressing.

To summarize and generalize: in film sequences with *tintinnabuli* music, the plot time tends to slow down – the action stops, time halts. Cinematographically, this is achieved by pairing the music with the visual means that most effectively convey an impression of stopping time, or of timelessness, and of looking at the *diegesis* (i.e., the characters' world) from above, including:

- high-angle overhead shots ("bird's eye" or "space cam" shots) – steady or slowly panning;
- (very) long-duration takes which often feature
  - slow panoramic camera pans;
  - little or no on-screen movement – all suggestive of stillness, peace.

Adding a dream-like quality to the depiction of events are

- (slow) dissolves between shots / double exposures;
- on-screen slow motion.

Often, the scenes with *tintinnabuli* music are cinematographically presented in some uncommon, unexpected way, when compared to the rest of the film. For example, the last episode (beginning at 2:00:05) of Carlos Reygadas' *Japón* (Mexico/Germany/Netherlands/Spain, 2002) consists of only one shot, the duration of which is in principle as long as that of *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (Benedek & HSOO 1997) which we hear with it (a number of bars truncated, the *Cantus* sounds for little over 5 minutes in film; see also below). Then again, in Gus van Sant's *Gerry* (USA/Argentina/Jordan, 2001) where the plot events are presented in extremely long takes as if almost in real time (working out to the average shot length<sup>19</sup> of roughly 60 seconds<sup>20</sup>), suddenly in 1:01:32 surreal flashbacks in sped-up tempos, accelerated erratic camera motions and abrupt cuts appear along with *Für Alina* (Malter 1999).

Contrary to the most common film music practice, *tintinnabuli* music usually becomes foregrounded in film. More often than not it has been given time and the necessary sonic space to

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<sup>19</sup> Measuring by ASL provides data that can be used to compare films on the basis of their editing style: how often they cut, and how long the shots last. For example, a long ASL means the film uses, on average, longer shots and fewer cuts.

<sup>20</sup> "Gerry is the first American narrative film available to a mainstream audience to employ an excessive long take style in a uniform manner and in a particular rhythm across the whole of its length. This decision to make the long take such a dominant and uniform element affects the film's treatment of time and its overall rhythm and pace. To begin, there are no 'peaks and valleys,' no 'fast-paced' climax, and no build-up or crescendo. The film runs 103 minutes, with an estimated 100 shots, which works out to an average shot length (ASL) of roughly 60". This is an ASL one encounters in films by Andrei Tarkovsky, Theo Angelopoulos, Bela Tarr, Hou Hsiao-Hsien, and Tsai Ming-Liang, not in American films starring Matt Damon playing at your local first run theatre. Equally important to the film's measured rhythm is that the ASL is consistent across the film, with approximately 50 shots in the first half and 50 shots in the second half. Along with the film's extremely slow ASL and metronomic rhythm, is its languid pace and minimal narrative. In terms of the plot little happens in a conventional dramatical sense and there is little action or conflict. To reiterate, no commercially distributed American narrative film has ever, to my knowledge, combined such an aesthetic, formal approach." (Totaro 2003)

unfold. First of all, a *tintinnabuli*-musical cue usually lasts long enough to really make a musical impact (4–5 minutes is not at all uncommon). Thereby, if there occurs a necessity to edit the *tintinnabuli* compositions, they are cut and pasted with great respect towards the musical grammar and syntax. For example, in the above-mentioned finale of Reygadas' *Japón*, the bars 60–86 of Pärt's *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (Benedek & HSOO 1997) have been cut, yet the omission can easily go unnoticed. Or consider the first time *Spiegel im Spiegel* appears in Mike Nichol's television drama *Wit* (USA, 2001) that chronicles the personal awakening of a longtime literary scholar (played by Emma Thompson) after the diagnosis of terminal cancer. The sequence from 0:08:14 to 0:10:45 is a great example of subtlety in editing of nondiegetic *tintinnabuli* music and other sounds, most remarkably the dialogue. In this scene, as a graduate student the protagonist Vivian Bearing discusses her essay on John Donne's *Holy Sonnet* entitled "Death Be Not Proud" with her mentor, Prof. E. M. Ashford (played by Eileen Atkins): the concept of 'death' is discussed at length for the first time in the story, and the word 'wit' (the film's title) comes up in the dialogue. The scene switches back and forth between two imagined conditions: Vivian's flashback of herself in Prof. Ashford's office, young and long-haired; and her imagination of watching and listening to Prof. Ashford in her own hospital room while herself a bald cancer treatment patient. By combining past and present in a graceful swirl of memory, time is thus halted in this scene. We hear the piano and cello version of *Spiegel im Spiegel* (Malter & Schwalke 1999); the music unfolds from bar 1 to 21, yet it is prolonged by repetition of the bars 1–11. Prof. Ashford's discussion of the last line of Donne's sonnet ("And death shall be no more, / Death thou shalt die") fits beautifully into the first musical "sentence," where the cello's melodic line moves up one step, and then down one step (see Example 2). Thereby, the word 'die' sounds together with the low pedal note on the piano (bar 6). After the first musical "sentence" (completed in bar 11), *Spiegel im Spiegel* is inconspicuously, with all due respect to musical grammar, cut back to the beginning. As a result, we now hear the low pedal point on the piano (bar 2) simultaneously with Prof. Ashford's word "life". Thus a musical bridge is created between these words in the dialogue (see Ex. 2).

What could have prompted this prolongation of the beginning of *Spiegel im Spiegel*? First, I would suggest, the necessity to keep surface musical (melodic) material at a minimum, in order not to divert any attention from what is being said. Since the matter of discussion here is so important for the entire film story, the diegetic speech is fit to the nondiegetic music, so that both have enough time and space to resound. Yet the reason why it is so important for *Wit* to have *tintinnabuli* music in this particular scene at all lies, I would say, in the following: in this scene, a lesson, for Vivian, in standards of scholarship and critical reading is foregrounded; yet there is another one offered, revealed through the elegant transformation in Prof. Ashford's character from a demanding,

uncompromising scholar into a caring, older friend – a lesson on warmth of heart Vivian unfortunately misses. And Pärt’s *Spiegel im Spiegel* is there to underline that lesson.

The image shows a musical score for Arvo Pärt's 'Spiegel im Spiegel' for Violoncello (Vc) and Piano. The score is in 4/4 time and features a single melodic line for the cello and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a sparse accompaniment in the left hand. The lyrics are: '2. "Life, death..."' and '1. "... Thou shalt die"'. The score is divided into two systems, with the second system starting at measure 12.

**Example 2.** Arvo Pärt, *Spiegel im Spiegel* (bb. 1–21) in 0:08:14–0:10:45 of *Wit* (Mike Nichols, USA, 2001).  
 Arvo Pärt “Spiegel im Spiegel” für Violoncello und Klavier  
 © Copyright 1978 by Universal Edition A.G., Wien  
 This version: © Copyright 1996 by Universal Edition A.G., Wien/UE 30336

To continue the summary of *tintinnabuli* music in film: as represented by the selected examples above, in composing the film’s integrated sound track<sup>21</sup>, it is quite common that:

- the dynamic level of *tintinnabuli* music is louder than that of other sounds, whether non-musical (e.g. speech-voice, natural sounds) or musical;
- often in scenes with *tintinnabuli* music, all the diegetic sounds and the dialogue are altogether absent;
- nondiegetic voice-over is preferred over diegetic dialogue to sound simultaneously with *tintinnabuli* music;
- if diegetic dialogue or a nondiegetic voice-over is heard with *tintinnabuli* music, it tends to
  - be highly music-sensitive: the speech (voice) and music conform in tempo and rhythm, in articulation (i.e., manner of phrasing and pausing), in musicality or melodicy as such – for example, speech is heard between significant musical events, or certain keywords can be underlined or framed by single pitches of the linear M-voice and/or the triadic T-voice;
  - present a highly important subject matter in terms of the film’s poetic structure (i.e., artistic trope).

<sup>21</sup> “Integrated sound track” (Neumeyer 2000) consists of nondiegetic and diegetic music, diegetic and non-diegetic voice (incl. paralinguistic means of verbal expressions), natural sounds, noises, sound effects, and silence.

In short, *tintinnabuli* music is rarely reduced to mere sonic background in favor of other narratively significant sounds like the speech voice. Instead it becomes a narratively significant sound itself. And that brings me to formulate the similar occasions and purposes for which filmmakers tend to use *tintinnabuli* music.

There is plenty of evidence to propose that in films, Pärt's *tintinnabuli* music consistently tends to occur in narrative situations of some sort of 'spiritual crisis' which challenges the fundamental values of humanity. And with the aid of the specific ways of setting this music to interact with other filmic means of expression – especially by positioning the music “above” *diegesis* through consistently suppressing diegetic sounds, and by consistently pairing this music with high-angle overheads and long takes – *tintinnabuli* music intervenes in the depiction of the crisis, the characters, their actions and other plot events, as if from another fictional plane, or as if a character or a voice itself. This another plane I have come to call the “sphere of the beyond”. It is the world of eternal spiritual values or ideals, acting as the genuine measure against which to validate the characters and their actions in a story. On the basis of my film analyses, I would say that the eternal values include, first and foremost, those that help to sustain Life (with capital 'L') – like goodness or kindness, empathy, compassion, mercy, humbleness, love, which all together allow for the knowledge of 'sacred' and 'transcendental'. In a plot level situation of the 'crisis', these eternal values remain beyond the characters' reach, possibly even beyond their understanding. Thus Pärt's *tintinnabuli* music simultaneously signals, represents, embodies and mediates those from beyond time and space. In other words, by the choice of particular film-compositional-techniques, recurrent from film to film, Pärt's pre-existing *tintinnabuli* music consistently seems to be “positioned as an anchoring continuity while everything around it falls to ruin.” (Flinn 2000: 125). This music is called upon for the confirmation of the validity of integrity, substantiality, and – perhaps above all – kindness in the mundane lives of characters, as well as the viewers. In addition, the music gives a specific character to the gaze cast from the “sphere of the beyond” on the characters, their actions and other plot events: due to how the *tintinnabuli* music sounds, this musical gaze tends to be perceived as a distant, aloof, non-judgemental, calm, quiet, and slightly melancholic in a restrained way; and, at the same time, the music is reported to evoke a yearning for something lost, forgotten, dispossessed of (see again Ex. 1; cf. Maimets-Volt 2009: 232–237).

Asserting that *tintinnabuli* music is not primarily (or at least not only) invoked to signify on the plot level of course does not preclude the spectator from experiencing and/or interpreting *tintinnabuli* music nevertheless on the plot level. After all, as is the case with any film, music simultaneously functions on various interpretive levels – “temporal, spatial, dramatic, structural, denotative, connotative” (Gorbman 1987: 22); hence “graceful and tender” on one level simultaneously translates into “strict with regard to organization and structure” (see Tykwer's quote

on the first page) on the other, or the idea of “pure, unconditional, unmerited love”<sup>22</sup> on yet another. (Notice that Abuladze’s own interpretation of Pärt’s *Tabula rasa* as “the voice of anguish, wailing of innocents deemed guilty” is grounded on the film’s plot level.)

## Conclusions

The quotes at the beginning of this article suggest that the basic answer to the question “What makes *tintinnabuli* music so attractive an expressive tool for directors and music editors for film and television?” lies in the music itself. That is to say, filmmakers have been drawn, first and foremost, to the specific, immediately recognizable sound of *tintinnabuli* music – its stylistic features, not the specific features of particular compositions. Secondly, the charm of this music for filmmakers could lie in the fact that the musical parameters of *tintinnabuli* compositions tend to remain constant throughout a piece – especially in the early instrumental compositions that are most frequently used in film soundtracks. Due to this immutability, the mode and intensity of musical expression do not vary during the course of a piece, which facilitates being unambiguous in communicating filmic messages, e.g., a specific point of view. Thirdly, one of the greatest advantages of *tintinnabuli* music as film music is its lack of sentimentality, i.e., its emotional restraint. If performed as envisaged by the composer (esp. without excesses like extensive vibrato), this music exhibits a strongly non-sentimental quality, which is extremely efficient in disentangling complicated subject matters, often depicted in a very realistic, hard-to-watch way. This quality of non-sentimentality prevents the depiction of plot events from becoming, on the one hand, overdramatic, overemotional, or melodramatic; and, on the other hand, prevents the filmmakers from compromising (artistic) truth, i.e. from covering up the difficult moments in a story by making those moments prettier, easier, secure, romantic, etc. with music. (That of course does not prevent the spectators/listeners from complete emotional submersion into the music and film – rather *vice versa*.) For example, that vibrato indeed adds sentimentality can be heard/seen in an episode of *Mother Night* (Keith Gordon, USA, 1996), beginning at 0:31:48, where the protagonist Howard Jr. Campbell’s (Nick Nolte) young sister-in-law (Kirsten Dunst) confesses her love to him next to the piano and violin duet of *Spiegel im Spiegel* (Little & Roscoe 1994). In that particular scene of *Mother Night* the sentimental “colour” is, strangely, nevertheless perfectly appropriate. However, because of its considerably fast tempo and inclination towards vibrato, using the Little & Roscoe 1994 recording I would find rather inappropriate for example in the “Stillness of time”-episode (0:29:37–0:31:18) of the film *Wit* (Mike Nichols, USA, 2001). Instead, the Bezrodny & Spivakov 1999 recording is used in the

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<sup>22</sup> Cf.: “The film [*Heaven*],” says Tykwer, “is about redemption, basically the concept that love can help us find our true perspectives and our true meanings. This is not about God being somewhere else, but in ourselves and what a gift that is.” (cited from Schumann 2002)

mentioned episode (paired with slow dissolves and high-angle shots, and the protagonist's voice conforming to the manner of music) to convey the stillness and slowness of hospital life that leads the protagonist to acknowledge her own mortality and the scarcity of time she has left.<sup>23</sup> In the latter case I find the music decisive in that the film manages to set an emotional tone that does not feel cheap. Furthermore, as soon as *tintinnabuli* compositions appear somehow "arranged" in the film score – whether in terms of postproduction (e.g., added sound effects<sup>24</sup>) or by presenting the music simultaneously with some other music<sup>25</sup> –, they instantly lose their unique expressive qualities and become yet another ordinary film score, however well conceived.

Fourthly and finally, pragmatic reasons cannot entirely be ruled out. On the one hand, *tintinnabuli* music's formal features (repetitive patterns, caesuras, lack of development) make it relatively easy to edit with images and other sounds, while allowing for more creative film-compositional techniques than simply turning the music "on" and "off".<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, in the context of contemporary Western culture of musical multimedia, *tintinnabuli* music does function "as part of a cultural shorthand" (Duncan 2003: 138). That is to say, the non-musical associations evoked by *tintinnabuli* music in the contemporary Western culture of music and musical multimedia are inescapably and self-reinforcingly predictable to a great extent. However, in invoking *tintinnabuli* music in film soundtracks, it takes a fellow artist to appreciate and make use of the music's compositional clarity, sense of proportion and symmetry, concise expression of complex matter, and sensibility to silence – in order to rise above "telegraphing instant profundity" (Holden 2003, cf. Wigley 2008) with this music, onto mediating the "authentic essence of world mystery" – the 'One'.

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<sup>23</sup> In Maria Cizmic's interpretation, *Spiegel im Spiegel* accompanying this monologue makes time/temporality real, palpable: "The music expresses what the narration cannot encompass. *Spiegel im Spiegel* creates a temporal space that does not build into dramatic climax; instead, it creates a static state of being, simply and slowly circling through the notes of F major. As Vivian describes her hospital life, the film provides a musical corollary for her temporal experience outside of the film's narrative scope." (Cizmic 2006: 31)

<sup>24</sup> See/listen to, for example, the distorted, darkened *Für Alina* in a short episode 0:49:00–0:49:30 in *Depuis qu'Otar est parti* (Julie Bertucelli, France/Belgium, 2003) of making and developing a false photo of the deceased Otar, as if he were still alive in Paris, in order his aged mother would not learn of his death.

<sup>25</sup> For example, see/listen to the piano and violin duet of *Spiegel im Spiegel* 'padded' with intermittent orchestral touches, prevailing by the strings (yet notice the 'pastoral/humanistic' oboe!), in an episode 0:08:34–0:13:46 in *Mother Night* (Keith Gordon, USA, 1996) summarizing Howard Jr. Campbell's life from childhood, through his and his beloved wife's "Nation of Two", to meeting his "Blue Fairy Godmother."

<sup>26</sup> When asked of his opinion on what makes Pärt's music so appealing for filmmakers, a British musicologist Nicholas Cook suggested: "Pärt's music is high on connotation but often low on the kind of busy-ness that can easily interfere with what is going on visually or in the dialogue. The latter means that you can't go wrong with it, in the same way as with Satie's piano music (a stand-by for low-budget TV programs, at least in Britain); the former means that it is capable of adding a great deal of meaning to the film. I hope this doesn't come across as in some way derogatory; people make the opposite mistakes of thinking that good film must be either (i) good music or (ii) bad music. I don't think it has anything to do with quality. It's just that the thematic, harmonic, rhythmic, textural, and timbral quality of some music lends itself more easily to pairing with moving images and dialogue than in the case of other music. This is especially the case when a film-maker is using pre-existing music, rather than music specifically composed round the images and words." (In Estonian cf. Ross 2005: 88–89)

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◆Malter, Alexander and Dietmar Schwalke (1999). ‘Spiegel im Spiegel’ (Arvo Pärt, 1978). On CD *Alina*. ECM New Series 1591.

### A chronological list of selected films featuring Arvo Pärt’s pre-existing concert music

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**Title of film (Director’s name, Nation, Year of release): Arvo Pärt’s composition(s) used (Year of composition)**

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*Repentance* (Thengiz Abuladze, Georgia/SU, 1984/87): *Tabula rasa* 2<sup>nd</sup> movement “Silentium” (1977)

*Rachel River* (Sandy Smolan, USA, 1987): *Fratres* (1977), *Variationen zur Gesundung von Arinushka* (1977), *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (1977), *Tabula rasa* (1977)

*Les amants du Pont-Neuf* (Leos Carax, France, 1991): *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (1977)

*Lektionen in Finsternis* (Werner Herzog, France/UK/Germany, 1992): *Stabat Mater* (1985)

*Little Buddha* (Bernardo Bertolucci, Italy/France/Liechtenstein/UK, 1993): *Sarah was Ninety Years Old* (1977/90)

*Little Odessa* (James Gray, USA, 1994): “Sanctus” from *Berliner Messe* (1990), *Silouans Song* (1991)

*Silent Witness* (Harriet Wichin, Canada 1994): *Miserere* (1989/92)

*Mother Night* (Keith Gordon, USA, 1996): *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (1977), *Fratres* (1977), *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978), *Tabula rasa* (1977)

*Hamsun* (Jan Troell, Germany/Norway/Sweden/Denmark, 1996): *Fratres* (1977), *Trisagion* (1992), *Psalom* (1985)

*Johns* (Scott Silver, USA, 1996): *Annum per annum* (1980)

*Winterschläfer* (Tom Tykwer, Germany, 1997): *Fratres* (1977), *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (1977)

*A Kind of Hush* (Brian Stirner, UK, 1998): *Trisagion* (1992)

*The Insider* (Michael Mann, USA, 1999): *Litany* (1994/96)

*The Thin Red Line* (Terrence Malick, USA, 1999): *Annum per annum* (1980)

*Wisconsin Death Trip* (James Marsh, UK/USA, 1999): *Summa* (1977), *Tabula Rasa* 2<sup>nd</sup> movement “Silentium” (1977)

*I cento passi (One Hundred Steps)* (Marco Tullio Giordana, Italy, 2000): *Silouans Song* (1991)

*Duet* (Stephen Quay, Timothy Quay, UK, 2000): *Für Alina* (1976)

*Bella Martha* (Sandra Nettelbeck, Germany/Austria/Switzerland/Italy, 2001): *Für Alina* (1976)

*La chambre des officiers* (François Dupeyron, France, 2001): *Für Alina* (1976), *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978)

*Uprising* (Jon Avnet, USA, 2001): *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (1977), *Fratres* (1977), *Für Alina* (1976), *Tabula Rasa* (1977)

*Wit* (Mike Nichols, USA, 2001): *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978)

*Lavoura Arcaica* (Luiz Fernando Carvalho, Brazil, 2001): *Festina lente* (1988/90), *Stabat mater* (1985)

*War Photographer* (Christian Frei, Switzerland, 2001): *Silouans Song* (1991), *Psalom* (1985)

*Gerry* (Gus van Sant, USA/Argentina/Jordan, 2002): *Für Alina* (1976), *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978)

*Heaven* (Tom Tykwer, Germany/Italy/USA/France/UK, 2002): *Für Alina* (1976), *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978), *Variationen zur Gesundung von Arinushka* (1977)

*Japón* (Carlos Reygadas, Mexico/Germany/Netherlands/Spain, 2002): *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (1977), *Miserere* (1989/92)

*Saenghwal ūi palgyōn (On the Occasion of Remembering the Turning Gate)* (Hong Sang-soo, South Korea, 2002): *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978)

*Ten Minutes Older: The Cello / Segment: Dans le noir du temps* (Jean-Luc Godard, UK/Germany/France, 2002): *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978)

*Out of Control* (Dominic Savage, UK, 2002): *Für Alina* (1976), *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978)

*Depuis qu’Otar est parti* (Julie Bertucelli, France/Belgium, 2003): *Für Alina* (1976), *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978)

*Les invasions barbares* (Denys Arcand, Canada/France, 2003): *Ein Wallfahrtslied / Pilgrim’s Song* (1984), *Psalom* (1985), *Trisagion* (1992/94)

*Fahrenheit 9/11* (Michael Moore, USA, 2004): *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (1977)

*Dead Man’s Shoes* (Shane Meadows, UK, 2004): *De Profundis* (1980)

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*La petite Lili* (Claude Miller, France/Canada, 2004): *Fratres* (1977), *Für Alina* (1976), *Summa* (1977)  
*Soldados de Salamina* (Fernando Trueba, Spain, 2004): *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (1977), *Fratres* (1977), *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978)  
*Notre musique* (Jean-Luc Godard, France/Switzerland, 2004): *Silouans Song* (1991)  
*Dag och natt (Day and Night)* (Simon Staho, Sweden/Denmark, 2004): *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (1977)  
*Dear Frankie* (Shona Auerbach, UK, 2004): *Spiegel im Spiegel* (1978)  
*Promised Land* (Amos Gitai, Israel/France/UK, 2004): *Peace Upon You, Jerusalem* (2002)  
*Feux rouges* (Cédric Kahn, France, 2004): *Für Alina* (1976)  
*Hawaii, Oslo* (Erik Poppe, Denmark/Sweden/Norway, 2004): *Für Alina* (1976)  
*Le temps qui reste* (François Ozon, France, 2005): *Für Alina* (1976), *Symphony No. 3* (1971)  
*Phantom Limb* (Jay Rosenblatt, USA, 2005): *Für Alina* (1976), *Tabula Rasa* (1977), *Silouans Song* (1991)  
*The Good Shepherd* (Robert De Niro, USA, 2006): *Litany* (1994), *Salve Regina* (2001), *Silouans Song* (1991)  
*Bes Vakit (Times and Winds)* (Reha Erdem, Turkey, 2006): *Te Deum* (1985/92), *Silouans Song* (1991), *Orient & Occident* (2000), *Como cierva sedienta* (1998)  
*Candy* (Neil Armfield, Australia, 2006): *Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten* (1977)  
*There Will Be Blood* (Paul Thomas Anderson, USA, 2007): *Fratres* (1977)  
*Izgnanie (The Banishment)* (Andrei Zvyagintsev, Russia, 2007): *Ode VII (Memento)* from *Kanon Pokajanen* (1994/97), *Für Alina* (1977)  
*Khodorkovsky* (Cyril Tuschi, Germany, 2011): *Symphony no. 4 "Los Angeles"* (2008)  
*Habemus Papam* (Nanni Moretti, France/Italy, 2011): *Miserere* (1989/92)  
*La grande bellezza* (Paolo Sorrentino, Italy/France, 2013): *My Heart's in the Highlands* (2000)