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**Citation:** Wiley, C. (2011). Theorizing Television Music as Serial Art: Buffy the Vampire Slayer and the Narratology of Thematic Score. In: Leonard, KP (Ed.), Buffy, Ballads, and Bad Guys Who Sing: Music in the Worlds of Joss Whedon. (pp. 23-67). Scarecrow Press. ISBN 0810869454

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# Theorizing Television Music as Serial Art: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and the Narratology of Thematic Score

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The rich and burgeoning literature on film music, which has for some years enjoyed substantial critical exploration, contrasts strikingly with the current under-theorization of its televisual counterpart. While a small number of fascinating analyses of aspects of music for television have recently appeared, those by Julie Brown, Robynn Stilwell, and K. J. Donnelly being particularly worthy of note, much research nevertheless remains to be conducted in this vast yet still largely untapped area.<sup>1</sup> The article on television in the latest edition of the foundational *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* – which crystallizes around the televised performance of operas, concerts, and masterclasses, as well as educational documentaries and commentaries about music – is emblematic of the limited musicological scrutiny hitherto received by other elements that are surely equally deserving of serious attention, such as the wealth of original (under)score.<sup>2</sup> One reason for the relative dearth of dedicated research on music for television, and of academic

This chapter has its origins in two conference papers: “‘I Believe the Subtext Here is Rapidly Becoming Text’: Music, Gender, and Fantasy in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*”, delivered at the Universities of London (December 7, 2001), Warwick (May 11, 2002), and East Anglia (October 20, 2002); and “Reading Television (Under)score: The Music of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*”, delivered at Keele University (March 18, 2005) and City University London (May 4, 2005). My work has benefited from a number of fruitful conversations, over the years, with Matthew Mills, Ben Winters, Ian Davis, and James Longstaffe; I am particularly grateful to Ben Winters and Matthew Mills for their invaluable comments on drafts of this essay. Thanks are also due to James Longstaffe for checking my transcriptions; to Kendra Preston Leonard for her helpful editorial guidance; to Laura Laakso for many hours of viewing companionship; and to the staff and students at City University London for much thought-provoking comment and critique.

<sup>1</sup> Julie Brown, “*Ally McBeal*’s Postmodern Soundtrack”, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. 126/2 (2001), pp. 275-303; Robynn J. Stilwell, “The sound is ‘out there’: score, sound design and exoticism in *The X-Files*”, in Allan F. Moore (ed.), *Analyzing Popular Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 60-79; K. J. Donnelly, “Music on Television 1: Music for Television Drama” and “Music on Television 2: Pop Music’s Colonisation of Television”, in *The Spectre of Sound: Music in Film and Television* (London: British Film Institute, 2005), pp. 110-33 and pp. 134-49 respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Lionel Salter, Humphrey Burton, Jennifer Barnes, and David Burnand, “Television”, in Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (eds.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn., 29 Vols. (London: Macmillan, 2001), Vol. 25, pp. 232-43. Throughout this essay, the term “score” has been used in preference to “underscore”, which would seem to provide an inadequate indication of the prominence of much of the non-diegetic music of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*.

contemplation of the ways in which it might differ from that for film, is doubtless the tacit supposition that observations about one may similarly apply to the other. It is difficult to dispute the value of film music scholarship in terms of raising certain issues that have wider generic application to other forms of musical multimedia, including that for television; at the same time, my proposition is that to omit to consider television as a separate discursive entity is to overlook its narratological uniqueness.

This chapter represents research drawn from a continuing project whose overarching purpose is the examination of music in contemporary Anglo-American cult television series. It thus takes the form of a position statement outlining my current thinking on the different narrative structures offered by film and television and their implications for the associated music, coupled to a discussion of how my premises might contribute fresh insights into the specially composed score for *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) and, to a lesser extent, the spin-off series *Angel* (1999-2004). In endeavoring to situate these shows within recent developments in television on both sides of the Atlantic, I am mindful of the fact that Joss Whedon was himself schooled in England, as reflected in many of the earlier characters to populate the so-called “Whedonverse.” Later sections of my essay are concerned with re-evaluation of the compositional technique of leitmotif as employed within a televisual context, with specific reference to the use of music in the celebrated *Buffy* episode “Hush” (B4.10) and its implications throughout the remainder of the fourth season and extending into the fifth. My case study of “Hush” also invites consideration of music’s participation within *Buffy*’s cutting-edge exploration of issues of gender and sexuality: not only was it one of several fantasy and espionage dramas appearing in quick succession to have crystallized around powerful lead females – analogies with *La Femme Nikita* (1997-2001), *Charmed* (1998-2006), and *Alias* (2001-2006) are particularly pronounced – but its pioneering exploration of the emergent lesbian relationship of a regular cast member has its origins in this very episode.

Given the self-evidently thematic construction of their scores, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel* naturally present themselves as prime candidates for analysis in a study of the narrative potentialities of non-diegetic television music. A number of different composers were to work on the two shows during their combined run of 12 programming seasons, the longest-standing of which include Christophe Beck (*Buffy*, primarily seasons 2-4, and *Angel* season 1), Robert J. Kral (*Angel*, seasons 1-5), and Thomas Wanker (*Buffy*, seasons 5-6). Certain experimental episodes, such as “Hush” (B4.10) and “Restless” (B4.22), were critically acclaimed for the richness of their incidental music; conversely, “The Body” (B5.16) was noted for its poignant absence. Yet the original score of the shows was not the only sense in which they were distinctive for their musical content, given the onscreen performances at The Bronze in *Buffy* and Caritas in *Angel*, the introduction of musical characters such as Oz (plus his fictional band Dingoes Ate My Baby) and Lorne, and the much-hyped musical episode “Once More, With Feeling” (B6.7). *Buffy* and *Angel* thus participated in the tradition, which has recently gained much momentum, of including prominent musical performances within mainstream television series;<sup>3</sup> parallel manifestations include the bands who perform at P3 in *Charmed*, the role played by Vonda Shepard and a plethora of subsequent popular artists in *Ally McBeal* (1997-2002), the musical episodes of shows such as *Scrubs* (2001-), and the songs that frequently feature, often with lyrics ingeniously rewritten for comic effect, on *The Simpsons* (1989-). Similarly *Buffy*, in particular, has continued the oft-encountered convention of television drama that Julie Brown has designated the “MTV style”: that of cutting between a series of shots that illustrate the state of affairs of principal characters (especially at the ends of episodes), accompanied by a lyrically relevant pop song but with minimal dialogue, in the manner of a music video.<sup>4</sup> Each of these instances, however, fundamentally concerns texted music, leading to a general tendency among viewers and commentators alike to concentrate their interpretive energies

<sup>3</sup> Anahid Kassabian discusses this emergent phenomenon in *The Soundtracks of Our Lives: Ubiquitous Musics and Distributed Subjectivities* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, forthcoming).

<sup>4</sup> Brown, “*Ally McBeal*’s Postmodern Soundtrack”, p. 285.

predominantly on the words rather than the sounds.<sup>5</sup> Without wishing to devalue such endeavors as a means of enhancing our understanding of the televisual product, my focus lies instead with the customarily instrumental music of the score: it is the contribution specifically made by the music – rather than by a combination of music and lyrics – that I wish to place squarely under the scholarly microscope.

In an important study of musical narrative with respect to nineteenth-century opera, Carolyn Abbate considered music as “*narrating* only rarely,” affirming that “certain gestures experienced in music constitute a narrating *voice*” against its surrounding, more generic or rhetorical, material that exists merely as sound.<sup>6</sup> In film and television, the leitmotifs that emerge at pivotal moments during which their scores genuinely “narrate” in the sense theorized by Abbate thereby constitute a prime agent for the construction of such musical meaning and its communication to the target audience. Originating ultimately in the music dramas of Richard Wagner, the technique of leitmotif has become a staple for film score composition that has enjoyed a rich history, thoroughly reinvigorated in recent decades through the perceived revival of the so-called classical Hollywood film score with which John Williams’s music for the first *Star Wars* trilogy (1977-1983) will forever be associated.<sup>7</sup> Yet it is not uncommon for studio composers to have worked, to a greater or lesser degree, in both film and television in the course of their careers. John Williams, whom Robynn Stilwell held to have revolutionized television score with *Lost in Space* (1965-1968) over a decade before his work on the earliest of the *Star Wars* films, is himself a key example;<sup>8</sup> another was Jerry Goldsmith,

<sup>5</sup> On the fallacy of such critical approaches, see Simon Frith, “Why Do Songs Have Words?”, in *Music for Pleasure: Essays in the Sociology of Pop* (Cambridge: Polity, 1988), pp. 105-28.

<sup>6</sup> Carolyn Abbate, *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 29, 19; italics in original.

<sup>7</sup> On the connections with Wagnerian aesthetics drawn historically in the theory and practice of film music, see for example Scott D. Paulin, “Richard Wagner and the Fantasy of Cinematic Unity: The Idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* in the History and Theory of Film Music”, in James Buhler, Caryl Flinn, and David Neumeyer (eds.), *Music and Cinema* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2000), pp. 58-84. For a good discussion of Williams’s revival of the classical film score, see Kathryn Kalinak, “John Williams and ‘The Empire’ Strike Back”, in *Settling the Score: Music and the Classical Hollywood Film* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), pp. 184-202.

<sup>8</sup> Stilwell, “The sound is ‘out there’”, p. 61.

whose symphonic film scores kept the classical Hollywood tradition alive in the decade or so prior to Williams's rejuvenation of it.<sup>9</sup> It therefore should come as little surprise that leitmotif is by no means exclusive to music of the cinema, particularly when, as in much of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*, television scores are written in a similarly Wagnerian, quasi-orchestral vein.

While the employment of such compositional procedures within filmic contexts has elicited significant critical attention, their application within the strikingly different medium of television has often been overlooked. In positioning the two as narratologically distinct, I do not wish to imply that they merely exist as hermetically sealed entities, devoid of cross-pollination both with one another and with other forms of musical multimedia; various traditions that have evolved over the years should serve to detract from such a view. Pilots for proposed television shows are even sometimes written as feature-length installments that can air either as two-part introductory episodes (if a full series is ultimately commissioned) or as a standalone "television movie" (if it is not). Successful films can spawn fully fledged television series; conversely, television franchises may be reinvented as films, whether resurrected years after the event or transferred to the cinema upon completion of a popular television run. The box office performance of the recent *Sex and the City* movie (2008) alone illustrates the continuing currency of the phenomenon, its commercial success having fueled speculation that other cult series, including *Friends* (1994-2004) and the UK's newly invigorated *Doctor Who* (2005-), may follow suit. Links between the small and silver screens are particularly evident within Joss Whedon's oeuvre: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* started out as a film (1992) prior to its being reborn as a highly successful television series; *Firefly* (2002-2003) was continued as the film *Serenity* (2005) after its being unexpectedly axed mid-season by Fox; and

<sup>9</sup> On this point, see Neil Lerner, "Nostalgia, masculinist discourse, and authoritarianism in John Williams' scores for *Star Wars* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*", in Philip Hayward (ed.), *Off the Planet: Music, Sound, and Science Fiction Cinema* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), pp. 96-108, at p. 97.

Warner Bros.’ press release on the cancellation of *Angel* hinted that the show might live on in undisclosed “special movie events” following the conclusion of its stint on television.<sup>10</sup>

With the caveat in place that sweeping statements about television and film will be generalizations at best, not least in view of the extensive common ground that they share, there is nonetheless much scholarly merit in contemplating their differences as well as their similarities. In terms of the rendering of the music to the listener, one oft-cited consideration lies in the inferior quality of sound reproduction offered by televisions themselves, the implications of which were historically more pronounced given the continuing technological advances that have ultimately led to the “home cinema” of today. Another is the cultural tendency for viewers to be less consistent in the level of attention devoted to the (typically domestic) activity of watching television – which surely lends its aural component an added significance as a means of re-establishing their interest when their concentration, whether deliberately or inadvertently, wavers. John Hill and Martin McLoone’s edited anthology *Big Picture, Small Screen*, meanwhile, has suggested that the factors that have led in recent decades to a closer relationship between the two media have been predominantly economic – particularly in Europe, television has come to provide much financial support for the film industry – rather than aesthetic, technological, or cultural.<sup>11</sup> It is therefore especially ironic that television programs are generally produced on much tighter budgets than films, with major implications for all resources, including their music. Mark Snow’s score for television episodes of *The X-Files* (1993-2002), for example, relied heavily on synthesizers under the composer’s own control; conversely, for the first movie (1998), released in between the series’ fifth and sixth seasons, an 85-piece symphony orchestra was at his disposal. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel* attained an artful compromise in this respect, often utilizing a combination of

<sup>10</sup> More in-depth discussions of the relationship between film and television are yielded by, for instance, John Ellis, “Cinema and broadcast TV together”, in *Visible Fictions: Cinema, Television, Video*, rev. edn. (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 224-50 and Kristin Thompson, “The Dispersal of Narrative: Adaptations, Sequels, Serials, Spin-offs, and Sagas”, in *Storytelling in Film and Television* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 74-105.

<sup>11</sup> John Hill and Martin McLoone (eds.), *Big Picture, Small Screen: The Relations between Film and Television* (Luton: University of Luton Press, [1996]).



computer-generated music and a small number of live instruments in order to give a convincing impression of an acoustic performance.

If we accept the premise that television and film can offer quite different narrative frameworks within which the music may operate, then much of the key to understanding their distinctiveness lies in the significance of the former's being ontologically dependent on the entwined concepts of the series and serialization. Whereas film represents a discrete and essentially autonomous artistic unit taking place on a relatively large canvas, television series unfold in substantially smaller-scale installments that play out over the much wider spans of annual programming seasons. Typically, US television dramas run for 22-26 episodes per season, with new installments airing normally (seasonal breaks notwithstanding) one or two weeks after the last; ideally, such shows will continue for several years.<sup>12</sup> The extent to which television series may develop over time is epitomized by the genre of soap opera, which can yield many more episodes per year and, if popularity and viewer demand are maintained, may run for some decades. At the other end of the spectrum, many programs are one-off episodes (*Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog*, though not explicitly conceived for television, is a case in point), while certain films are made specifically for television rather than the cinema; nevertheless, and doubtless owing in large part to the logistics of scheduling, the series increasingly became the prevalent mode for television broadcasting from the 1960s.<sup>13</sup> Various cinematic antecedents also influenced television, perhaps the most obvious being the serial films historically shown in theaters alongside feature-length counterparts: flourishing in the 1910s with silent-era serials including *What Happened to Mary?* (1912) and *The Perils of Pauline* (1914), the genre enjoyed a revival in the 1930s and 1940s that resulted in the *Flash Gordon* series (1936-1940), *Buck Rogers* (1939), *Adventures of Captain Marvel* (1941), *Batman* (1943), *Superman* (1948), and many others. We must be careful, too, not to

<sup>12</sup> The 12-episode first season of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, which commenced broadcast over halfway through the programming year as a mid-season replacement for *Savannah* (1996-1997), is an exception in this respect.

<sup>13</sup> On this point, see Donnelly, "Music for Television Drama", p. 124.

overlook the still-current tradition of films that give birth to sequels, although the appearance of such follow-ups is inevitably separated by years rather than weeks, and hence in a very real sense each stands apart from the others; that few modern films ultimately evolve beyond two or three sequels is surely indicative of the form's limited viability. It is surely no coincidence that some of the most famous franchises to have produced a more extended chain have attained a total number of films approximately equal to a full season of a US television series; perhaps the best-known contemporary example, the James Bond canon, presently comprises 22 installments with the 2008 release of *Quantum of Solace*.

Many television series may at first glance seem more episodic than serial in the strictest sense of the word, but the point still stands that the inherently cumulative nature of successive installments (even in the case of ostensibly "standalone" episodes) is such that the overall product may be helpfully understood in terms of serial fiction in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.<sup>14</sup> Notwithstanding the infelicitous tendency in much of the critical literature on television to insist too rigidly upon the series and the serial as two distinct categories, the hybridization and obfuscation of the boundaries between them have been recognized in certain quarters at least since the early 1990s.<sup>15</sup> While a number of such studies have investigated in relative isolation the narrative structures offered by television,<sup>16</sup> the relative absence of rigorous scholarly examination of the serialized aspect of television music has also led me to turn more widely to research on installment fiction and the conventions of serialization, which has crystallized around other forms such as the serialized novel, to provide the theoretical underpinnings necessary for its

<sup>14</sup> *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* has revealed itself to be particularly aware of its serialized nature; notably, the hundredth episode, "The Gift" (B5.22), opened with a sequence of clips garnered from many of its previous shows.

<sup>15</sup> See Sarah Kozloff, "Narrative Theory and Television", in Robert C. Allen (ed.), *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled: Television and Contemporary Criticism*, 2nd edn. (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 67-100, at p. 92.

<sup>16</sup> Of the substantial corpus of writings on television, I have found the following texts particularly helpful in this regard: John Fiske, *Television Culture* (London: Methuen, 1987); John Corner, *Critical Ideas in Television Studies* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999); and Jeremy G. Butler, *Television: Critical Methods and Applications*, 3rd edn. (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2007).

contemplation.<sup>17</sup> The comparison is particularly apposite given that, as a recent study by Robert Giddings and Keith Selby has explored, the British Broadcasting Corporation initiated a long-standing tradition in the 1930s and 1940s of serializing and dramatizing classic novels, many of which had themselves started life as installment fiction (Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, and Hardy were among the most prevalent authors) and were thus effectively re-serialized for radio and television presentation.<sup>18</sup> Parallels between nineteenth-century installment literature and contemporary television have been noted in scholarship on both forms;<sup>19</sup> Rhonda Wilcox has explicitly drawn comparison between *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and the serialized novel and in particular the works of Dickens,<sup>20</sup> whose *Pickwick Papers* (1836-1837) marked a defining moment in the history of the genre.

Defined by the embargoed release of individual installments prior to the whole, serial fiction imposes restrictions on writers and readers alike. Under normal circumstances, it is impractical for any of its contributors substantively to revise material that has already received a public airing, or to alter previously established information (at least, not without leaving themselves open to suggestions of backpedaling or “retroactive continuity”). Readers are similarly limited as to how they may engage with the product: they may freely refer back to installments that have previously appeared, but it is impossible for them to progress forward beyond a certain point. This arrangement results in a distinct reciprocity between the two: writers may respond, in later offerings, to public

<sup>17</sup> Among the studies that have notably guided my thinking are Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund, *The Victorian Serial* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1991); Carol A. Martin, *George Eliot's Serial Fiction* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1994); and Jennifer Hayward, *Consuming Pleasures: Active Audiences and Serial Fictions from Dickens to Soap Opera* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997). J. Don Vann's introduction (pp. 1-17) to *Victorian Novels in Serial* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1985) is similarly insightful.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Giddings and Keith Selby, *The Classic Serial on Television and Radio* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001); see further, Robert Giddings, Keith Selby, and Chris Wensley, *Screening the Novel: The Theory and Practice of Literary Dramatization* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990).

<sup>19</sup> For example, Hughes and Lund, *The Victorian Serial*, pp. 276-77, and Butler, *Television*, p. 40.

<sup>20</sup> Rhonda Wilcox, *Why Buffy Matters: The Art of Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (London: Tauris, 2005), pp. 2-3. Jennifer Hayward's study of serialization, *Consuming Pleasures* – which successively considers Dickens's literature, comic strips, and soap operas – is also particularly germane given that both *Buffy* and *Angel* continued as comics following their television runs.

reaction to what is often effectively a periodically issued work in progress, while readers are enabled to speculate as to its possible continuation and conclusion (often leading to disappointment once its intended outcomes are ultimately revealed). Creative teams are famously required to work to strict deadlines in order to deliver their product on time; though film composers already operate within notoriously tight schedules, deadlines for their counterparts in television are typically measured in days rather than weeks. Broadcast series may additionally need to be adapted to accommodate unforeseen circumstances, such as cast members' conflicts with other commitments, illness, the 2007-2008 Writers Guild of America strike, and so forth. To the very real extent that television music participates in, enhances, and extends aspects of the narrative of its associated shows, any of these elements may have considerable implications for the content, if not also the form, of their score.

Another important feature of serial art is the requirement that individual installments be approximately equal in length, whether measured by the pages of a fascicle, the column inches of a periodical, or the minutes of a pre-existing broadcast schedule. Prescribed formats have correspondingly evolved for episodes of television drama: as a general rule, they comprise an introductory "teaser," the opening credits, a number of "acts" (normally four of unequal length, if the series is designed for a one-hour slot), and finally the closing credits. That itself imposes a particular structure upon each, partly to make room for commercial breaks but also to provide points of articulation for the narrative, necessitating a sense of trajectory within individual acts: all should open and close elegantly rather than abruptly, and many will end on a "cliffhanger" to maintain viewer interest until the show resumes.<sup>21</sup> Not only are the overall narratives of television series disparate in their dispersal across months and years, then, but individual installments are themselves further subdivided, thereby lending an added significance to elements such as music that can

<sup>21</sup> While various traditions have previously emerged of including intermissions in cinema screenings, the practice has now largely been consigned to history.

provide unity across these various breaks. Even within the smaller spans of acts themselves, additional pointers are often required to prepare the viewer for the frequent changes of scene; sound may function to punctuate the narrative aurally in much the same way that clichéd shots of cityscape panoramas and building exteriors (the latter to introduce the site within which the ensuing action will take place) act as visual indicators. There are, of course, many additional musical implications of the serial nature of television shows. The requirement for a readily identifiable signature tune that in some way defines its attendant series, which will be heard week after week during its opening credits and may figure prominently within its score as well, is perhaps best saved for a separate study. Others include the music associated with any trailers to the episode prior to its being broadcast, the oft-encountered “previously on...” pre-teaser, any concluding “next time on...” sequence, and the signature shot (or sequence) that regularly appears by way of announcing an intermission for, or return from, a commercial break.

Certain recurring characteristics of serial fiction yield additional assumptions as to the organization and development of the narrative: those identified in Jennifer Hayward’s study of the genre include “intertwined subplots,” “[d]ramatic plot reversals,” and the “impossibility of closure.”<sup>22</sup> The continual generation of suspense to maintain consumers’ interest and encourage them to return for the next installment of the work is especially important from the narratological perspective, since inconclusive elements are thereby incorporated within serial art by its very nature. That television episodes usually interweave a number of different, even unrelated, plots (sometimes as many as four in a single installment) also means that they are on the whole faster-paced than film, whose teleology tends to be more tightly focused toward a single goal and for which the need to hold the audience’s attention is generally less pronounced. Their different pacing is also, of course, related to their scope: whereas the standard duration for a full-length episode of a US television series is around 42-46 minutes (in order to fill a one-hour slot with commercials deemed relevant to

<sup>22</sup> Hayward, *Consuming Pleasures*, pp. 3, 4.

the viewing demographic), feature films typically last an hour and a half at minimum, and many exceed two hours. As Roy Prendergast explained in the preliminary discussion of television music that appeared in the second edition (though not the first) of his landmark text *Film Music: A Neglected Art*, a hypothetical sequence lasting for a “leisurely” 20-30 seconds in film would be stripped down to a “rapid-fire” 10-12 seconds in television.<sup>23</sup> Undoubtedly, the speed with which the narrative unfolds is considered very carefully in both media in pursuit of the desired aesthetic effect, with material culled from the final cut as necessary; nonetheless, the requirement to whittle down installments to a particular length in order to comply with the very precise constraints of broadcast schedules is specific to television. This aspect of editorial pacing is demonstrated effectively by the UK drama *Spooks* (2002-), episodes of which, already fast-moving at their original length of 59 minutes (the BBC’s UK channels do not air commercials), have subsequently been compressed to 44 minutes for the show’s presentation in the US as *MI-5*. Likewise, such techniques as split-screening, which enables action to be displayed from several different viewpoints simultaneously rather than sequentially (and hence quickens the pace at which it advances), are far more common in contemporary television series than in film.

The counterpointing of a number of different stories within many television episodes warrants further contemplation in relation to the associated music. Typically, at least one of these plots would be exclusive to that particular broadcast, although – given the strong tradition of two-part episodes and, to a lesser extent, those tales divided across three or more installments – it may develop over slightly larger spans. Other plots, conversely, may participate in the establishment of the story arcs that often extend across the better part of, and sometimes beyond, their originating season. To read the narrative of a television score most fully therefore involves the understanding not just of short-term signifiers that operate across a single episode (possibly including its

<sup>23</sup> Roy M. Prendergast, “Music for Television: A Brief Overview”, in *Film Music: A Neglected Art: A Critical Study of Music in Films*, 2nd edn. (New York: Norton, 1992), pp. 274-87, at p. 275.

immediate neighbors), but also the longer-term ones that function over wider periods. The thematic scores for *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel* yield examples of both: perhaps the most recognizable in the first category (although it technically straddles two seasons) is “Sacrifice,” introduced in “The Gift” (B5.22) and returning in “Bargaining” (B6.1/2), while those of the second include the celebrated “Close Your Eyes (Buffy/Angel Love Theme),” “Buffy and Riley” theme, and “I’m Game,” all composed by Christophe Beck. An approach of this nature would seem to have been implicitly taken by Matthew Mills in an illuminating essay on the music of *Angel*, which included exploration of the “I’m Game” theme associated (at least primarily) with the ensouled vampire himself, as well as that heard in connection with the ill-fated Doyle, in the episode “Hero” (A1.9, scored by Christophe Beck and Robert J. Kral).<sup>24</sup> The former constitutes a long-term signifier, heard prominently in *Angel*’s opening show and intermittently in the five ensuing seasons; conversely, the latter is found in only a single installment – together with stray fragments in “Parting Gifts” (A1.10) two weeks later – and hence operated within a completely different timescale.<sup>25</sup> However, doubtless owing to restrictions of scope, Mills’s study falls short of considering the creative ways in which these different musical themes function in tandem: the climactic sequence of “Hero” features both Angel’s motif (hinted at 34’23”, with a fuller presentation at 35’38”) and Doyle’s (at 37’32”, 38’10”, and 39’06”), one giving way to the other to indicate which of the two characters is truly the episode’s titular protagonist and the “Promised One” of the Lister demons’ prophecy.<sup>26</sup> It is this interrelationship between short- and long-term narrative agents that I am especially keen to probe in my own reading of “Hush.”

Prior to turning to an analysis of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* in earnest, we must briefly pay heed (as far as space allows) to the question of the validity of leitmotivic procedures in cinematic

<sup>24</sup> Matthew Mills, “Ubi Caritas? Music as Narrative Agent in *Angel*”, in Stacey Abbott (ed.), *Reading Angel: The TV Spin-off with a Soul* (London: Tauris, 2005), pp. 31-43, at pp. 33-37.

<sup>25</sup> That is, discounting as anomalous an isolated (and truncated) presentation some years later at the end of “Power Play” (A5.21).

<sup>26</sup> All timings provided in this chapter have been taken from the PAL-format DVDs available in the UK; timings for NTSC-format DVDs may differ.

contexts, upon which matter much ink has previously been spent. Chief among the contributions is an influential critique by Theodor Adorno and Hanns Eisler, to which James Buhler has recently offered a particularly thought-provoking response in an article on the thematic construction of the scores for the original *Star Wars* trilogy. Whereas Adorno and Eisler's concern stemmed from film music's inherent discontinuity, which led, in their opinion, to its leitmotifs acting merely as musical "signposts" while failing to assume the wider structural and symbolic significance witnessed in Wagnerian music drama, Buhler argued that although the *Star Wars* themes that referred to the Dark Side (notably the "Imperial March") are indeed used formulaically, those associated with the Force (such as the so-called "Force" theme itself) conversely attain mythic qualities.<sup>27</sup> Buhler's demonstration that such music can function to differentiate between protagonists and antagonists cannot realistically be applied to *Buffy* and *Angel*, in which that binarism receives thorough deconstruction through figures such as Angel(us) and Willow.<sup>28</sup> If there are any general inferences to be drawn concerning the organization of leitmotifs in *Buffy* and *Angel*, perhaps the most easily defensible is that the best known of the former concern the relationship between characters (love themes having a long tradition in film), whereas those of the latter refer to a specific individual – doubtless reflecting that of the two, *Buffy* is more of an ensemble show. But Buhler's point remains that the employment of leitmotivic techniques can participate in the creation and perpetuation of mythology on the screen as well as the stage (albeit implemented in quite different ways), revealing to the audience information unforthcoming from other narrative sources such as words and dramatic action, as we shall presently see with respect to *Buffy*. Moreover, such mythology is potentially more extensively developed on television, where it may flourish across episodes and seasons and hence establish a more sophisticated semiotic nexus than that possible at the cinema. Michael

<sup>27</sup> Theodor W. Adorno and Hanns Eisler, *Composing for the Films* (London: Athlone, 1994), pp. 4-6; James Buhler, "Star Wars, Music, and Myth", in idem, Flinn, and Neumeyer (eds.), *Music and Cinema*, pp. 33-57.

<sup>28</sup> See further, Robynn J. Stilwell, "'I Just Put a Drone under Him...': Collage and Subversion in the Score of 'Die Hard'", *Music and Letters*, Vol. 78/4 (November 1997), pp. 551-80, in which Stilwell explored the central role played by the music of *Die Hard* (1988) in questioning which of the film's ostensible hero (John McClane) and villain (Hans Gruber) was the true antagonist.



Giacchino's score for *Alias*, for instance, includes themes not just for principal characters such as criminal mastermind-turned-humanitarian Arvin Sloane, but also a mysterious five-note leitmotif for Milo Rambaldi, the (fictional) Renaissance technological prophet whose mythic artifacts form a basis for the show's synopsis.

Scholarly opinion is similarly divided over the crucial ethnographic question as to whether the narrative intricacies of music for film and television are (insofar as it is ever possible definitively to determine the meanings of art) correctly understood and decoded by the listeners – and, indeed, whether it is even intended that they should be. Claudia Gorbman famously wrote of film scores in terms of their not (normally) being actively heard,<sup>29</sup> a view that has since been implicitly countered by Jeff Smith in demonstrating that such music is imbued not just with important narrative functions but commercial ones too.<sup>30</sup> Certainly the recent proliferation of film and television soundtrack releases, which effectively furnish the viewer with a repository of their most cherished music – and often also identify their narrative significance through the track listing or liner notes – have explicitly drawn attention to their thematic cues in ways that fundamentally call Gorbman's contention into question. Inevitably some audience members will be more musically aware than others, who might instead focus on parameters such as acting, directing, editing, mise-en-scène, dialogue, and plot. But since all are integral to the multimedia texts of television and film, all are active participants in the construction of its meaning and none should therefore be ignored; consequently, critical inquiry that centralizes music, in tandem with these other elements, will contribute to a greater understanding of the overall narrative. In the case of serial art, as various recent studies have shown, additional possibilities exist for feedback from (even dialogue with) one's interpretive community. Hence if the significance of a given use of music has engendered

<sup>29</sup> Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (London: British Film Institute, 1987).

<sup>30</sup> Jeff Smith, *The Sounds of Commerce: Marketing Popular Film Music* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). For a more explicit re-evaluation of the standpoint exemplified by Gorbman and others, see Jeff Smith, "Unheard Melodies? A Critique of Psychoanalytic Theories of Film Music", in David Bordwell and Noël Carroll (eds.), *Post-Theory: Reconstructing Film Studies* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), pp. 230-47.

viewers' interest for the right reasons, then it becomes elevated to the level of a recognized convention that can be knowingly deployed and subverted in the future; conversely, if the intended meaning does not seem to have received widespread acknowledgment, the show's creative team is empowered to respond by according it greater prominence in forthcoming episodes.

Most importantly, when analogous musical signifiers appear in different contexts, they offer the potential to induce audience members who have observed the similarity to compare the contexts as well, and hence they may participate in the accretion of narratological meaning.<sup>31</sup> A thematic score is by no means the only possible site in which such musical cross-references may be located. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* yields a non-leitmotivic example that is especially fascinating for the temporal distance separating successive occurrences: as Jacqueline Bach discusses in this volume, in the episode "Band Candy" (B3.6), during which Giles and Joyce are uncharacteristically intimate, they hang out at Giles's place while enjoying Cream's "Tales of Brave Ulysses" in the diegetic background; over two seasons later, the viewer witnesses Giles's listening to the same musical excerpt some time after Joyce's funeral in "Forever" (B5.17). In other instances, often owing to the constraints of time and budget and the practice of repeating in different episodes what K. J. Donnelly has termed "musical blocks," narratological red herrings can emerge.<sup>32</sup> The same emotive cue by Thomas Wanker is heard as Willow prepares to enter the mind of the comatose Buffy through magical means in "The Weight of the World" (B5.21, from 14'01"), as Buffy cuts her hair in "Gone" (B6.11, from 11'26"), and as Anya rehearses her wedding vows, while Xander wanders aimlessly through the rain, in "Hell's Bells" (B6.16, from 25'47"); but there is no clearly discernible reason why these three scenes admit comparison other than that all are, in the broadest sense, emblematic of (widely spaced) poignant moments for (different) protagonists – they do not even all

<sup>31</sup> That such musical cues can accumulate meaning with each progressive occurrence implicitly casts doubt on the legitimacy of assigning them names (for example, the "Buffy and Riley" theme) that, taken at face value, suggest otherwise. Having continually questioned my assumptions in the course of my research, however, my opinion is that the labeling used in this study – much of which is not my own – is nonetheless defensible.

<sup>32</sup> Donnelly, "Music for Television Drama", pp. 119-24.

fall within the same programming season. However, and without wishing to become further embroiled in debates as to what constitutes a “genuine” leitmotif,<sup>33</sup> the point is surely that a rich tradition of deploying musical cues that do possess clear narrative functions has evolved within television shows, a practice that would surely not have retained its value through recent decades were the target audience wholly unaware of their significance. For example, the use of a “Laura Palmer” theme in Angelo Badalamenti’s score for *Twin Peaks* (1990-1991) is well known; the comedy value of *Ally McBeal* is enhanced by a profusion of recurring “soundtrack games” (to borrow Julie Brown’s formulation), among the most obvious being Ling Woo’s “Wicked Witch of the West” cue and John Cage’s association with Barry White’s “You’re the First, the Last, My Everything” and the music of *Rocky*;<sup>34</sup> and a recent BBC Promenade concert (Royal Albert Hall, London, July 27, 2008) based around the revived *Doctor Who* series brought the thematic structuring of Murray Gold’s incidental music to public notice in a particularly novel way.

The evidence in the case of the leitmotivic scores for *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel* is more compelling still. Fans’ attention has been drawn to their more important themes in that “Close Your Eyes” was featured on one tie-in CD, “Sacrifice” on another, and “I’m Game” on a third;<sup>35</sup> one volume of the show’s authorized companion, *The Watcher’s Guide*, even reproduced the first few bars of the notated “Close Your Eyes” and “Buffy and Riley” themes.<sup>36</sup> Internal evidence from the series themselves reveals certain moments in the narrative that (in a manner broadly analogous to Wagner’s own leitmotifs) are only fully explained by non-diegetic music: in “The Yoko Factor”

<sup>33</sup> Further discussion on this point is to be found in Justin London, “Leitmotifs and Musical Reference in the Classical Film Score”, in Buhler, Flinn, and Neumeyer (eds.), *Music and Cinema*, pp. 85-96. Matthew Mills, in his article in the present volume, subjects this and other terminology commonly encountered in studies of musical multimedia to more rigorous scrutiny.

<sup>34</sup> Brown, “*Ally McBeal*’s Postmodern Soundtrack” (for citation, see n. 1).

<sup>35</sup> Christophe Beck, “Close Your Eyes”, Track 18, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Album* (TVT, 1999); idem, “Sacrifice”, Track 22, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: “Once More, With Feeling”* (Rounder, 2001); idem, “I’m Game”, Track 20, *Angel: Live Fast, Die Never* (Rounder, 2005). Also included on these releases were Beck’s Suites from “Restless” and “Hush” (Tracks 20 and 21 respectively of “*Once More, With Feeling*”, the latter incorporating the “Buffy and Riley” theme) and the musical cue from *Angel* in which Doyle’s theme is heard most prominently (Robert J. Kral, “Hero”, Track 6, *Live Fast, Die Never*).

<sup>36</sup> Nancy Holder with Jeff Mariotte and Maryelizabeth Hart, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Watcher’s Guide*, Vol. 2 (New York: Pocket Books, 2000), pp. 434-35.

(B4.20), for instance, as Riley hears scattered reports on his radio of a hostile threat that his military comrades are unable to neutralize, only a subtle, augmented manifestation of the “I’m Game” theme in the score (23’25”) confirms to the viewer at this juncture that Angel has arrived in Sunnydale and is making his presence felt there.<sup>37</sup> This was, of course, a musical cue previously presented exclusively on *Angel*; likewise, when Buffy made her first crossover appearance in the spin-off show, in “I Will Remember You” (A1.8), “Close Your Eyes” migrated with her.<sup>38</sup> But while some such themes are especially familiar, others – which are perhaps more sparingly deployed, and less significant overall to the shows in that they do not concern their eponymous protagonists – do not seem to have received mainstream acknowledgment. One is the love theme for Giles and Jenny, heard repeatedly in “Passion” (B2.17) and tied to its tragic events, and later used in “I Only Have Eyes For You” (B2.19) and “Becoming, Part Two” (B2.22), notwithstanding the death of one of its associated characters. Another is that for Willow and Oz, which came to prominence at the end of “Wild at Heart” (B4.6), in which Oz leaves Sunnydale, and toward the opening of “Something Blue” (B4.9), during which Willow struggles to come to terms with his departure; it was brought back some months later in “New Moon Rising” (B4.19), when Oz’s unexpected return presents a challenge to Willow’s blossoming relationship with Tara. The scope of this study does not, alas, permit more comprehensive exploration of these particular avenues.

Arguably the most celebrated and musically developed theme in the two combined series is that for Buffy and Riley, introduced in the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* episode to which we shall now

<sup>37</sup> Doubtless some viewers will have been aware of the crossover in advance and others will have noticed the mention of David Boreanaz as Angel in the opening credits, or surmised from the “previously on...” sequence that he would return in the course of the episode; but that takes nothing away from the significance of the presentation of Angel’s “I’m Game” theme in the score prior to his appearance onscreen. Likewise, it is the non-diegetic music that informs the audience that Oz’s departure from Sunnydale is preying on Willow’s mind as she escapes the dorm party in “Doomed” (B4.11) and that Buffy is in Riley’s thoughts while on a nighttime stroll in “Goodbye Iowa” (B4.14), as well as confirming that the telephone call that Buffy and Willow receive in “Passion” (B2.17) concerns the news of Jenny’s death.

<sup>38</sup> Such intertextual practices extend back to the mature origins of leitmotivic procedures, given the musical reference to Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde* (1857-1859) found in his *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (1862-1867). One contemporary television example is yielded by the crossover of the character of Dr. Martha Jones (plus her associated musical theme) from the revived *Doctor Who* to spin-off series *Torchwood* (2006-).

turn by way of applying the theoretical foundations set out above to a specific case study. As a distinctive example of a television program awash with music on a number of different levels, “Hush” (B4.10, written and directed by Joss Whedon) exceptionally includes nearly half an hour of material devoid of spoken dialogue: its synopsis is that “The Gentlemen” – an ominous group of fairy-tale demons with pale skin, bald heads, and smart Victorian attire, who float effortlessly above the ground accompanied by straitjacketed Footmen – steal the voices of residents across the town in order that they might harvest the hearts of seven unsuspecting individuals without making a sound. In effectively “speaking” for the silenced characters, Christophe Beck’s score for “Hush” is elevated to the textual foreground in a manner rarely encountered in television. Its music thus participates in the episode’s wider conceptual theme of non-verbal communication, firmly established in the opening scene in which Professor Maggie Walsh tells her class (and by extension, the viewer) that some “thoughts and experiences” simply cannot be expressed using language.<sup>39</sup> “Hush” consequently explores aspects of the lives of several major cast members that are problematized by a lack of effective communication: Buffy and Riley lend new meaning to the word “babblefest” in talking inarticulately about all the wrong topics but avoiding mention of their developing yet apparently forbidden romantic interest in each other; Xander procrastinates over discussing the nature of his relationship with Anya, who, in her inimitably frank manner, accuses him of caring little for her beyond the sexual gratification she offers; and Willow meets with little success when attempting to explain to her new-found Wicca group that being a genuine practitioner of witchcraft might actually involve casting spells. Recalling previous discussions as to serial fiction’s being characterized by the interweaving of plots and the establishment of cross-installment arcs, “Hush” yields an ideal model of an episode involving a combination of short- and long-term storylines, complete with their corresponding musical cues. While the tale involving the Gentlemen is central, and exclusive to “Hush,” a number of more protracted stories (Buffy and Riley, Xander and Anya,

<sup>39</sup> “Hush”. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Season 4). Dir. Joss Whedon. DVD. Twentieth Century Fox, 1999.

Willow and Tara) are also advanced, whose narrative implications ultimately extend to much of the remaining three and a half seasons of the show's run. As we shall see, the ways in which these different plots interact within "Hush" are highly illuminating in terms of the incidental music with which they are associated.

Before we examine the score in earnest, however, two other important instances in which music features in "Hush" require brief exploration for their integration within the explanation of the main storyline, and which are therefore impossible to ignore. The episode's most obvious manifestation, indeed, concerns the diegetic use of a pre-existing work, during the scene in which Giles serves up the fruits of his research to Buffy, Xander, Willow, and Anya. Being unable to speak at this point in the story, Giles delivers his presentation using a series of acetate slides while playing an abridged recording of Camille Saint-Saëns's renowned *Danse macabre* (1874). Based on a poem by Henri Cazalis depicting a midnight graveside setting in which skeletons dance to a tune played by Death himself on the violin, Saint-Saëns's pictorial composition has become a standard piece with which to represent the diabolical and otherworldly, and its appearance in "Hush" clearly functions intertextually. Moreover, as the Appendix illustrates in documenting each shot along with the matching passage in the score of *Danse macabre* and providing commentary on the relationship between them, the sequence is judiciously crafted such that the music articulates both Giles's projector slides and the onscreen action in general – hence testifying to the considerable level of care given to the use of music, and its interaction with the plot, images, and editing, throughout the episode.<sup>40</sup> The musical climaxes (bars 370f. and 430f.) correspond both to the gruesome peak of Giles's presentation (the projector slide of a victim's heart being extracted, at shot 26) and Willow's mime representing the death of the Gentlemen (shots 47-49), before merging seamlessly into Christophe Beck's score at the end of the scene. Likewise, the double-placement of Giles's first

<sup>40</sup> The musical excerpts supplied in the Appendix have been prepared from Camille Saint-Saëns, *Danse Macabre and Havanaise For Violin and Orchestra in Full Score* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2005).

slide (in reverse in shot 5, and the correct way round in shot 10) synchronized with the commencement of *Danse macabre*'s main theme (bar 85) and its immediate repetition (bar 93) acts as a manifesto for the co-ordination with the music, which, as may be seen from the commentary provided in the Appendix, pervades the whole sequence. Giles's last slide, and specifically Buffy's reaction to his drawing of her, coincides with the solo violin music of the work's coda (shot 56 / bar 455), which relates to the point in Cazalis's poem at which the cockerel crows to indicate daybreak – thereby identifying Buffy with the deathly protagonist of *Danse macabre* and hinting that she, rather than the Gentlemen, will ultimately be the one to bring about the demise of the other. Such elements might, particularly in view of the scene's three-minute timescale, suggest some consonance with the conventions of music video, whose significance to television drama has previously been noted in alluding to the frequency of MTV-style montages. Given that *Danse macabre* is a nineteenth-century classical piece rather than a contemporary pop song, however, its diegetic employment within this scene is much more distinctive; in this respect, it may be better understood within the context of the use of pre-existing art music in, for example, Stanley Kubrick's œuvre, which Michel Chion has interpreted as a nod toward the historical silent film.<sup>41</sup> As the Appendix's commentary shows, it is certainly replete with the trademark visual humor – such as Buffy, Willow, and Anya's correcting Giles's mistake in placing his first slide back to front on the projector – in ways that delineate the male and female characters and encourage the viewer to side with the latter. Consequently, the episode's generally sexually charged nature is epitomized by this scene in ways only made possible by its exclusion of dialogue: when Willow points to her chest to indicate the body part sought after by the Gentlemen (shot 14), Xander immediately thinks of “boobies”; and Buffy's ambiguous gesture intended to indicate staking (shot 35, coincident with bar 394) is universally (mis)interpreted as imitative of male masturbation.

<sup>41</sup> Michel Chion, trans. by Claudia Gorbman, *Kubrick's Cinema Odyssey* (London: British Film Institute, 2001), pp. 90-97.

The second means by which diegetic music centrally participates in the processes that identify the principal plot of “Hush” to the viewer occurs at the episode’s outset. As the initial scene is revealed to be one of Buffy’s fabled prophecy dreams, information about the Gentlemen is communicated to her by a small girl’s innocently singing a simple pseudo-nursery rhyme comprising little more than an alternation between two notes.<sup>42</sup> The traditional alignment of music with the fantastical receives frequent articulation within both *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*, among the more prominent examples being the musical demon of “Once More, With Feeling,” the lycanthropy of band musicians Oz and Veruca, Lorne’s ability to discern people’s destinies but only when they sing, and the rich score (not to mention the “Exposition Song”) of the dream sequences of “Restless.” More importantly, in the opening sequence of “Hush,” we initially hear just the child’s voice; only immediately prior to establishing visual contact do we start to discern the words intoned by the young *chanteuse*. The connection on television between a wordless, disembodied, female voice and the “exotic” otherworldly extends at least as far back as Alexander Courage’s signature tune to the original incarnation of *Star Trek* (1966-1969), and, as Linda Phyllis Austern has noted, analogous cultural tropes can ultimately be traced to Ancient Greek mythology.<sup>43</sup> The concept is employed again in the angular theme connected in the score with the Gentlemen, who (significantly) are themselves silent onscreen and are ultimately neutralized not by the conventional stake through the heart, but by Buffy’s screaming once her voice has returned. In terms of its pitch configuration, meanwhile, the Gentlemen’s theme draws on the long-standing musical associations of the exotic with semitones and chromaticism, and (to some extent) that of the supernatural with the interval of a tritone, the so-called *diabolus in musica* – one key intertext being *Danse macabre* itself, owing to its celebrated use of solo violin *scordatura*. Strains of the theme, particularly the

<sup>42</sup> The full rhyme is as follows: “Can’t even shout, Can’t even cry, The Gentlemen are coming by. Looking in windows, Knocking on doors, They need to take seven and they might take yours. Can’t call to Mom, Can’t say a word, You’re gonna die screaming but you won’t be heard.” (For episode citation, see n. 39.)

<sup>43</sup> Linda Phyllis Austern, “‘Forreine Conceites and Wandring Devises’: The Exotic, the Erotic, and the Feminine”, in Jonathan Bellman (ed.), *The Exotic in Western Music* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1998), pp. 26-42.



“sighing” semitones with which it commences (and their wordless voices), permeate the episode’s score, punctuating the Gentlemen’s onscreen appearances and other junctures; notably, it is interspersed with the otherwise generic music of the final fight scene from 37’31”.<sup>44</sup> Its fullest presentation occurs at 23’11”, as the Gentlemen intrude upon the U.C. Sunnydale campus to claim their latest victim; a skeletal transcription of the opening of this cue (whose texture is adorned by celesta in imitation of a child’s musical box) is shown in Example 1.<sup>45</sup>

**Ex. 1: The Gentlemen’s theme, fullest presentation (opening only), 23’11”**



In addition to this localized theme (which, being unique to “Hush,” more readily admits comparison with the familiar, self-contained uses of non-diegetic music in film), the score also provides narration on the awkwardness of the developing relationship between Buffy and Riley, the twin subjects of a major story arc that was to unfold over the next 22 episodes. Prior to the events of “Hush,” each protagonist had been vigilantly guarding his or her true identity from the other: while college student Buffy moonlights as the titular Vampire Slayer, Riley, who masquerades as a graduate teaching assistant by day, is in reality a military commando medically enhanced to combat the forces of evil as part of a top-secret government operation known as the Initiative. The fact that they are essentially on the same side would indeed legitimize their budding romance, and their secrets nearly slip out at the start of the episode; but these are topics that are of necessity off-limits,

<sup>44</sup> As a cue characterized by the use of wordless voices, it naturally suggests analogy with Doyle’s theme from *Angel*’s “Hero” (A1.9), which had aired two weeks earlier.

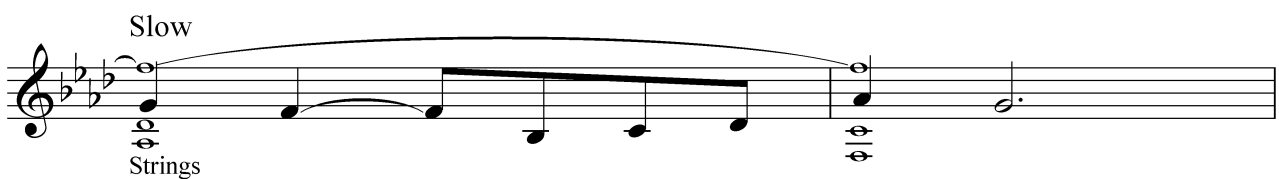
<sup>45</sup> All skeletal transcriptions in this chapter (including those in Table 1) have been made by the author and are drawn from the episodes “Hush” and “Doomed”, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Season Four, Twentieth Century Fox Television, 1999-2000, with score by Christophe Beck.

for fear of exposing themselves and endangering others. Their problematized relationship is underpinned by the earliest appearances on the show of the “Buffy and Riley” theme: introduced upon their first meeting after having lost their voices to nuance the tender moment during which they kiss (the first half of the cue is transcribed in Example 2), it is heard again, in abridged form, immediately after they have worked together to vanquish the malevolent demons (Example 3).

**Ex. 2: “Buffy and Riley” theme, initial presentation (opening), 20'49"**



**Ex. 3: “Buffy and Riley” theme, abridged presentation, 39'00"**



That the latter instance marks the endpoint of the episode’s culminating action sequence (just as Wagnerian leitmotifs function to structural as well as symbolic ends) itself evidences the interface between short- and long-term narratives; still greater insights are contributed by an additional presentation of a version of the “Buffy and Riley” theme, located between the two previously mentioned and in a different key. This interim cue is recognizably set within the musical context of the Gentlemen’s theme, in terms both of its spacious string accompaniment and the metamorphosis of the melody such that it is now constructed from semitones and tritones (as annotated in Example 4) – whose association with the Gentlemen is established at other junctures in the episode – rather than the diatonic intervals of the original.

**Ex. 4: Metamorphosis of “Buffy and Riley” theme (melody only), 29’49”**

Slow  
W/S [Wide Shot] Buffy

Cut to W/S Riley

Strings 8va

+ Wordless voices

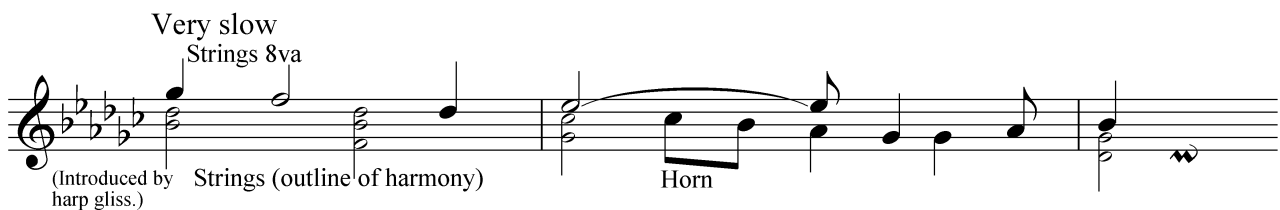
Tritones marked above stave  
Semitones marked below stave

Though its corresponding images cut between shots of Buffy and Riley, this is the only occurrence of the theme in “Hush” during which the two are not in each other’s company, for they are pursuing the Gentlemen independently at this point. In view of its connotations elsewhere coupled to its new musical setting, the score would seem to be adding an extra layer to the narrative in anticipating the episode’s outcome (albeit one that viewers might reasonably have predicted): that the pair will run into each other in pursuing their goal of finding and defeating the Gentlemen, and that this encounter will help to resolve the tension in their relationship resulting from their secret identities.

The nature of several broadly comparable bonds between cast members are also probed during the course of the episode. “Hush” marks the only appearance of Giles’s mysterious friend Olivia apart from the season’s opener and (in a dream sequence only) its finale, and the silencing of the characters’ voices is hence narratologically convenient for its precluding exploration of questions that are never satisfactorily answered as to her identity, her exact relationship to Giles, and her wider role within the show’s storylines. Xander and Anya’s reconciliation following their (verbal) argument at the start of the episode, moreover, is potentially more informative in terms of the function specifically played by the score. Xander’s actions in attacking Spike, who he erroneously believes has bitten Anya (a misunderstanding that would doubtless have been avoided had they been able to talk to each other), cause his girlfriend to realize what words alone could not

express: that he does indeed have romantic feelings for her. But Anya’s response is a coquettish hand-gesture that merely suggests more sex – the very point that generated their rift in the first place. The moment is, however, inflected by a musical cue connoting – in an ironic, almost humorous, manner – a grand filmic gesture of love (Example 5); indeed, in terms both of string sonority and melodic contour (opening with a descending second, subsequently followed by a rising stepwise third), it may even have been intended as a tangential allusion to the “Buffy and Riley” theme itself. Only the score, then, truly explicates the meaning of this scene as a loving reunion that sets Anya’s mind at rest regarding their relationship.

**Ex. 5: Xander and Anya reconcile, 35'13"**



The final coupling examined in “Hush” represents a further instance of interaction between short- and long-term signifiers, though for somewhat different reasons. “Hush” witnessed the introduction of the character of Tara, written into the show as a love interest for Willow (though the timing of her appearance was precipitated by the departure from the regular cast of Seth Green as Oz) and apparently the only other genuine witch among the “bunch of wanna-blessed-bes” she had earlier encountered. The episode also yielded the initial indications of the lesbian relationship that was to emerge between the two, at a pivotal moment where sapphism, sorcery, and silence converge. Various associations between lesbianism and witchcraft have been established during the course of the show: further on in the fourth season, the word “witch” was used as a coded substitute for “lesbian” in reference to Willow and Tara’s relationship, just as “singing” briefly became a euphemism for “[lesbian] sex” in “Once More, With Feeling”; and the female constituency of

Wiccans (the term is not in reality gender-specific) might itself be construed as an implicit lesbian subtext.<sup>46</sup> It was a connection largely initiated by “Hush,” during which Tara seeks out Willow (ostensibly) to enact magic to bring everybody’s voices back – but the pair run into the Gentlemen and their attendant Footmen. Being incapable of casting spells vocally, and since neither sorceress is yet powerful enough to save herself, they intuitively combine their supernatural abilities with a symbolic holding of hands – yet they do not let go of each other when the spell is complete. Within the context of a fast-moving, generic cue that enhances the suspense as Willow and Tara attempt to elude the Gentlemen by barricading themselves into a laundry room, the scene is articulated by two strains of the Gentlemen’s theme, which – recalling Carolyn Abbate’s contention that particular musical gestures constitute fleeting “moments of narration... like voices from elsewhere”<sup>47</sup> – occur specifically at the two physical manifestations of the lesbian bond that the pair were subsequently to develop. The rhythmic editing of musical material with onscreen action at the points central to this narrative (annotated in Example 6) – especially the coincidence of the first appearance of the Gentlemen’s theme with the shot of Tara’s hand moving toward Willow’s – implicitly invites comparison between the Gentlemen and the two witches (for example, in terms of the strength in numbers that both groups embody and the mysticism that unites them) as well as serving to remind the viewer of the situation that brought Willow and Tara together in the first place.

“Hush” therefore provides an enlightening illustration of the ways in which television score may participate in the narrative both within the confines of a discrete episode, and more widely across episodes and seasons. The Gentlemen’s theme, while it has implications for the music that adorns the exploration of two romantic couplings, itself constitutes a short-term signifier not encountered in subsequent installments; indeed, the use of this material to add nuance to the earliest suggestions of the emergent relationship between Willow and Tara may go some way toward

<sup>46</sup> Of course, connections between witchcraft and sexuality have long been embedded within Western culture; see for example Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, sexuality and religion in early modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994).

<sup>47</sup> Abbate, *Unsung Voices*, p. 29.

# **Ex. 6: Willow and Tara elude the Gentlemen, 36'05"**

Allegro, in quavers  
Strings tremolo

Horn

Bass

(Repeated cuts between Willow, Tara, and drinks machine)

Cut to C/U [Close-Up] Willow, attempting to cast spell

Strings

Wordless voices

GENTLEMEN'S THEME

Tara's hand moves towards Willow's hand

In a series of shots, Tara grasps Willow's hand fully

Their head movement is synchronized as they look in the direction of the door

Drinks machine hits door at this point

Strings (unaccomp.)

Cuts between C/U Willow and C/U Tara (still holding hands)

Strings 8va (in imitation of voices)

GENTLEMEN'S THEME

(Ensemble in unison)

explaining why they (unlike Willow's previous love interest) did not receive a consistently appearing non-diegetic cue. Conversely, the story arc of the romance between Buffy and Riley, for which "Hush" is pivotal, extended throughout the fourth season and some way into the fifth – complete with their musical theme in various guises. Its redeployment cannot simply be ascribed to external factors such as the show's tight production schedules; Christophe Beck has even stated for the record that he felt the theme to be "difficult to reuse."<sup>48</sup> Yet its association with the two protagonists is prominently articulated in the very next episode, "Doomed" (B4.11), in which it features, whether completely or in truncated form, on a total of five occasions, all but one of which are in the same key; by way of demonstration, the music with which each opens has been charted alongside its narrative context in Table 1, with the three presentations in "Hush" included for comparison. Several further instances occur in "Goodbye Iowa" (B4.14), mainly connected with Buffy's caring for Riley as he suffers the physical symptoms of withdrawal from the Initiative's medication; appearances are likewise identifiable in "This Year's Girl" (B4.15), "Superstar" (B4.17), and "The Yoko Factor" (B4.20), and further allusions may be heard in the appoggiatura motifs underscoring Buffy and Riley's sex scenes in "Where the Wild Things Are" (B4.18). Conversely, it is absent from "Who Are You" (B4.16), in which, unknown to Riley, "Buffy" is not Buffy at all – Faith, the "rogue" Vampire Slayer, has forcibly occupied her body. The compositional "voice" in which the score was written changed discernibly at the start of the fifth season, at which point Thomas Wanker replaced Christophe Beck as in-house composer; but the idiosyncratic theme nevertheless continued to be used as one of the show's established narratological conventions, as is a semi-standard practice in team-composed musical multimedia.<sup>49</sup> It re-asserted itself in "Out of My Mind" (B5.4) and particularly in "Into the Woods" (B5.10), the cue for the scene of Riley's

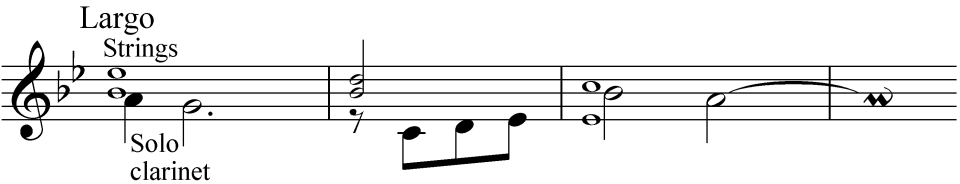
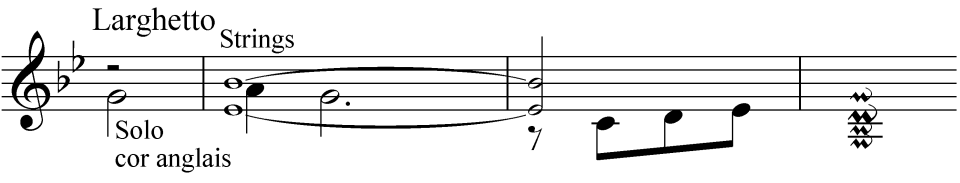

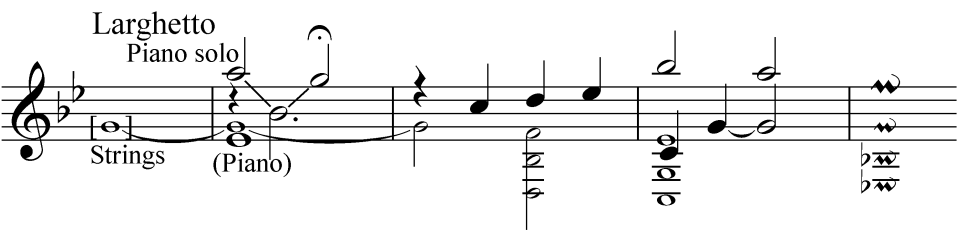
<sup>48</sup> Interview with Christophe Beck in Holder, Mariotte, and Hart, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Watcher's Guide*, Vol. 2, pp. 433-37, at p. 434.

<sup>49</sup> Consider for example how John Williams's instantly recognizable themes to blockbuster film franchises such as *Jaws*, *Jurassic Park*, and *Harry Potter* were carried over to later sequels even after Williams himself had stepped down as principal composer of their scores.

**Table 1: Occurrences of the “Buffy and Riley” theme in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, “Hush” (4.10) and “Doomed” (4.11)**

EPISODE, START TIME	NARRATIVE CONTEXT	TRANSCRIPTION OF OPENING OF MUSIC
“Hush”, 20'49"	Buffy and Riley meet in town after having lost their voices, and embrace	<p>Slow</p> <p>Strings</p>
“Hush”, 29'51"	Buffy and Riley pursue the Gentlemen, independently	<p>Slow</p> <p>Strings 8va</p>
“Hush”, 39'00"	Buffy and Riley look at one another at the end of the fight with the Gentlemen	<p>Slow</p> <p>Strings</p>
“Doomed”, 3'38"	Buffy and Riley discuss their secret identities and agree that they need time to come to terms with these revelations	<p>Freely Piano solo</p> <p>Strings</p>



EPISODE, START TIME	NARRATIVE CONTEXT	TRANSCRIPTION OF OPENING OF MUSIC
"Doomed", 21'41"	Buffy tells Riley that a relationship between them would not work; Riley tries to persuade her otherwise, to no avail	<p>Largo Strings Solo clarinet</p> 
"Doomed", 22'47"	Having rejected Riley, Buffy leaves [codetta to the previous cue]	<p>Larghetto Strings Solo cor anglais</p> 
"Doomed", 29'32"	Riley tells Buffy to give their relationship a try, only to be rejected again	<p>Largo Solo clarinet Strings Flute</p> 
"Doomed", 40'56"	At the end of the episode, Buffy calls round to see Riley; they kiss	<p>Larghetto Piano solo Strings (Piano)</p> 

departure from Sunnydale (from 38'22") incorporating several strains of the theme, fantasia-like, as if apotheosizing both the music and the ultimately doomed relationship between its two attendant characters. In total, the theme accrued some 20 independent, and readily recognizable, occurrences over at least eight of the episodes to have originally aired in the calendar year between "Hush" and "Into the Woods" inclusive. It would doubtless have been further utilized had actor Marc Blucas not left the regular cast, which evidences the ways in which the narratives of serial fiction are required to adapt to external circumstances and how the associated music can become directly affected. Even Blucas's subsequent guest appearance in "As You Were" (B6.15) did not yield sufficient grounds to resurrect the theme, doubtless reflecting that the now-married Riley had moved on in the intervening period.

The above analysis offers only a modest cross-section of the fascinating and rich evidence in support of my reading of the original score for *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, but it nonetheless highlights the significant repercussions for the music of the different narrative frameworks provided by the medium of television in comparison to film. We are now enabled to recognize that Roy Prendergast's contention that the former is faster-paced represents only half of the story. Television may indeed move substantially more quickly than film across individual episodes, especially given the previously noted expectation of any serialized work that each of its installments will draw the narrative to an elegant (though not necessarily conclusive) close. The segment of "Hush" in which the musical cues discussed above are located, bookended broadly by the outer presentations of the "Buffy and Riley" theme, took place in its entirety within the space of less than 20 minutes;<sup>50</sup> recalling Prendergast's arguments, it would surely have been developed over a period perhaps twice as long had it appeared within a film instead. At the same time, however, the story arc concerning the rise and fall of Buffy and Riley's relationship unfolded over much wider temporal spans, not just

<sup>50</sup> In the case of many channels, this period of time would have been extended by the commercial breaks, which can in no sense be considered part of the artwork itself. While subsequent releases (for instance in DVD format) present the multimedia text uninterrupted, as I shall presently discuss, we should also not overlook the practices of many viewers of skipping through these intermissions in watching domestic recordings of the initial television broadcast.

in terms of the cumulative duration of all the relevant episodes (three of which would be more or less sufficient to match the length of many films) but also considering the show's broadcast history, given that its installments aired at intervals of a week or more across the programming season. From the perspective of the show's earliest viewers, then, that particular plotline emerged gradually over a period of months – as was its original conception as serial art. As Linda Hughes and Michael Lund have argued in the context of Victorian literature, installment fiction is more completely understood through contemplation of its initially serial format and its corresponding periodicity, since later presentations (notably the republication of the whole as a novel) have significantly altered the reader's interpretation of the text.<sup>51</sup> The point is confirmed by internal evidence from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel* such as the occasional allusions to the former's Tuesday evening broadcast slot (Buffy's line "So, Dawn's in trouble. Must be Tuesday" in "Once More, With Feeling" is a case in point<sup>52</sup>) and Lorne's postmodern remark at the start of Act 3 of *Angel*'s "Spin the Bottle" (A4.6): "Well, those were some exciting products. Am I right? Mm. Let's all think about buying some of those."<sup>53</sup> Even subsidiary channels on which such shows subsequently air in installments will fit them into their own schedules, and may place commercial breaks in the "wrong" places as well – thereby compromising the meaning of dialogue such as the above and inadvertently repartitioning episodes originally designed to adhere closely to the four-act model, for instance "Restless" (B4.22), "The Body" (B5.10), and "Life Serial" (B6.5).

The disclosure of storylines over such protracted timeframes raises another issue crucial to the narratology of serial fiction: that of recapitulation. In view of recent technological advances – the proliferation of domestic video recording equipment (the more advanced of which can even be set to record new episodes in a series automatically), the possibilities for obtaining digital downloads after the initial broadcast, and the prevalence of detailed show synopses in magazines

<sup>51</sup> Hughes and Lund, *The Victorian Serial* (for citation, see n. 17).

<sup>52</sup> "Once More, With Feeling". *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (Season 6). Dir. Joss Whedon. DVD. Twentieth Century Fox, 2001.

<sup>53</sup> "Spin the Bottle". *Angel* (Season 4). Dir. Joss Whedon. DVD. Twentieth Century Fox, 2002.

and online – as well as the long-standing US tradition of simply repeating the previous week’s episode of a series in its regular slot if no new one has yet become available, it is now easier than ever for the interested viewer to catch up on missed installments. But the digital revolution also brought with it competition for ratings on an unprecedented scale, as the increased range of channels made securing a healthy share of the active television audience even more challenging. As with other forms of serial art, one key function of the sustaining of suspense through, and beyond, individual episodes is to encourage potential devotees to continue with a given series rather than to abandon it and direct their attention elsewhere instead. The choice of channels, and the ease of switching between them particularly at commercial breaks, makes this a special concern of television. Recapitulation is therefore necessary not just to remind a show’s regular following of previous plot developments, but more importantly, to provide first-time and on-and-off watchers with sufficient background information to be able to engage with the latest installment, so as not to limit the potential audience disproportionately. Indeed, story arcs have become so intricate, and integral, to cult television drama that certain shows have based whole episodes around their summary by way of enhancing accessibility to such demographics. Recent examples that have been heavily geared toward the recounting of plots advanced in previous installments include *Alias*’s “Q&A” (1.17) and various out-of-sequence clip shows for *Lost* (2004-), as well as “Lab Rats” (7.20) in *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (2000-), whose musical cues connected to the “Miniature Killer” story arc possess a distinctly eerie timbre that itself lends them a leitmotivic quality.

In general, such recapitulation is much more easily effected with respect to the plot than to the score. One important rhetorical device that has developed to ensure that unacquainted viewers possess the necessary knowledge of the back story is the inclusion of “redundant” dialogue between principal characters, typically toward the start of an episode, in which such background is discussed; Xander’s conversation with Anya about her past life as a vengeance demon, at the opening of Act 1 of “The Prom” (B3.20) (Anya’s third appearance on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and her first for

some weeks), yields a good illustration. To a lesser extent, the phenomenon is observable at the beginning of other acts and scenes too, conveniently accommodating the needs of any viewers whose attentions are divided or who have joined the broadcast partway through, as well as the inevitable interruptions to the flow of the narrative created by commercial breaks. The opening “previously on...” sequence that has become a staple of the television drama series, moreover, has direct implications for the score and the limitations of its meanings since the heavy cutting involved in condensing the original clips to the modest proportions required for such a lead-in often obscures the significance of the music with which they were originally associated. For instance, as Matthew Mills has discussed, the teaser for *Angel*’s “War Zone” (A1.20) artfully applies the “I’m Game” theme to Gunn instead of Angel, thereby momentarily tricking the viewer into believing that the trenchcoat-wearing figure from whom the vampires are running is the eponymous hero himself.<sup>54</sup> Yet this is a subtlety lost in subsequent “previously on...” re-editing: while it serves to remind the audience of Gunn and his street-gang background, the use of “I’m Game” itself is obscured, hence offering few clues as to music’s original participation in this implicit comparison between the two demon-fighting protagonists. The score, therefore, must adopt other strategies if it is to maximize the possibilities for the viewers’ interpretation of its themes across different episodes.

Consideration of “Hush,” and the episode that succeeded it, “Doomed,” is again indicative. In terms of the world of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, the two take place immediately one after the other: the teaser for “Doomed” even continues the closing scene of “Hush,” the unease between Buffy and Riley indicating the resumption of their previous difficulties in talking to each other. From the point of view of the original broadcast schedule, however, the two installments were separated by the comparatively long period of five weeks, having aired either side of the seasonal break (on December 14, 1999, and January 18, 2000, respectively) – one reason, no doubt, why “Hush” represented such a pivotal and suspense-filled episode, activating a number of important

<sup>54</sup> Mills, “Music as Narrative Agent in *Angel*”, p. 38.

new directions for the show's various storylines. But although the sense of anticipation generated by such an installment would have functioned to maintain viewer interest during the intervening period prior to the appearance of the next episode, the "Buffy and Riley" theme itself would surely have been forgotten by the vast majority of those who had initially noticed its significance. That may explain why, having gone some way toward establishing it through three presentations in relatively quick succession in the course of "Hush," "Doomed" built upon these foundations (as Table 1 reveals) by furnishing a further five instances – a level of repetition analogous to that of a scriptwriter endeavoring to create a new catchphrase for a given character. A more pronounced example of the same procedure is yielded by the opening episode of *Angel*, "City Of" (A1.1), in which the fanfare-like principal motif of the "I'm Game" theme occurs some fifteen times in under 40 minutes.

In view of the broad periods over which television series are disseminated – not to mention the enforced intermissions within individual installments brought about by the commercial breaks – we might reasonably expect them to contain a greater level of recapitulation of the narrative and its corresponding music than in an essentially standalone medium such as film. Yet it is increasingly becoming an industry standard to release whole seasons or half-seasons on DVD (or, earlier, videocassette) upon the conclusion of their initial airing on their associated television network, thus facilitating the viewing of episodes immediately one after another and the skipping backward and forward at will. The advent of digital television and the concomitant expansion of available channels has also led to the rise, at least in the UK, of traditions of presenting the next installment on a subsidiary channel immediately after the first has aired; and, particularly on the newly emerged specialist channels, a show's reruns may air episodes on adjacent days or even present several in succession in a single evening. These practices are, of course, all quite alien to the segmented, serial-format nature of television shows as released systematically over significant temporal spans; the original broadcast scheduling proves especially dear to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*, in

which the numerous crossovers and plot tie-ins assume a precise viewing order so as most fully to comprehend all aspects of the episodes' narratives, including the music.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, and particularly from the perspective of establishing canons of television series that are thereby made available to future viewers, DVDs represent the definitive multimedia text, devoid of commercials as well as any additional mediation on the part of specific channels (including editing for content), which can inadvertently render a carefully crafted score nonsensical.<sup>56</sup> Comparison of television shows with analogous forms such as the serialized novel – whose subsequent reprints and ultimate single-volume publication have clear parallels in television reruns and DVD releases respectively – hence becomes even more apposite. The adaptation of scholarship on the narrative structures to which other serialized works adhere may offer one valuable direction through which to shed new light on the whole area of music for television in the future.

Given these industry developments, a slightly different picture of the relationship between television and film has recently materialized, one that suggests it is now potentially more straightforward critically to interpret the former medium and its associated music – and not merely because of its being typically faster-paced within specific scenes and sections. For Matthew Mills, the use of leitmotivic techniques in television series represents “an important point of mnemonic reference not only during each discrete episode but also between episodes whose viewing may be separated by longer spans of time.”<sup>57</sup> The difficulties of actively recalling the narratological subtleties of a particular show that have historically been connected with their unfolding over comparatively long periods are, however, presently being negated by their being increasingly

<sup>55</sup> More rarely, DVD releases may reinstate the intended order of a season aired out of sequence owing to unforeseen circumstances, as was the case with *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*'s “Earshot” (B3.18), the broadcast of which was postponed until just prior to the start of season 4.



<sup>56</sup> The tradition of including “bonus material” such as documentary featurettes, deleted scenes, and episode commentaries by directors, writers, and actors also enhances the viewer's understanding of the narrative in ways not available during the show's initial broadcast run. Conversely, multimedia materials that are ancillary to the series itself (and more specific to its broadcast on television), such as trailers, may be omitted.




<sup>57</sup> Matthew Mills, “Meaning and Myth: Leitmotivic Procedures in the Musical Underscore to *Angel*, Season One” (unpubl. MS, 2002).




released in formats that render superfluous the built-in recapitulation of individual acts and installments. The weeks, months, and years of programming schedules are instead condensed into the hours of back-to-back, commercial-free playing time of (often very reasonably priced) DVD box sets, which enable the engagement with television series even decades after their original airing and presuppose repeat viewing on a previously unparalleled scale. Now more than ever, then, music for television reveals itself as a fascinating and illuminating object for scholarly study.







## Appendix: Tabular Analysis of the *Danse macabre* scene from “Hush” (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, 4.10)




Shot no.	Time	Camera Shot/Description of Action	Projector Slide	Diegetic Music (with excerpts)	Commentary
1	0'00" (time from start of episode: 26'41")	W/S [Wide Shot] LECTURE THEATRE (from back at side, panning to front) Xander closes window shutters in preparation for slide show Xander, Anya, Buffy, and Willow take their seats to watch Giles's presentation (Buffy and Willow sit next to one another; Anya in the row behind; Xander on the steps just in front) Giles pulls down the projector screen and walks round the desk at the front of the Lecture Theatre		(None)	
2	0'14" (26'55")	M/S [Medium Shot] GILES Giles, standing in front of the desk, walks up to tape recorder			
3	0'15" (26'56")	C/U [Close-Up] TAPE RECORDER Giles depresses “play” button on tape recorder; <i>Danse macabre</i> starts		<i>Danse macabre</i> starts Introduction (bars 25-32): <i>scordatura</i> solo violin, unaccompanied 	
4	0'16" (26'57")	W/S LECTURE THEATRE (from front at side) Xander, Anya, Buffy, and Willow are sitting in the Lecture Theatre, waiting for Giles's presentation to start			
5	0'19" (27'00")	M/S GILES Giles flexes (and cracks) his fingers, and puts the first slide on the projector (in reverse)	WHO ARE THE GENTLEMEN? [in reverse]	Cut from bar 32(2) to bar 84(3) for Theme A (bars 85-92): full first violin, accompanied by full strings, lower woodwind, trumpet, trombone, and percussion 	Slide in place on downbeat of bar 85 for start of the main theme (Theme A)  Visual humor: Giles has displayed the slide in reverse but, blissfully unaware of his error, his demeanor is self-assured...
6	0'24" (27'05")	M/S XANDER Xander is speechless (figuratively speaking), mouth open			...Xander is at a loss for action...
7	0'25" (27'06")	M/S BUFFY AND WILLOW Buffy and Willow point to the slide to alert Giles to his error			...but Buffy and Willow draw attention to Giles's mistake...


Shot no.	Time	Camera Shot/Description of Action	Projector Slide	Diegetic Music (with excerpts)	Commentary
8	0'26" (27'07")	M/S ANYA Anya (munching, with a bag of popcorn on her lap) motions a circle in the air with her finger, indicating that the slide is to be turned over			...and Anya signals how it can be rectified
9	0'27" (27'08")	C/U GILES Giles looks behind him at the slide			
10	0'28" (27'09")	M/S GILES Giles flips the slide over and puts his hands in his pockets, before removing the slide	WHO ARE THE GENTLEMEN? [correct way round]	Repeat of Theme A (bars 93-100): solo violin and upper woodwind, accompanied by bassoon, harp, full brass, and percussion 	Slide in place on downbeat of bar 93 (start of repeat of Theme A)
11	0'34" (27'15")	M/S BUFFY AND WILLOW Buffy and Willow trade looks			
12	0'36" (27'17")	C/U GILES Giles puts on a new slide and nods his head repeatedly	THEY ARE FAIRY TALE MONSTERS [Includes picture of one of the Gentlemen on left-hand side of slide]	Theme B (bars 101-16): full strings, accompanied by double bass, woodwind (not flutes), horns, and timpani 	Slide in place slightly before start of Theme B (bar 101)
13	0'37" (27'18")	M/S GILES Giles is nodding his head, hands on hips; he then changes slides and points his finger in the air	WHAT DO THEY WANT		Slide in place towards midpoint of Theme B (bar 109), which commences with the same material as bars 101f.
14	0'45" (27'26")	M/S WILLOW Willow puts up her hand, and points repeatedly to her chest			
15	0'48" (27'29")	C/U XANDER Xander mouths "Boobies?" and makes an accompanying gesture with his hands (spread in front of his chest to suggest breasts)			Visual humor: Xander misinterprets Willow's gesture (note that breasts are a uniquely female signifier)
16	0'50" (27'31")	C/U GILES Giles, unimpressed at Xander's error, removes the slide		Theme C (bars 117-24): antecedent phrase in solo violin accompanied by <i>pizzicato</i> upper strings, lower woodwind, horns, and harp; consequent phrase in upper woodwind and xylophone, accompanied by <i>pizzicato</i> full strings, brass (not horns), and timpani 	Removal of slide occurs at downbeat of bar 117 (end of Theme B/start of Theme C)  Theme C is derived from the main theme (Theme A), on the dominant

Shot no.	Time	Camera Shot/Description of Action	Projector Slide	Diegetic Music (with excerpts)	Commentary
17	0'51" (27'32")	M/S BUFFY AND WILLOW Buffy and Willow appear similarly unimpressed; Willow rolls her eyes and points at the new slide, giving Xander a look			
18	0'54" (27'35")	M/S GILES Giles gestures with his arm to the slide he has put up	HEARTS [Includes picture of three heart shapes]	[Consequent phrase; see above for orchestration] 	Cut to shot (new slide) coincides with consequent phrase of Theme C (bar 121)
19	0'56" (27'37")	M/S XANDER Xander visibly realizes his mistake		Theme C (bars 125-32): as before	
20	0'59" (27'40")	M/S ANYA Anya, reaching into her popcorn bag, does not appear to care much for the proceedings (she seems to be enjoying herself)			
21	1'00" (27'41")	M/S GILES Giles changes slides and nods  Giles changes slides again and extends his hand outwards from his mouth, indicating "voices"	THEY COME TO A TOWN [Includes picture of two Gentlemen on a hill overlooking two houses]  THEY STEAL ALL THE VOICES SO NO ONE CAN SCREAM [Includes picture of two Gentlemen on a hill (in continuation of the previous slide) and four victims below, with lines extending from the mouths of the victims to the Gentlemen]	Return to material of introduction (bars 133-6): solo violin, joined by xylophone, accompanied by held chord (trumpets, oboes) 	Slide placed in time for consequent phrase of Theme C (bars 129-32)  Slide placed on bar 134; note the use of this musical material (from the introduction) as a "framing" device heralding a new section of explanation
22	1'07" (27'48")	M/S BUFFY AND WILLOW Buffy and Willow are taking all this information in			
23	1'09" (27'50")	M/S GILES Giles puts on a new slide, and points in the air to articulate the word "then" (on the slide)	THEN [Includes another picture of one of the Gentlemen on left-hand side of slide]	Cut from bar 137(1) to bar 337 (after five beats' rest) for transitional passage (bars 337-44): full strings <i>arco</i> , accompanied by sustained horns and timpani roll 	Giles's rhetorical slide (and demonstrative pointing action) is further articulated by the transitional nature of the music: that it is building to a climax signals the crux of his explanation
24	1'10" (27'51")	C/U GILES Giles is pointing in the air; he then removes slide from projector			The quick cut to this shot further articulates the narrative importance of the word "then" on the slide

Shot no.	Time	Camera Shot/Description of Action	Projector Slide	Diegetic Music (with excerpts)	Commentary
25	1'13" (27'54")	M/S GILES Giles puts a new slide on the projector	[The slide shows a picture of one of the Gentlemen, wielding a knife, having made an incision in the chest of his victim, who is lying on a bed]		Slide placed during transitional passage (three bars before start of climax): prepares for the next slide
26	1'17" (27'58")	C/U SLIDE (as projected onto screen) Giles moves a new slide onto the projector such that it appears on the screen	[The slide shows a picture of one of the Gentlemen pulling out the heart from his victim (in continuation of the previous slide)]	Bar 344 conflated with bar 369 (rising scale in upper woodwind) to effect cut to bar 370 for apotheosis of Theme B (bars 370-85): trombones, accompanied by full strings (using opening motif of Theme A) and full woodwind, horns, and percussion 	Slide placed fractionally after music enters its apotheosis; the climactic nature of the music underlines the horror of the graphic visual images (note that this is also the first close-up shot of a slide, and is even more gruesome in its imagery than the last)
27	1'19" (28'00")	C/U BUFFY Buffy, finding the imagery unpleasant (perhaps because of the graphic nature of Giles's slide pictures), looks at Willow			
28	1'21" (28'02")	C/U WILLOW Willow looks back at Buffy (in agreement?)			
29	1'22" (28'03")	M/S ANYA Anya, still eating popcorn, appears indifferent to the horror depicted on the slides			Visual humor: unlike Buffy and Willow, Anya is oblivious to horror (cf. shot 20); being an ex-vengeance demon, she has seen it all before
30	1'24" (28'05")	M/S XANDER Xander starts to write on his message pad			
31	1'26" (28'07")	M/S GILES Giles changes slide	THEY NEED SEVEN THEY HAVE AT LEAST TWO [Includes picture of seven heart shapes, colored in red (dripping blood?)]		Slide placed prior to bridge section, reached in the ensuing shot.  [In fact, the Gentlemen have three hearts already, as revealed by the scene in the clock tower at the start of Act 3.]
32	1'29" (28'10")	M/S XANDER Xander clicks his fingers in the air to attract everybody's attention		Bridge section (bars 386-415): full strings (variously accompanied) alternating with full orchestra 	Music calms a little, preparing for the final climax – thus allowing more “discussion”
33	1'30" (28'11")	M/S BUFFY AND WILLOW Both girls look in Xander's direction			
34	1'31" (28'12")	C/U XANDER Xander holds up his message – “How do we kill them?!” – and looks inquisitive			

Shot no.	Time	Camera Shot/Description of Action	Projector Slide	Diegetic Music (with excerpts)	Commentary
35	1'34" (28'15")	M/S BUFFY Buffy makes a thrusting, up-and-down motion with her hand in front of her (endeavoring to mime the action of staking)		[Full violins] 	Buffy's gesture is coincident with bar 394 (the start of a new passage led by the violins, which extends as far as the Animato section – and thus encompasses the entire sequence of the misinterpretation of Buffy's mime and its resolution)
36	1'36" (28'17")	C/U XANDER Xander looks at Buffy strangely			Visual humor of shots 35-43: Buffy's attempted mime is misunderstood by all as a gesture connoting male masturbation
37	1'37" (28'18")	M/S BUFFY Buffy wonders why Xander has reacted in this way, and looks at Willow			
38	1'38" (28'19")	M/S WILLOW Willow appears slightly appalled (she avoids eye contact with Buffy)			
39	1'40" (28'21")	C/U GILES Giles (no doubt equally shocked) looks deadpan			
40	1'41" (28'22")	M/S BUFFY Buffy reaches for a stake in her bag, and attempts to mime the action of staking again with the help of a visual aid			
41	1'45" (28'26")	C/U XANDER Xander visibly understands Buffy now			
42	1'46" (28'27")	C/U GILES Giles also understands (and has an answer prepared)			
43	1'49" (28'30")	M/S BUFFY AND WILLOW Willow gives Buffy a reassuring look and smiles; she too has understood			
44	1'52" (28'33")	M/S GILES Giles has, off-screen, already put up a new slide  Giles changes slide at the end of this shot	IN THE TALES NO SWORD CAN KILL THEM [Includes picture of one of the Gentlemen, with three swords penetrating him]	Animato section (bars 416-37): full orchestra 	Cut to this shot occurs fractionally after the start of the Animato section, as the music enters its final climax
45	1'56" (28'37")	C/U SLIDE (projected) Giles's slide comes into view on the projector screen	BUT THE PRINCESS SCREAMED ONCE.... AND THEY ALL DIED [Includes picture of a princess with lines coming out of her mouth, and two Gentlemen lying dead on the ground]		Cut to this shot coincides with bar 421 (a near-repeat of the material of the previous five bars)  Sound is revealed to be the means of neutralizing the very demons that caused the silence

Shot no.	Time	Camera Shot/Description of Action	Projector Slide	Diegetic Music (with excerpts)	Commentary
46	1'58" (28'39")	M/S WILLOW Willow suddenly has an idea, and scrabbles around for a visual aid to help her communicate it		[Full strings, accompanied by full orchestra] 	Willow's visible reaction to her flash of inspiration occurs at bar 426 (the concluding cadences of the Animato section)
47	2'00" (28'41")	M/S BUFFY AND WILLOW While Buffy is writing on her message pad, Willow proceeds to mime: she holds up a CD, and covers her ears as though the sound is too much for her (indicating that they can use recorded voices to fight the Gentlemen)		[As above] 	Climactic codetta of music (bars 430-7) is coincident with Willow's mime (shots 47-9)
48	2'04" (28'45")	C/U GILES Giles looks a little bemused			
49	2'05" (28'46")	M/S WILLOW Willow continues her mime of her ears being covered, then places her hands around her throat and sticks her tongue out to suggest death. She then smiles as if happy (with the demise of the Gentlemen? with her own acting skills?)			
50	2'07" (28'48")	M/S GILES Giles, understanding the message Willow is trying to communicate, quickly changes slide, and points to his throat (again, he has an answer prepared)	ONLY A REAL HUMAN VOICE [Includes picture of one of the Gentlemen standing next to a gramophone (with lines coming out of the gramophone to indicate sound)]	Coda, Tempo 1° (bars 438-end): oboe, subsequently solo violin; accompanied by sustained horns alternating with <i>tremolo</i> strings 	Last section of music corresponds to the cockerel crowing (i.e. daybreak) in Henri Cazalis's poem  Slide in place for the first solo (oboe, bar 440) of the coda
51	2'12" (28'53")	M/S BUFFY AND WILLOW Willow looks disappointed that her idea will not work. Buffy (who is still writing on her message pad) raises her hand, finger extended, to attract attention			
52	2'18" (28'59")	C/U BUFFY Buffy holds up her message pad, which reads: "How do I get my voice back??"			
53	2'20" (29'01")	M/S GILES Giles opens his arms wide (to indicate that he does not know) and removes the slide			
54	2'23" (29'04")	M/S BUFFY Buffy, disappointed with Giles's answer, lowers her message pad			

Shot no.	Time	Camera Shot/Description of Action	Projector Slide	Diegetic Music (with excerpts)	Commentary
55	2'25" (29'06")	M/S GILES Giles puts on a new slide	BUFFY WILL PATROL TONIGHT [Includes picture of a girl (apparently Buffy) armed with bow and arrow]		
56	2'27" (29'08")	M/S BUFFY AND WILLOW Buffy gestures that Giles's drawing portrays her as too fat		[Solo violin, accompanied by sustained horns]  <i>f</i> <i>déclamé</i>	Visual humor: Buffy exhibits vanity over the representation of her figure (a traditionally female concern)  Buffy's reaction to the slide depicting her coincides with the start of the solo violin theme (bar 455), thereby identifying her with the protagonist of <i>Danse macabre</i>
57	2'30" (29'11")	M/S GILES Giles motions that it is not important, and points at Buffy and then the slide (as if to reinforce his instruction) After that, he picks up a thick bound volume from the desk, points at Xander, Anya, and Willow, and then holds up the book (signaling that everybody else is to research tonight)			
58	2'37" (29'18")	W/S LECTURE THEATRE (from front at side) Xander, Anya, Buffy, and Willow rise from their seats and begin to walk away following Giles's presentation Buffy, at the front of the shot, picks up one of Giles's slides			<i>Danse macabre</i> merges seamlessly into the show's score following bar 467, with the progressive introduction of violin <i>tremoli</i>
59	2'46" (29'27")	C/U BUFFY (through slide) The camera shot blurs Buffy and focuses on the slide (which depicts a drawing of one of the Gentlemen)			<i>Segue</i> into the next section of Christophe Beck's score for "Hush"
Scene ends	2'49" (29'30")				