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## Communicating Emotion Through Images and Music in Narrative Film

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Communicating Emotion Through  
Images and Music in Narrative Film

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
In  
Communications

By  
Peter Edward Hagan III

Bachelor of Commercial Science, Tulane University, 1964  
Master of Liberal Arts, Tulane University, 1994  
Master of Music, University of New Orleans, 2003

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II. AESTHETIC INSIGHTS .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>III. SYMBOLIC NATURE OF IMAGE AND MUSIC .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>A. Image in Film.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>B. Symbols .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>C. Film Music .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>D. Emotion.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>IV. APPLICATION .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>A. Tools of the Screenwriter and the Composer .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>B. Sensitivity and Interpretation .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>V. EXAMPLES .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>VI. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>VII. CITATIONS .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>IX. APPENDIX .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>A. Film La Strada .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>B. Film – Juliet of the Spirits .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>C. Emotional Impact.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>D. Commentary .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>X. VITA .....</b>	<b>38</b>

## **ABSTRACT**

Art can be the bearer of expressive qualities embodied into the work by its creator. The creator of the work can imbed into the work his or her own feelings which are deeper than mere emotions. The emotions can be named, but the feelings are on a deeper subconscious more intangible level for which mere labels can not describe, but which in sensitive hands can be incorporated into the work.

In the case of narrative film, which is a collaborative art form, it is the choices made by the film's director which facilitates this process, augmented by the musical score when present. The feelings and emotion embedded into the film are in the form of vital energies which can be felt by the viewer.

In narrative film it is the images and music that communicates the emotion to the audience.

**The traditional feature film is a genuine emotion machine.**  
**Ed. S. Tan, Emotion and the Structure of Narrative Film.**

## **I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of this study is to explore the role which images and music play in conveying emotion in narrative film. Narrative film in this case follows the concept of narration as outlined by Ed Tan as being “the process by which fictional events are presented in an ordered and temporally structured manner, thereby producing a certain effect upon the listener (in our case) the viewer.” (1) (Tan 6).

The effect of this upon the viewer/listener is one of emotion. The question then is how does a film viewer extract relevant meaning from what is shown on the screen? As Ed Tan points out, “film awareness is a complex process and though current theories of emotion provide a basis for describing the film experience they are by no means sufficient to do justice to its complexity.” (2) (Tan 5).

Music itself can be said to be a symbolic language. It bypasses spoken language by conveying emotions through sound and belongs to a realm that has developed independent of verbal language.

Film is another medium that can be considered a symbolic language that can bypass spoken language. As David Cook points out:

Film is a mass medium of popular entertainment as well as an art form – and a medium that bypasses language to communicate directly with the senses through moving photographic images of the apparently real. (3) (Cook 31).

This study looks at the combination of music and images in conveying emotion in narrative film. Film music and its role in film narration will be discussed, and how the two together form a symbiotic relationship far greater than the sum of the individual parts in accessing the emotions of film audiences.

The possibilities for this line of inquiry are vast; however, the suggested length of this study precludes that the application be narrowed down. For that reason the major examples studied have been limited to exploring in more depth two highly emotional films directed by Federico Fellini (1920-1993); *La Strada*, 1954, and *Juliet of the Spirits*, 1965, which are presented in the appendix.

## II. AESTHETIC INSIGHTS

An interesting and informative contribution to aesthetic philosophy is one which views art as a bearer of expressive qualities and which was expounded by Bennett Reimer in his books *A Philosophy of Music Education*, and *The Nature of Music Experience*. However, Reimer's approach is not limited only to the field of music, and is applicable to all the arts. Since film shares with music the feature of being an art form which is performed within the framework of time, a number of parallels can be drawn between the two.

This aesthetic concept delves into the nature of art itself, and how art can make the subjective comprehensible in ways that language is inadequate to describe and sometimes is inadequate to define. This is accomplished in the way that the individual art work presents and transmits to the receiver a sense of human feelings, and the depth of feeling which the work's creator is able to embody within it. According to Reimer:

Every good work of art, no matter when it was made and no matter how it was made, is good because its artistic qualities succeed in capturing a sense of human feeling. (4) (Reimer 51).

This then leads to the view that art can make the subjective comprehensible in the way that the art work presents a sense of feelings, and as Reimer explains, "the experience of art is related to the experience of life at the deepest levels of life's significance." (5) (Reimer 52).

Creating art therefore relates to the concept that art is a bearer of expressive qualities, which begins with an impulse in the mind of the work's creator.

The process of creating the work consists of a process of exploration and discovery in which the creator of the work searches out his or her own feelings and discovers a medium of expressiveness, and then works out those feelings with the medium.

Reimer views the artist as making certain artistic decisions in the act of creation, and working on the materials, while at the same time the materials are working back on the artist. During this process, the materials will resist the artist, and his success depends upon the degree to which he can overcome that resistance to create a work that is expressive.



Reimer states: “In the quality, intensity and profundity of the interchange lie (sic) the conditions for the quality, intensity and profundity of the thing created out of it.” (6) (Reimer 62).

A critical ingredient in the preceding process has to do with decisions made by the creator of the work with regards to good craftsmanship, personal style, sensitivity and imagination, and how this will impact the work being produced. Reimer further expounds on this point thus:

Art works are expressive forms in which the vital conditions of livingness have been captured so that people can regard them and experience them. The conditions of life – the rhythms of organic existence are embodied in the artistic qualities of art works. (7) (Reimer 103).

What then takes place is a sharing between the creator of the art work, which contains an embodiment of feeling, and the perceiver. The perceiver’s feelings, however, cannot be precisely those of the creator since he has not made a simple statement of emotions, but has expressed a complex set of expressive qualities and feelings capable of giving rise to many and varied feelings in the perceiver.

Susan Langer who has development similar ideas, is of the opinion that art picks up where language leaves off. (8) (Langer 9).

G. L Hagberg takes that concept further. He observes that whereas language functions to communicate cognitive meaning, art functions to communicate emotive meaning and its expressive content is beyond the reach of language. (9) (Hagberg 3-4).

Another way of looking at this is that aesthetics can be generally thought of as the theory of beauty, or what is found beautiful or pleasing in an experience; however, these concepts are ever changing. What one generation would find pleasing might seem trite or downright ugly to another.

Although there might be a push to define from an objective standpoint what is “beautiful,” ultimately the judgment on which something is going to be evaluated is going to boil down to subjective likes and dislikes which will differ from person to person, but which is also influenced by cultural factors.

Art can therefore be considered simply a matter of self-expression, or an activity in which an artist expresses his emotions.

According to Leo Tolstoy;

Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that others are infected by these feelings and also experience them. (10) (Leo Tolstoy as quoted in the Aesthetics Article in Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy 12).

This is accomplished by the form of the object, or the way in which certain lines, colors and the form of the object stir our aesthetic emotions, combined by the way that the object represents something while at the same time it is able to project some of the thoughts and emotions of the object's creator.

In applying these concepts to an art form such as film one must recognize that creating cinema is a group process. As a collaborative art form, there are a number of people involved in its creation. Foremost in cinema it is the director, (sometimes called the auteur for the French word for author,) whose vision and judgment predominates in expressing his own emotions in the images that are created, and ultimately in selection of the music that will be used.

### **III. SYMBIOTIC NATURE OF IMAGE AND MUSIC**

#### **A. Image in Film**

In essence film is composed of a sequence of images in conjunction with dialogue, music and other sounds to construct its narrative flow. It is not possible in a study of this length to cover the entire spectrum of how this is accomplished.

This section has therefore been narrowed down mostly to the effect of how images can be purposely used to project emotion. Because film is primarily a visual medium in order for it to be accepted by its intended audience, it has to enter into the imagination of the viewer.

The way in which western art developed has determined how modern man has been conditioned to perceive art within the confines of a rectangle. Paintings are most often viewed in a rectangular frame. As it evolved cinema developed within its own rectangle, the screen in which it displays its own narrative style.

Joseph Boggs has commented on the emotional immediacy of Cinema and the propensity of it to share several characteristics with other art forms.

Like painting and sculpture, film employs line, texture, color, form, volume, and mass, as well as subtle interplays of light and shadow. What sets it apart is its sense of reality, its immediacy, and its quality of free and constant motion combined with the complexity of its sensual appeal, communicating simultaneously by means of sight, sound and motion.

It is that continuous flow that gives it a sense of reality and causes the viewer to become totally immersed in the illusion projected on the screen. Through an optical phenomenon known as “persistence of vision,” the eye retains the visual image of fast changing images and there is an illusion of actual, smooth continuous movement that holds the interest of the audience.

Concepts of narration in film assist us in understanding emotion in the viewer because the narrative is in and of itself a way to arouse emotion. This has been observed back to the early days of the exhibition of narrative film.

In 1905 in Paris the Lumière Brothers screened the short film *L'Arrivée d'un Train en Gare de la Ciotat*. (11) (Cook 10). Not knowing what to expect, many of the people in the audience were terrified when the train arrived at the station, and some of them panicked. What that audience experienced is what audiences have been experiencing ever since, and is what is known as the filmic state. This is a phenomenon also called the diegetic effect in which the viewer experiences the fictional world as if he were an invisible observer actually there.

The viewer has no body in the filmed environment and the imaginary space behind a window framed by the screen; however the psychological experience of the presence increases his identification with and emotional response to the action. (12) (Tan 19).

While there is the illusion of movement on the screen, the viewer sits rather motionless in the dark so that his or her perceptions to other stimuli are relatively dormant to that seen and heard in the film.

There is something almost hypnotic about the illusion of movement that holds the interest of the audience. Some viewers, but not all, go into an almost trance-like state. In essence the viewer has the impression that he or she is physically present either in, or is an observer to the screen, and can give himself or herself up to fantasy and temporarily set aside critical reserve and the rationality of everyday existence.

The viewer looks upon himself or herself as a witness or onlooker to the action and his gaze is automatically directed to the spot where the action is. It is the perceptual illusion of being present in the fictional world and the strong sense of reality that in many cases allows him or her to identify with the protagonist, and emphasize with and feel emotions similar to those of the characters. Edward Branigan has observed that as the spectator watches the film the camera seems to reach out toward them and that narration in film relates to the viewer's ability to create a three dimensional world out of a two dimensional wash of light and dark in which size, color, angle, lens, and shape must be transformed into an array of solid objects and texture.

(13) Branigan 33).

As Boggs has observed, "Thus the most complete and utter fantasy assumes through film the shape and the emotional impact of the starkest reality."

(14) (Boggs 4,5).

Robert Kolker echoes that assessment. His observations are that we invest movies with emotion and meaning, and that movies have achieved a presence of being, an emotional immediacy that seems unmediated. He is of the opinion that the reason we find film realistic is because we have learned certain responses from them.

Kolker distinguishes what he calls the truth of the image, in that the image is artificial and is not the thing itself. The image exists to transmit the real world, and is thereby used to trigger emotional responses. (15) (Kolker 15).

## **B. Symbols**

One important aspect of the visual communications aspect of film is the use of symbols, and in particular symbolic images. In general a symbol is something used for, or used to represent something else that arouses associative ideas in the perceiver.

In most cases it is a material object representing or regarding something immaterial or intangible. It is something into which special meaning, external to its own properties, has been attributed. That special meaning communicates instantly by the associations to other emotions, values, attitudes, ideas, events, things, people or places which the symbol invokes.

According to the psychoanalytic theories of Carl Jung, symbols are distinct capabilities within the mind to hold distinct pieces of information which can free associate with any number of other symbols and can be organized, and reorganized in any number of ways. (16) (Jung 20-25). They can thereby hold connected and associative meanings between symbols as symbols in themselves in the way they represent both abstract and concrete information. Building on the work of Jung, Joseph Campbell has done a good bit of work on the nature of symbols in myth and religion, and how metaphors which they imply can be applied to drama. (17) (Campbell 17-19).

Filmmakers purposely use these non-verbal symbols to convey information and project emotion. Some of these are general universally understood natural symbols that get their meaning from past associations within a given culture.

In other cases the filmmaker can create symbols by the way certain objects are treated visually in the film, either through repetition, emphasis, association, or the context in which the object appears. Emotion can be evoked by the way certain symbolic images foretell events as they unfold, or how characters in the film respond to symbols, or in the way in which the objects are used to create allegory or metaphor. (18) (Boggs 31).

As such the images become in essence signs and symbols that in and of themselves convey meaning and understanding. It is up to the filmmaker to code the meaning into the symbol, and it is up to the viewer to decode and understand its meaning.

Valuable insights can be obtained from the writings of the Russian film theorist, teacher and director Sergei Eisenstein (1898-1948), who was a pioneer in using images to project emotion.

According to Eisenstein:

Our films are faced with the task of presenting not only a narrative that is logically connected, but one that contains a maximum of emotion and stimulating power. (19) (Eisenstein 4).

Eisenstein was looking for a universal measurement of emotion in art. Rather than view cinema as an art form into which the filmmaker simply embodied emotion during the process of creation, Eisenstein took an intellectual, or mechanistic approach in which studied techniques would be consciously and deliberately used for effect. Eisenstein built upon and improved techniques of montage that had been developed earlier by other directors such as D. W. Griffith. He analyzed selections from poetry and literature to determine various techniques of layering and montage that would create the emotional quality of a scene, and then applied those techniques to film. He felt that emotions have a progression that can be initiated in a chain of linked emotions and evoked associations in the viewer's mind, which can be initiated in a series of steps. In so doing he made extensive use of the juxtaposition of images in shots taken from different perspectives, and of varying lengths for effect. In this he used a variety of conflicts, tensions, and opposites. These would combine into a new quality to actively engage the viewer to elicit their feelings and complete the intended theme. Eisenstein felt that the actors in his films should not just copy feelings, but should cause the feelings to arise and develop into other feelings which would live before the spectator.

In a like manner, the images of a scene should not exist as something fixed, but should unfold before the senses as though it was producing a living impression.

Eisenstein felt that “the actual method of creating images must reproduce that process whereby in life itself new images are built up in the human consciousness and feelings.” (20) (Eisenstein 18).

According to Greg Smith, “Eisenstein conceptualized emotions as processes with all the immediacy and lack of consciousness of physical reflexes.” The process therefore consists of arranging images in the feelings and mind of the spectator.

Engineering the emotions therefore becomes a primary task of the filmmaker. Eisenstein viewed movement as the mechanization for all of this, in both the images and music. (21) (Smith 4).

French philosopher Gilles Deleuze published *L'Image-Mouvement-Cinéma* as an attempt at the classifications of images and signs.

Deleuze challenged the concept of cinema as a succession of still photographs and concentrated interest on what he considered movement-image. Under this viewpoint figures are not described in motion, it is the continuity of the movement which describes the figure. (22) (Deleuze 5).

Deleuze considered cinematic movement-images to be broken down into three main types:

1. Perception images that focus on what is seen, best exemplified by long shots. In describing the viewpoint of the camera Deleuze viewed the camera as representing consciousness.
2. Affection images that focus on expressions of feeling using mainly close-ups, and move between the poles of wonder and desire.
3. Action images that focus on the duration of action and which mainly are shown in medium shots.

In analyzing montage Deleuze also saw distinct types of montage based on concepts of duration and movement:

1. Organic montage in the American school as evidenced by the work of D. W. Griffith which relies on opposites but attempts to give them unity as a whole.
2. Dialectic montage of the soviet school of Eisenstein in which opposite ideas give birth to something new.
3. Quantitative montage of the pre-war French school which had an emphasis on movement.
4. Intensive montage of the German expressionist movement which emphasizes color and light and is essentially a montage of visual contrasts.

Images on the screen are not the thing that they represent; rather they are an interpretation of that particular thing. Knowing how to invest them with emotions that the audience can relate to is critical for the filmmaker.

### **C. Film Music**

Music on the other hand is mostly made up of symbols in the form of sounds comprising the basic components of pitch, melody, rhythm, tonality, harmony, and timbre, which are used as tools to present musical ideas and project emotion.

Even though there is no precise formula as to which sounds produce exactly which emotional response, there is a long history of devices and empirical techniques originally learned from both trial and error in conjunction with observation and study as to how best to elicit a psychological response in the mind of the listener.

The use of music in film has paralleled the evolution of cinema as an art form. From the introduction of sound in cinema, music has been an important component of the film experience. In fact the 1927 film *The Jazz Singer*, which was the first feature-length motion picture to contain synchronized sound contained six musical numbers.

As Theodor Adorno and Hans Eisler have pointed out: “The character of film music has been determined by everyday practices. It has been an adaptation in part to the immediate needs of the film industry.” (23) (Dickinson 59).

The major requirement for music in film has been that it serves the purpose of the picture and is effective in fulfilling the director’s vision. It can be used in many ways to enhance the plot, reflect the theme, and enhance the mood. It can establish a sense of time and place, and augment a sense of atmosphere concerning the location. It can help pinpoint the dialogue, and at times surpass the spoken work in conveying psychological elements. Good scoring can underscore the theatrical build up of the action in a scene and add to a sense of suspense and drama. To do this it must relate to the action.

Music helps draw the audience into the world of the characters. It can assist in filling in gaps in the continuity of the action, and can help put the audience emotionally in the setting. According to sound designer David Sonnenschein: “The intent is to guide the audience towards an unambiguous identification with the feelings of the scene.” (24) (Sonnenschein 156).

It follows then that one of the major functions of music in film is to provide emotion. This is not exactly the same as simply just telling the audience what to feel in any given situation. It is much more.

In slightly different words Larry Timm points out that a major function of film scoring is not as much to project emotion, but to reflect emotion. In order to do so the music must create subconscious associations in the audience.



Timm also feels that music functions in fact to intensify or relax the pace of the action, provide unity, and create an atmosphere of time and place.

It is in expressing the invisible that film music can be at its most potent:

The third function of film scoring is when music is used to create “unspoken” thoughts in a character or unseen implications of a situation. Music can be used to transfer subliminal messages to the filmgoers where we can feel what the main character is feeling or where the music creates the conditions of the atmosphere on the screen so that the members of the audience can almost swear that they were up there on the screen with the action. (25) (Hall X).

Of the many composers who contributed to the development of film music, Aaron Copland (1900-1990) stands out. Copland wrote the music for William Wyler’s 1949 film *The Heiress*, and two Lewis Milestone films, *The Red Pony* in 1949, and *Of Mice and Men* in 1939. He has contributed greatly to the philosophical understanding of the function of film music. Copland was of the opinion that music can create a more convincing atmosphere of time and place. He felt that music can be used to underline or create psychological refinements such as the unspoken thoughts of a character or the unseen implications of a situation. He also viewed the importance of music in serving as a kind of neutral background fill in building a sense of continuity in a film, and to provide the underpinning for the theatrical buildup of a scene which would then lead to a sense of finality. (26) (Copland 192-193).

In fact Copland was of the opinion that a film composer can do more than just make potent through music a film’s dramatic and emotional value. (27) (Prendergast 1-11).

In more general terms, since music can function as a universal language, there are times when it can provide a sub-text to the visual information to fill in such things as miscellaneous commentary that is lost when stories are transferred to the visual medium.

Film scores seem to operate best when they are so well integrated into the fabric of the film that they operate in the background just below the consciousness of the audience.

Yet to be most effective the music has to somehow seem to enter into the plot of the film thus adding an additional dimension to the audience's perception of the images and dialogue in an almost symbiotic two-way exchange between the film and the sound.

Underscoring is therefore an important part of enhancing musically what the audience sees by expressing an emotion or by creating a mood. As such the film music serves as a cohesive element, expressing in sound that which is invisible on the screen, thus filling in voids in the plot, action and dialogue and building a sense of continuity, and consequently helping unify the visual.

Most of what has been described above relates to what is known as non-diegetic, which is music that is heard by the audience but is not in the life of the characters. There are times when music and other sounds become what is known as diegetic, and are located in the world of the characters and in the scene. This is source music coming from somewhere in the action, and it can also be very effective in communicating emotion.

Yet still there are times when the music can be anempathetic, in that it can deliberately take an indifferent stance for effect to create irony. Music in the two Stanley Kubrich films *A Clockwork Orange*, 1971 and *2001: A Space Odyssey*, 1968, used this technique to good effect.

Film music also works on an additional level, subjectively to what is on the screen. As the projected images unfold, the music playing can lull the audience into greater receptivity of the imaginary world of the story.

Robert Spande has described this phenomenon:

The deeper reality of film music involves the way the film tries to evoke a sort of temporary and illusive 'film-subjectivity,' which closely mimics our everyday subjectivity. To do this, the film must rely on tactics far beyond simply spinning a good yarn. The film experience must imitate in some way all three overlapping dimensions of subjective reality; the symbolic, the real and the imaginary. The method by which this is done involves very heavily the use of film music. (28) (Spande 1).

Most of the published research in the psychology of music has dealt with the perception and cognition of music, and little has specifically dealt with the emotional response to music and the emotional effectiveness of film scores.

This is because of the difficulties in designing methodology in scientifically investigating the phenomenon. Music educator Rita Aiello has attributed this to the fact that there is no uniform meaning in music for all listeners at all times and the meaning derived from a piece of music may change over time. (29) (Aiello, 59).

It is exactly the same thing that Eisenstein was looking for when he was trying to find a universal measurement for emotion in art. Although the actual question was never answered, what worked for Eisenstein was in the process of the montage.

What works well in film music is that which fulfils the intent of the screenwriter, the vision of the director, and the expectations of the audience. As such it works best on the intuitive and emotional level.

#### **D. Emotion**

No matter how rational one might view oneself to be, in the final analysis it is hard to divorce one self from emotional responses when viewing any art form, and cinema is no exception. The mere fact that cinema is an art form that has a narrative plot engages the emotions even more so. For that reason, it would be hard to divorce emotional responses from how any viewer would view a particular scene, and to what degree he or she would have an emphatic identification with the story and its characters.

Unlike a simple perception, an emotion is directly dependent on the motivation of the person experiencing the emotion, and whether or not a particular film fulfills that individual's psychological needs in any way.

As stated, a number of factors enter into the equation. This would include the viewer's individual preferences, dislikes, and goals, past history, upbringing, and cultural background. Mood and interest level are also factors. In evaluating one's own like or dislike for a film, one would start with the initial perception, in which information from both visual and aural sources is combined to form the experience.

Concepts of narration in film assist us in understanding emotion in the viewer because the narrative is in and of itself a way to arouse emotion. The filmmaker has an initial intention to create a particular scene, object, thing or environment.

In viewing it, the audiences will accept or reject it according to their own criteria, mainly based on their own motivation and subconscious needs. It is here that the psychological aspects overlap and possibly outweigh the physiological aspects of perception.

No matter how objective any viewer might try to be, the beginning part of the process is going to be subjective, and that will in and of itself involve the emotions. For vast portions of any audience, subjective responses are going to outweigh objective analyses. And those who take an objective approach at analysis will have to deal with emotion at some part of the process, usually up front.

The gatekeeper to these responses is therefore going to be emotion. How the receiver initially perceives the image and the music will have several determinants that include, but are not limited to mood, emotional intelligence, education, training, interest, personal likes and dislikes, and cultural conditioning. Personal preferences for genre and style will also influence the viewer's response.

What should then be extremely obvious is that in creating images and music for film that the starting point is going to be technical competency on the part of the filmmaker. Ingrained in the process is sensitivity to the emotional responses that the images and music are capable of eliciting in the intended audience, and that is determined by artistic decisions made along the way.

Scientifically measuring emotion is not an easy task. Subjective after-the-fact surveys can be used only up to a point. No one has yet come up with a unit of measurement of emotion. There is no uniform device analogous to horsepower which could be used.

Subjects can be wired up to mechanical devices to record eye movement, pulse rate and brain activity and limited studies have been done on such things as facial recognition or pairing facial expression with descriptive words. Brain research studies pairing pictures with emotionally spoken words have been done which in effect have confirmed that which was already empirically known. A multidiscipline study entitled *Combined Perception of Emotion in Pictures and Musical Sounds* was conducted in 2005 by researchers in Music Psychology, Music Medicine, Cognitive Science, Neuroscience, and Neurophysiology.

The research concluded: “Evaluation of emotional scenes requires integration of information from different modality channels, most frequently from audition and vision. (30) (Spreckelmeyer 160).

In analyzing the results the researchers observed that considerable less effort has been directed toward the integration of emotional information from more abstractly related inputs in movies, commercials or music videos. However they noted:

Though music has been found to be suitable to alter a film’s meaning, no attempt has been made to study the mechanism involved in the integration of emotion conveyed by music and visually complex material. We assume that integration of complex affective scenes and effective auditory input takes place later than integration of emotional faces and voices because the affective content of the former is less salient and thereby requires more semantic analysis before their affective meaning can begin to be evaluated. (31) (Spreckelmeyer 161).

The answer to this puzzle may lie in the field of Gestalt psychology in which the emphasis is on a holistic approach in which the brain has a self-organizing tendency, and in which the whole is conceptualized as greater than the sum of its parts. As Linda Phyllis Austern points out:

One direction for a more cognitive approach came from Gestalt psychology. In the first half of the twentieth century Gestalt psychologists held that our understanding of the world is based on the way we cognitively organize our perceptions into patterns that are unified wholes rather than individual parts. Gestalt principles of visual perception were applied to music, especially to the perception of temporal (rhythmic) patterns. Based on perceptual experiments, it was found that both rhythmic and melodic patterns were perceived as units if they followed Gestalt laws of visual perception. For example, the Gestalt law of proximity held that music notes are grouped close together in auditory space will tend to be perceived as a unit. Also, the law of similarity applied to music. People tend to hear a series of notes with some element in common as a unit. (32) (Austern 339).

Further insight can be had from the writings of John Belton who has commented on Russian formalist theories that view art as a perceptual process that derives its effects from a prolongation of the process of perception. According to Belton’s analysis, the perception of sound is bound up with the perception of the image and though the two are apprehended together, the sound is often perceived through or in terms of the image and consequently acquires a secondary status.

“The viewer perceives and regards the information presented on the sound track differently from that on the image track, though in both cases the viewer, through his/her response to visual and aural cues, plays a decisive role in the realization of the events seen and heard on the screen.” (33) ( Belton in Brady, Leo, *Film Theory & Film Criticism* 387).

This dovetails with Eisenstein’s original quest to find a scientific unit of measurement for determining the emotional effect in art. Eisenstein was familiar with the psychological theories of Freud and the conditioned reflex experiments of Dr. Ivan Pavlov. Eisenstein was able to intellectualize and apply to film the Marxist theories of Dialectical Materialism in which a synthesis would emerge from the conflict between a thesis and its antithesis and this in turn would generate a new synthesis. This led Eisenstein to develop the montage process, in which independent images were assembled together to produce an emotional effect different from the sum of its parts. (34) (Cook 124). In reality Eisenstein did not find a uniform unit of measurement of emotion, however he did develop an intellectual and effective process to elicit it.

The answer to melding concepts garnered from the fields of cognition, perception, and aesthetics may then lie in the dialectical process, where the separate elements combine to create something else different - in this case understanding how prolonging the process of perception with sound and image are apprehended together but perceived separately

The viewer through his responses to the images and sound plays a large part in realizing what is on the screen, and that therefore may be the key. In essence, whatever insights one might get from various disciplines, which may or may not dovetail in their thinking, the theory is not static.

It lies within the film, within the music, and how the viewer processes what he sees and hears and responds psychologically and emotionally to the images and music.

For the filmmaker the key to communicating emotion is in knowing how to best present the images and music to elicit the desired response during the course of the narration. It is no different from when Dr. Pavlov in his famous experiments conditioned dogs to associate the ringing of a bell with the presentation of a morsel of food.

Eventually, Dr. Pavlov could ring the bell and the dog would salivate even though the food had not been presented. Filmmaking can follow a similar process in presenting the images and music. It is the artistic decisions made along the way in the collaborative process of making the movie that will blend together the art and science.

Whether or not vital emotional energies are embodied in the movie will be reflected in the final cut and how it is eventually received by its audience.

#### **IV. APPLICATION**

##### **A. Tools of the Screenwriter and the Composer**

In writing a screenplay, working on the materials involves more than just a procedure of inventing a scenario and putting words into the mouths of characters, and then describing the visual aspect. Fundamental building blocks include plot, dialogue, action, conflict and the interaction of characters. (35) (Heath 42).

In choosing or scoring the music, this is then melded together with melody, harmony and orchestration to produce the building blocks of the work. The fundamental dramatic structure has to have a beginning, middle and end with various episodes of tension, release, departure and resolution. So does the music. The structure usually begins with some sort of incitement or inciting action, escalates to a peak of intensity, and then breaks suddenly into some sort of release or resolution, technically called the denouement. (36) (Timm 8).

The build-up to the climax is slower than the resolution because it sustains audience interest. The climax and resolution provide the emotional release that is satisfying, but of necessity should be short-lived since it is the moment of maximum dramatic tension when the issues of the plot are clearly defined, and the emotions and objectives of the characters are most exposed.

Robert Cohen expressed it thus:

The climax may bring about recognition of higher truths, reversals of fortunes or thinking, and a catharsis and profusion of feelings leading finally to their purification . . . dramatic structure is not merely a creation of the theatre, it is fundamental to life itself. (37) (Cohen 193).

Though not projected to the audience per-se or visible to the untrained eye, the screenplay is broken into acts, each with scenes and sub-scenes and various episodes.

Changes in mood, attitudes, actions, interactions, negotiation status, or understandings provide dramatic variety. Each scene or sub-scene should have its own conflict or obstacle to be overcome, each with its own sub-climax leading up to the final resolution.

The plot is of the utmost importance, since it is the organic unit out of which the characters move to arrive at a dramatic climax. Eric Heath has identified thirty-six dramatic situations; the variations of which it is said form the plots of much of our drama and film. (38) (Heath 44-240).

In film the visual images, the music, dialogue and sound form the main structure of the work. Through them the characters speak or sing the thoughts of the writer, or writers, and move along the plot, perform the actions, and resolve the conflict. Through the course of exposing their feelings they reach out to emotional responses in the audience. However, it is the characters who through their cross intentions create much of the conflict. The process of resolving this helps develop character. There is thus an imperative for the characters to be well-defined. The writer has to develop the characters well, and define well who they are and the relationships between them as the plot unfolds. The director's vision then sets the stage for what the end product will be. Music has the potential to both reflect and augment the visual image and to create additional emotion in the audience.

When music is desired to enhance the action or the narrative flow, it is then the task of the composer to create music that captures the philosophical and psychological nature of the text, and augment the writer's and/or the director's vision. The composer has at his disposal a number of technical tools to use at good advantage.

Skillful use of rhythms and rhythmic variety can alter mood, change heart rate, and pulse rate. Rubato and changes in dynamic levels work well for effect. Some tonal areas are thought to be better than others in conveying emotion.

Skillful use can be made of intervals since some are more consonant than others, while the more dissonant intervals convey tension and unrest. The same can be said for chords and chord progressions that make up the harmonic structure, and through which the listener's mind can be guided through a sequence of emotions.



Skillful use of orchestral color or timbre is also a good device. Delaying cadences can also add to the tension.

Melody is one of the most important devices in film music, and the most accessible to the audience. The use of leitmotiv in particular is important in assigning a particular theme to a particular character, concept, or location.

It is here where the music enters the consciousness of the audience on a deeper but more lasting level. One has to go no further than *Lara's Theme* composed by Maurice Jarre for David Lean's 1965 film *Dr. Zhavago* to illustrate how certain themes can function as a device for emotional recall of the film long after the individual images have faded from memory.

The better the composer is at feeling the emotional content in the film the better he or she will be in conveying emotion to the ultimate audience.

## **B. Sensitivity and Interpretation**

In creating the film and the film music, sensitivity to one's own emotions and feelings is critical at each step of the process. If the screenwriter and director are different people, then the director has to decode something of the emotional intensity that the original writer intended for the text and make it his own. The director then works on the material and through his own imagination and creativity puts into it his own feelings and emotions. Sensitivity is important at the next stage also, that of selecting and/or scoring the music

The intention of the director and the emotional intensity which is thereby embodied in the work then has to be interpreted by the composer and ultimately by the musicians so that the viewer has an emotional response.

Of course this process is simplified immensely if the composer also conducts the orchestra. John Williams is among the contemporary composers who has frequently conducted his own works in such films as the *Star Wars* series.

The overriding factor here is that film is a collaborative art form, and there are several visions that must be combined. These include those of the writer, the director, and the composer of the music. The director has to rely on the cinematographer and the editor. The composer has to rely on the individual musicians, and sometimes an orchestra conductor.

Ultimately it is the vision of the director that will prevail, however for our purposes of examination it is the images and music combined which will ultimately create an emotion in the mind of the individual audience member.

Understanding these concepts can help filmmakers make films of high quality. The goal therefore is to study and examine what has worked for others, and become consciously competent in techniques that will have merit. Sensitivity to the emotional content of the images and music is therefore paramount.

## **V. EXAMPLES**

In order to explore the results of this study, I analyzed two films by Italian filmmaker Federico Fellini (1920-1993), to see how creative vision can be translated into emotion. They are *La Strada*, 1954, and *Juliet of the Spirits*, 1965. These two films both have musical scores by Nino Rota (1911-1979), and are examples of how music and images can combine together to produce an emotional response in the audience. This analysis is presented in the appendix beginning on page 29.

## **VI. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS**

The aesthetic theory of art as synthesized by Bennett Reimer is one which is valuable to anyone studying or creating art. In the field of music it is valuable for composers, conductors, performers and historians, and anyone interested in having the best possible aesthetic experience from music.

Film is composed of a sequence of images that create the narrative flow. The images have the propensity to by-pass language and assess the emotions direct. Music, which is a symbolic language in which emotions are converted into sound, can also bypass conventional spoken language.

Music is mostly made up of symbols in the form of sounds comprising the components of pitch, melody, rhythm, and harmony that are used as tools to project emotion. There is no precise dictionary listing which sounds produce exactly which emotional response, however there is a long history of devices and techniques learned from both study and trial and error as to how best to elicit a psychological response in the mind of the listener. Together, music and images have a synergistic effect in conveying emotion in film.

In evaluating to what degree one can say that narrative film can project emotion through its images, music and other sounds, it is necessary to rely less on science and quantifiable methods and more on qualitative factors coming from intuition and the empirical, and also analysis of that which works well. As with music in which it is said the theory relies within the music, in cinema the theory relies within the films.

Understanding these concepts can help filmmakers make films of high merit and become consciously competent in techniques that produce quality work. It is in that way that one would communicate emotion through images and music in narrative film.

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## **IX. APPENDIX**

### **A. FILM *LA STRADA* (THE ROAD) – b&w – 1954**

#### **1. Credits**

- a. Director – Federico Fellini
- b. Producers – Dino De Laurentis and Carlo Ponti
- c. Screenplay – Federico Fellini, Ennio Flaiano and Tullio Pinelli
- d. Music – Nino Rota
- e. Cinematography – Otello Martelli
- f. Film Editing – Leo Cattazzo
- g. Production Design – Mario Ravasco
- h. Art Direction – Brunello Rondi
- i. Costume Design – Margherita Marinari
- j. Principal Cast
  - (1). Giulietta Masina – Gelsomina, a peasant girl.
  - (2) Anthony Quinn – Zampano, a circus strongman.
  - (3) Richard Basehart – Il Matto (the Fool) an acrobat and clown.

#### **2. Plot Summary**

*La Strada*, which means “The Road,” is an episodic narrative which begins on a beach and ends on a beach. Along the way the characters wonder roads in Italy with no clear focus, however they each do eventually realize change, but the results are tragic. In the opening sequence Zampano buys Gelsomina from her mother for 10,000 Lira as a replacement for her recently deceased sister who served as Zampano’s traveling companion and assistant performer. The two travel the roads of Italy in a cross between a motorcycle and a gypsy wagon, performing in town squares and small circuses.

Zampano has a strongman act in which he ties chains around his chest, and breaks them by muscular action. Zampano mistreats Gelsomina physically, emotionally and sexually. She makes an attempt to escape, but Zampano forces her back.

Along the way Gelsomina meets Il Matto (the Fool) who is performing a high wire act in a town square. Il Matto reappears at a small circus where they are all performing. The major conflict arises when Il Matto taunts Zampano, and because of the ensuing fight which they have, they are all dismissed from the circus.

While Zampano is womanizing elsewhere, Il Matto tries to get Gelsomina to leave, and when she refuses, Il Matto convinces Gelsomina that her true place is with Zampano, and that staying with him gives meaning to her life. This is a turning point in Gelsomina who realizes that she is fond of Zampano.

As Zampano and Gelsomina are once again traveling on a road, they encounter Il Matto whose car has a flat tire. Zampano attacks Il Matto who amid the ensuing fight falls to the ground dead. Zampano then shoves Il Matto and his car down a ravine. Gelsomina is distraught, and will neither eat nor venture out of the wagon for ten days. It is at this point that Zampano begins to realize that he genuinely cares for Gelsomina, and he tries to tend to her. However, Gelsomina's immediate reaction goes from an appearance of recovery to a relapse of depression, crying out, "the Fool is dead" Unable to take the stress, Zampano waits for her to go to sleep and abandons Gelsomina on the side of the road.

About five years later Zampano is walking on a road and hears a housewife singing Gelsomina's song. He questions the housewife and learns that Gelsomina had wandered into that town, was cared for by the housewife's family, and has since died.

That night Zampano goes into an uncontrollable rage, and collapses on the beach in a very highly emotional scene of self discovery, and we at that point see the profound change in Zampano as in his remorse and guilt he realizes how much he cared for Gelsomina.

### **3. Cinematography and General Features**

#### **a. Style**

*La Strada* is stylistically a blending of Italian neo-realism and expressionism. This dictates many of the features of the production. Black and White film is used. This allows it to function well within its limitations of Black and White. Filming is done in dingy locations and there is no pretty scenery and the landscape is bleak. The costumes are shabby, and this all adds to the image of the dismal day-to-day existence of the protagonists.

#### **b. Technical aspects**

Fellini who many times uses surrealistic and/or expressionistic technical effects in his films, allows *La Strada* to progress in a series of episodes in linear narrative style.

He does however like parades and processions, and in *La Strada* there are religious procession and a parade leading up to the final circus scene. Although there are some shots looking up, and some crane shots looking down, the camera is for the most part at eye level. What is used to good advantage is camera movement, which in several scenes moves backward from the action to create dramatic effect. In addition, framing is also used effectively, with several scenes composed in deep focus with characters carefully placed as if in a painting.

Though shot mostly outdoors, lighting is also used effectively in the interior scenes to create mood. In the final sequences lighting is used very well in a nighttime shot outside a building to create limitations to the space, and to highlight the converging railroad tracks which appear to lead to the beach where the last scene is shot.

### c. Symbolism

As with other Fellini films, *La Strada* has layers of symbolism. The major functional symbol is the ever present **road**, over which Zampano and Gelsomina are constantly moving. Other characters are also moving over roads, and a religious procession also moves on one. The religious procession itself is laden with symbolism, as are the sounds of church bells which can be heard in several scenes.

There seems to be a symbolic connection between water and Gelsomina, the earth and Zampano, and Il Matto, to the air. Surely the first time we see him, he is walking a high wire, but there are other things suspended in the air, such as the crucifix in the procession, and the trapeze artist in the final circus scene. Gelsomina's connection to the water is also not complete, since when she tries to wash in a village square the spigot runs dry, while it is Zampano who wades into the sea in the final scene as an act of purification. Another way of looking at this might be to assume that the water acts as purification and catharsis, and that while several things are suspended between earth and sky, that it is Zampano who finally comes down to earth, so to speak, when he falls down on the sand in intense self awareness in the final scene.

Another potent symbol is the circus, which appears in other Fellini films. Fire is also used, and may be a metaphor for the soul.

Moreover, I view the chains, which Zampano breaks several times in performances, as symbolic of Zampano's subconscious desire to not be tied down emotionally, and that is why his realization of his true feelings for Gelsomina is so difficult on him at the end.

**d. Editing**

The editing is effective. It used mostly the invisible Hollywood style, and is linear. Of particular note is in the final sequence on the beach in which Zampano falls to the ground, and the cut to his face is so seamless that it is almost impossible to detect that it was edited.

**f. Sound**

The sound is the weak part of the film. The dubbing is not well done, and many times the visuals were not synchronized to the sound. Since two of the principal actors are American, their lines were dubbed in to Italian. There were also problems with the musical instruments, the drums in particular, in that the visual movement did not match the aural pulsations.

These problems were however, counterbalanced with some good aspects in the sound area. The ambient sounds were for the most part good. These included background noises such as birds, motorcycles, etc. There was also good use made in several scenes of church bells ringing in the distance.

**g. Music**

The best part of the sound was the Nino Rota music, in particular the wedding scene, and the famous theme which Matto teaches Gelsomina. The theme has a very simple but plaintive melodic line, and the harmonic structure is uncomplicated, but in a minor key tonality for high emotional impact. This music is used both diegetic, (within the scene), and non diegetic, (not part of the action.) It is also used very effectively to highlight the emotional impact of the final scene. Rota has a strong sense of melodic line, and the music for *La Strada*, as did some of Rota's other music for the *Godfather* and *Romeo and Juliet* became very popular and crossed over into other media.

**4. Awards - *La Strada* received the first Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film**

## **B. FILM - *JULIET OF THE SPIRITS (GIULIETTA DEGLI SPIRITI)* – 1965**

### **1. Credits**

- a. Director – Federico Fellini
- b. Producer – Angelo Rizzoli
- c. Screenplay – Federico Fellini, Ennio Flaiano, Tullio Pomelli, Bernallo Rondi
- d. Music – Nino Rota and Eugene Walter
- e. Cinematography – Gianni di Venanzo
- f. Film editing – Ruggero Mastrolanni
- g. Main Cast
  - (1) Giulietta Masina – Giulietta Boldrini
  - (2) Suzy/Iris/Fanny – Sandra Milo
  - (3) Giulietta's Husband Giorgio – Mario Pisu
  - (4) Valentina – Valentina Cortese
  - (5) Pijma – Valeska Gert

### **2. Plot Summary**

Juliet is a middle aged, upper middle class housewife living a rather prosaic but comfortable life. She is currently undergoing a crisis in her marriage and her life. She lives in a well ordered house by the ocean. A deeply spiritual and superstitious person, she is naïve, and has low self esteem, based on her comparison of herself with her more glamorous mother and sisters.

Juliet suspects that her husband Giorgio is having an affair. Her sister gets her to have a private investigator confirm the fact. She visits a psychic who advises her to act out her sexual fantasies. Susy, a beautiful but promiscuous neighbor arranges a brief affair for Juliet. Guilt feelings begin to crop up, and she is remorseful.

Juliet catches her husband Giorgio talking to another woman on the telephone. One night he calls out the name of his mistress while dreaming, and it sets off an emotional crisis in Juliet. She begins to have fantastic visions with strong religious overtones. The visions accuse and terrorize her. As the crisis ebbs, Juliet explores her subconscious, and gets in touch with her desires. Gradually she gains more independence. She has a liberating revelation, and realizes that she would be better off without her husband and gathers up the strength to possibly leave him. He leaves her first and goes off on a trip with his mistress, and Juliet feels relieved. She banishes her visions, and realizes that she has become emotionally emancipated.

### **3. Cinematography and General Features**

#### **a. Style**

Though shot in color, stylistically Fellini pays homage to film noir with a lot of shadows and lighting effects. Basically the style is a mixture of expressionism and surrealism. The linear narration is punctuated with flashbacks and the fantasy visions.

#### **b. Technical Aspects**

There are tracking shots, and close ups with small spots punctuating Juliet's eyes. There was very imaginative use of off center framing, and some larger than life full framing. There were also several instances of using the sets to alter the perspective.

#### **c. Symbolism**

There was very heavy use of symbolism that included: religious iconography; various animals such as cats and peacocks; and sexual symbolism using apples, shakes, breasts, and even a slide from Susie's bedroom into a pool that was suggestive of a female organ. Thunder storms were also used to heighten mood. True to form, Fellini also used his favorite devices of circuses and processions.

#### **d. Editing**

The editing was smooth and included numerous instances of time dislocation due to the flashbacks and visions; however in the non fantasy scenes it was seamless.

#### **e. Sound**

Background noises also heightened the mood, although the cricket noises tended to be overdone. Other background sounds included barking dogs, church bells, birds chirping, owls hooting, peacocks squawking, and motor sounds from an electric fan. There were several instances of the dubbing not matching lip movements.

#### **f. Music**

The through composed musical score by Nino Rota and Eugene Walter was very effective in creating mood, and in projecting emotion. It used a variety of up tempo rhythmic devices such as march tempos, waltzes, and jazz syncopation. The composers resisted the temptation to use minor keys and diminished chord tonalities, and instead used major key tonalities punctuated with dissonances based on seconds, sevenths and sixths. As in all of Roto's music the melodic lines were strong.



There was also good use of the mid century experimental music sounds of atonality mixed with chromaticism, however the resolutions always seemed to resolve to a major key sound. There was a very good song-without-words sequence at Susie's party. That music was diegetic. The only other instance of diegetic music was when a visitor played the main theme on a guitar; otherwise all the rest of the music was non-diegetic.

There was also an interesting jazz improvisation used as a leitmotif for Juliet. At times the music was superimposed over the other ambient sounds. Generally, the music complimented the symbolism very well, and that added to the emotional impact.

### **C. Emotional Impact**

I chose *La Strada* and *Juliet of the Spirits* for this project because of their emotional impact. It was these vital energies which I felt in both *La Strada* and *Juliet of the Spirits*, and which led to their choice for this report. In both films a number of factors have come together to form these energies; namely, the screenplay, the acting, the direction, the cinematography, the editing, the costumes, the settings, and in particular the music.

The music in particular has the capability for functioning in the capacity of emotional recall, allowing one to recall the complex emotions of the film whenever hearing just the music alone.

This is why works like these, in which these things have been embodied in the tout ensemble and can have such an impact on its audience. However, there is nothing in this to suggest that when viewing them that the viewer is expected to feel the exact same feelings or emotions that Fellini had in creating it, or Giulietta Masina had in performing Gelsomina or Juliet, or Anthony Quinn had in performing Zampano and in particular his highly emotional final scene. What is expected though, from an aesthetic experience standpoint is that the viewer will have his or her own emotional experience and feelings at the same level or intensity that Fellini et al had when they embodied their own feelings and emotions on film.

To that end, in conclusion, I propose that as the director of the film Fellini succeeded in creating works which captures emotional vital energies, and that is the secret to the universal appeal of *La Strada* and *Juliet of the Spirits*.

#### **D. Commentary**

Federico Fellini has earned his place among the great film auteurs. In a report written following a series of long interviews with Fellini, James Silke noted the autobiographical nature of many of Fellini's films.

He also quoted Fellini's concept of music in film.

I like music when I work; it helps because it is another piece of the body of the picture. The music is a big help, always, because it puts you in a strange dimension in which your fantasy stimulates you. (39) (Silke 10-11).

It seems that it is just because of the autobiographical nature of Fellini's work that he is able to embody so much a part of his own feelings in his work. That is why when I look at a Fellini film I have such an emotional response, and I am certain that is why Fellini's films work so well.

Fellini has been fortunate to have been able to work with Nino Rota. Rota was classically trained at the conservatory of Santa Cecilia, and he also trained as a composer. He has scored a number of other films, most notably *The Godfather* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Rota has a good melodic sense, and makes his music accessible.

Building on some of the work of Joseph Campbell in relating successful fiction to archetypes of mythology, the mythic structure of *La Strada* can be seen in relation to what is called a "Hero's Journey." *Juliet of the Spirits* can also be analyzed along the same lines. Both films build on archetypes and show them both in relation to the ordinary world, and the special world of their character's journeys. It is these mythic factors which also appeal on a subconscious level.

#### **E. Fellini's Life and Work**

Prolific and influential director Federico Fellini (1920-1993) was married to Giulietta Masina (1921-1994) who starred in several of his films. His early period was influenced by Italian neo-realism; however his later period was influenced by Swiss Psychiatrist Carl Jung's theories of the role of the archetype in the collective unconscious.

Four of Fellini's films won the Oscar for the best foreign film. They are *La Strada*, 1954; *8 ½*, 1963; *Notti di Cabiria*, 1957; and *Amarcord* in 1973.

#### **F. Nino Rota's Life and Work**

Also extremely prolific as a film composer, Nino Rota (1911-1979) wrote the music for most of Fellini's films, including *La Strada* and *Juliet of the Spirits*. He is best known for composing the music for the three Francis Ford Coppola *Godfather* films, and Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*. Classically trained at the Conservatory of Santa Cecilia, Rota wrote ten operas, five ballets and many orchestral works that stand on their own.

## **X VITA**

Peter Edward Hagan III was born in New Orleans and grew up in the adjacent suburb of Metairie. He has Bachelor of Commercial Science and Master of Liberal Arts Degrees from Tulane University. While at Tulane Mr. Hagan served as Student Body President of University College, was the first recipient of the prestigious Joseph Merrick Jones Memorial Award, and was elected to membership in Omicron Delta Kappa, Alpha Sigma Lambda and Phi Alpha Theta Honorary Societies. At the University of New Orleans he served as Secretary of the Music Service and Advisory Association, and was a member of Alpha Theta Epsilon, Phi Beta Delta and Omicron Delta Kappa Honorary Societies.

Mr. Hagan is Vice President of the Louisiana Council for Music and Performing Arts in which capacity he previously served as Treasurer of the State of Louisiana Arts Council. He is a Lay Eucharistic Minister at St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Metairie, and has been invested as a Chevalier by the Sovereign Military Order of the Temple of Jerusalem (Knights Templar) with the rank of Knight Commander. He has previously served as President of both the Jeunesse d'Orleans Chapter of the Louisiana Council for Music and Performing Arts, and the Louisiana Chapter of the American Society of Training and Development.

At the University of New Orleans Mr. Hagan studied Film Theory with Dr. John McGowan-Hartmann and Dr. Wayne Schuth, Music Theory and Composition with Dr. Jerry Sieg, Aesthetics of Music with Dr. David Nelson, Aesthetics of Drama with David Hoover, Form and Idea in Media with Dr. Kevin Graves, Playwriting with Dr. Stewart Stelly, and Screenwriting with Michelle Benoit and Henry Griffin. He also studied Piano with Dr. Robin Holtz Williams, and Voice with Dr. Raquel Cortina, Dr. Valerie Jones Francis, and Karl Matherne.