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Synch Holes and Patchwork in Early Feature-Film Scores

ERIC DIENSTFREY

Abstract. The aesthetics of early feature-film scores were shaped by narrational problems introduced by multi-reel features and their longer durations. Using *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*, I show how stylistic devices like silences and musical punctuation were used to address the coherence and pacing of multi-reel storytelling.

During the fourth reel of Paramount's *The Patchwork Girl of Oz* (1914) filmgoers are briefly introduced to the Lonesome Zoop, an ape-like beast who chases unsuspecting passersby through the storybook land's vast countryside. The scene likely elicits humor—perhaps the fruits of its unremarkable acting and costumes—though the exact reason for its inclusion in the film remains unclear. The mythical beast has no coherent connection to the film's protagonists and their goals, nor does it appear in L. Frank Baum's source novel.¹ As a result, the Zoop chase becomes one of several puzzling moments from *Patchwork Girl's* five-reel narrative, and it therefore can help to illustrate two often-overlooked components of early feature-film aesthetics.

First, the scene is an example of story padding, an occurrence somewhat endemic to early multi-reel filmmaking. Paramount Pictures required all films on its newly formed national distribution program to be between four and six reels in length, and by padding *Patchwork Girl* with such tangents as a Zoop chase, its filmmakers could more easily expand the plot to the contractually obligated duration of around 5,000 feet.²

Second, and more significant to this article, the scene exemplifies synchronization

problems inherent to early motion picture scoring. As was typical of film music written during the late 1910s and throughout the 1920s, composers would indicate the visual events where each music cue was to begin and end. Similarly, tempo markings and the elimination of “bad page turns” would help to ensure that each cue could synchronize with the film with as few problems as possible for the musicians.³ Written in 1914 by first-time film composer Louis F. Gottschalk, the score for *Patchwork Girl* lacks this degree of precision. The music cue that underscores the Zoop's entrance consists of four measures of 4/4 and accompanies about 80 seconds of screen time.⁴ Gottschalk instructs the performers to begin playing at the title card “Lonesome Zoop” and to continue “twice thru (or more ad lib.)” Further, the cue includes only a brief tempo indication: “Slow.” While a very slow tempo would likely create a foreboding tone consistent with the Zoop's creep toward the first passerby, a slightly faster interpretation of “slow” might allow for each beat of the music to align with the movements of the Zoop and to create a moment of pantomime. For film music scholars tracing the development of sound-image congruence and the formation of codified accompaniment practices, there are conse-

quential differences between these two interpretations. Yet it remains unclear as to which “slow” tempo would be the more accurate reflection of Gottschalk’s intentions, let alone the better estimation of how musicians in 1914 would have played these four measures.

Such aesthetic questions are the focus of this article. Like other formal components of cinema, film scoring during the early 1910s was a period that saw both experimentation and systemization regarding certain stylistic techniques. I argue that Gottschalk’s original score to *The Patchwork Girl of Oz* serves as a valuable reflection of the aesthetic norms of musical accompaniment that were emerging during this early period of filmmaking. Further, I argue that these norms were not simply emerging by chance, but were being shaped by the narrative strategies pertaining to the rise of the multi-reel feature—strategies that concerned both strengthening narrative cohesion across longer film durations, and reinforcing the narrational functions of such structural elements as “incidents” and “padding.”

This article also addresses the inherent difficulties of observing aesthetic tendencies in early feature-film scores. As the Zoop’s entrance music demonstrates, when faced with historiographic quandaries of a stylistic nature, scholars seem likely to substitute the question of “which is accurate?” with historically informed heuristics that are more accessible and therefore easier to answer, such as “which *sounds* accurate?” or “which sounds less strange?” These substitutions, however, have the potential to misdirect scholars when reconstructing past events. For instance, those unfamiliar with the practice of pantomime in 1914 film music might conclude that a more accurate sounding synchronization would adhere to a slower tempo and would avoid the tradition’s unique sound-image relations.⁵ Similarly, even those who are familiar with pantomime practices in 1914 would still need to deter-

mine how they might have sounded to Gottschalk if they were applied to a scene like the Zoop’s introduction.⁶

In 1979 film historian Charles Musser recounted a similar problem concerning reconstruction heuristics when analyzing the editing style of Edwin S. Porter’s *The Life of an American Fireman* (1903).⁷ Earlier historians had concluded that the film looked accurate if it featured shot/reverse-shot editing, and as a result they reconstructed the film to include an oscillation between interior and exterior views of the fireman’s climactic rescue. Musser’s research contradicted these edits. He found that the conventions of continuity editing were neither in place nor conceived of by filmmakers in 1903, and that the film actually presented the same rescue twice in its entirety and in two consecutive long takes: the first from inside the burning house, and the second from outside the house. Both the Zoop’s introduction and the fireman’s rescue suggest that using “which seems accurate?” as a viable heuristic for early cinema reconstruction can be problematic if aesthetic histories of the medium are mischaracterized or incomplete.

Scholars have helped to rectify this problem by dedicating considerable attention to the period of cinema prior to 1915, for it was arguably during these years leading up to the formation of the Classical Hollywood industry that the formal experiments in single- and multi-reel cinema gave way to stylistic conventions like deep staging and continuity editing.⁸ In particular, historians like Gillian B. Anderson and Martin Marks have begun to investigate the origins of musical accompaniment practices that, over time, would become the Classical Hollywood film score. Anderson, for instance, has used Hugo Riesenfeld’s musical arrangement for Cecil B. DeMille’s *Carmen* (1914) to reveal the extent to which early feature-film accompaniments could have “bizarre” orchestrations and imprecise instructions for how

conductors should synchronize the music to the picture.⁹ Additionally, Marks' study of musical accompaniment between 1910 to 1914 has pointed to two important generative mechanisms that shaped the development of film music style: a) the trade press's commencement of "best practice" columns for musical and sound-effect accompaniment, such as Clarence E. Sinn's "Music for the Picture" and Clyde Martin's "Playing for the Pictures;" and b) the unique experiments of Kalem, All-Star and other producers in commissioning and distributing original scores for a select number of releases.¹⁰

Such research has led scholars like Rick Altman to construct new aesthetic histories of early film music, although in several instances these histories remain incomplete. Altman argues that the 1910s should be divided into a period of experimentation followed by a period of standardization.¹¹ Accordingly, both "best practice" discourse and experiments in film score composition in the early 1910s converged with the release of D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), a film with such a well-regarded score by Joseph Carl Briel that it would become a significant turning-point in establishing a new period of standards and practices for composers and musicians. While Altman is perhaps accurate to divide the 1910s into two overarching periods, his treatment of *The Birth of a Nation* as the turning point in film music history is debatable. The narrative requires downplaying or disregarding the influence of many other accompaniments written before 1915.¹² Similarly, the salience of Briel's score and its perceived importance among historians is likely exaggerated by the small percentage of film scores from the early 1910s that have been adequately reconstructed and made available for analysis.

Perhaps to address these archival limitations, Altman also suggests that a distillation of the trade press's "best practice" columns can offer insight into the norms of

accompaniment and aesthetic tendencies of the early 1910s.¹³ Featuring recommendations like "Only with the best known folk or popular songs should music be matched to the image by title or lyrics" and "Music should concentrate attention on the main lines of the story, not the details," Altman's list of tendencies nonetheless manifests two key limitations. His analysis is not a description of what the music actually sounded like, but instead a description of what the trade press's ideal musical accompaniment might have sounded like. Additionally, Altman's distillation is less a summary of the music's formal characteristics as a whole and more an account of only its semantic and expressive congruence with respect to the image. As the Zoop scene illustrates, this attendance to only the norms of sound-image congruence neglects how a single music cue might offer multiple alignments, and thus multiple meanings, when played alongside a moving image.

In order to more effectively observe the stylistic patterns in film accompaniment during the early 1910s, this article avoids presenting an analysis of *Patchwork Girl's* semantic and expressive congruence. I instead discuss the film's unique place in cinema's industrial history, after which I analyze Gottschalk's overlooked score within contexts that concern the problems of synchronization and the ways filmmakers at the time conceived of music's structural functions. My analysis reveals two prominent stylistic devices repeated throughout the accompaniment: patterned silences and the punctuations of dramatic "incidents." Practitioner manuals and trade press discourse indicate that these stylistic decisions were likely common to film music during the early 1910s. More significantly, the sounds of these devices may seem strange to those who are familiar with later film music conventions, and as a result these sounds may disrupt current heuristics used during score reconstructions.

The story of *Patchwork Girl* concerns Unc Nunkie, Margolotte, and Danx, three Oz inhabitants who turn to stone when “Scraps,” the clumsy girl made of patchwork fabric, accidentally spills petrification potion onto their heads. In order to restore life to these characters, Ojo, Jesseva, Dr. Pipt, and “Scraps” all journey to find three rare ingredients—water from a dark well, three hairs from the tail of the Woozy beast, and a six-leaved clover—which when mixed together can create an antidote for petrification. The film was the first of several five-reel features adapted by L. Frank Baum’s Oz Film Manufacturing Company from his series of children’s novels.¹⁴ Baum was perhaps able to secure a prestigious distribution deal with Paramount due to the popularity of these novels and to the popularity of his 1913 musical *The Tik Tok Man of Oz*.¹⁵ Featuring songs composed by Gottschalk, the music from the show was a key selling point¹⁶ and it likely propelled the composer to become the Vice President of Oz Film with the additional responsibility of writing original scores for each of the company’s releases.¹⁷ At the time, *Patchwork Girl* was the only children’s comedy distributed through Paramount’s otherwise serious program of “quality” pictures, which included star-vehicles for Mary Pickford and John Barrymore as well as works from notable producers like Jesse L. Lasky.¹⁸ Gottschalk’s scores might then have been a means to help bring greater distinction to the relatively lighter fare produced by Oz Film.¹⁹

Patchwork Girl was not the first time Baum would experiment with providing original music for his motion pictures. In 1908 the author produced a two-hour²⁰ multimedia program titled *The Fairylogue and Radio-Plays* with the assistance of the Selig Polyscope Company of Chicago.²¹ Based upon his popular children’s stories—including *Ozma of Oz* (1907) and *John Dough and the Cherub* (1906)²²—the program included live stage pantomime,²³ a combination of lantern slides

and hand-colored motion pictures,²⁴ and an original score composed by songwriter Nathaniel D. Mann, who had worked with Baum previously on the 1902 stage adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz*.²⁵ Notably, *Fairylogue’s* premiere in Grand Rapids, Michigan on September 24, 1908²⁶ would predate the November 17th Paris premiere of Camille Saint-Saëns’s score for *L’Assassinat du duc de Guise* (1908) by several weeks,²⁷ making this unique venture between Baum, Selig, and Mann among the first documented instances of a non-compilation musical accompaniment written for the cinema. However, neither Mann’s accompaniment nor Selig’s films were as well-received as was *duc de Guise*. Shortly after its December run in New York City, *The Fairylogue and Radio-Plays* would end its national tour prematurely due to a sizable budget and insufficient ticket sales.²⁸ The debt amounted from this multimedia experiment—financed almost entirely by Baum himself—would cause the author to offer Selig the rights to several of his children’s novels.²⁹ He eventually declared bankruptcy in 1911.³⁰

In many ways Baum’s second experiment with a film and music program—this time with the aid of Gottschalk and Paramount—would appear to have had a similarly short and unsuccessful trajectory. *The Patchwork Girl of Oz* was released on September 28th 1914,³¹ accompanied by months of advertising in *Moving Picture World*—including its placement on the cover of the October 3rd issue.³² Though robust, the promotional campaign would produce only minimal results, for Paramount would soon drop Oz Film from their national program presumably due to *Patchwork Girl’s* poor theatrical run.³³ That December, Baum would find distribution for his fourth feature, *The Last Egyptian* (1914), with the independent Alliance Programme,³⁴ though this would appear to be the last multi-reel feature produced by the Oz Film Manufacturing

Company. Within a year Gottschalk would leave Baum's financially troubled studio to compose and arrange original accompaniments for producer Thomas Ince of Triangle Films and for Griffith's *Broken Blossoms* (1919) and *Orphans of the Storm* (1921).³⁵

Surviving documents from *Patchwork Girl's* 1914 theatrical release includes a 21-page piano score from Gottschalk's original accompaniment, which resides in the Tams-Witmark Collection at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Mills Music Library. In addition, a 35mm print of the film, with all but a few hundred feet of film still intact, is housed at the Library of Congress. Each time-code in this paper refers to the film's 2001 DVD release, which was made from the LoC print and which assumes an eighteen frames-per-second projection speed typical of comedic motion pictures from the 1910s.³⁶ A combined analysis of the score and film reveals several ambiguous synchronization instructions that prevent a full and unobjectionable reconstruction of the film's musical accompaniment. However, not every page is afflicted by these problematic notations. There are many short cues with clearly marked visual synch points and that contain repetitions and "vamps" that help the music last for the appropriate amount of screen time. For instance, *Patchwork Girl's* thirteenth cue is instructed to begin when the rectangularly shaped Woozy beast "enters scene from his cave" (p11, tc: 25m 15s), and is instructed to repeat "till Title about 3 hairs from the End of his tail, etc" (p11, tc: 26m 28s). The duration between each visual action indicates about 73 seconds of screen time. The cue itself is 16 measures of "molto giocoso," a duration of about fifteen seconds of music, which suggests that this cue would likely play a total of five times.

There are also several cues that form only reasonably adequate synchronizations with the image, timings that could easily be tweaked by the musicians should either

the rehearsal or the first performance raise eyebrows in the orchestra pit. *Patchwork Girl's* fourth cue, for example, is instructed to begin at the title card that mentions "Jesseva and Danx" (p4, tc: 5m 53s), and is instructed to play "till well scene 2nd time" (p4, tc: 6m 45s). The music that accompanies this romantic courtship of the two young lovers is a 32-measure waltz without any tempo marking. If we were to assume a neutral speed slightly slower than one measure-per-second, the cue would last for about 40 seconds, roughly ten seconds shy of the allotted screen time. In order to more adequately align the cue to the image, the musicians might take the waltz at a slightly slower tempo, add a ritardando during the final measures, and even repeat the cadence in the final four measures to create a more emphatic conclusion.

While these two types of cues occur with some frequency in *Patchwork Girl's* score, the longer sections of music require a greater degree of analytic investigation. The score's sixth cue, for example, is instructed to begin just after the mule exits the frame, when "Margolotte sews the Patchwork Girl" for the last time (p6, tc: 8m 39s), and is instructed to play "till Margolotte leans Patchwork Girl against the table in Dr. Pipt's laboratory" (p9). Problematically, this table leaning action happens twice during the segment. It first occurs as Margolotte carries Scraps down the stairs and places her on a table in the background (tc: 11m 01s). It next occurs when Margolotte places Scraps next to a table in the foreground after Ojo and Unc Nunkie enter the laboratory (tc: 12m 31s).

Due to its primacy, we might expect the first of these two actions to be the correct visual cue, although the duration of the music suggests otherwise. The entire cue consists of 232 measures without any tempo marking, and the screen time between the cue's beginning and the second table leaning is around 232 seconds. If we were to assume a pace of

about one measure-per-second, this would allow for a little less than four minutes of music and would therefore align the music with this second table leaning with near precision.

SCORE

232 measures

at one measure-per-second

= 3m 52s of music

FILM

time code: 8m 39s to 12m 31s (second table leaning)

= 3m 52s of screen time

However, there are several black and blue pencil markings written directly onto the archival score which have crossed out 32 measures from the cue's B section (p8). While it is possible that these 32 measures were removed in order to accommodate a damaged piece of film that was subsequently cut from the motion picture, the pencil markings might suggest that earlier musicians felt that the first of the two table leanings was the correct visual cue. With the built-in repeat and a slightly faster tempo, the removal of these 32 measures (64 in total) could then allow the cue to last for roughly two minutes and 30 seconds, which would in turn time the cue to the first table leaning almost perfectly.

SCORE

168 measures (232 - 32x2)

at slightly faster than one measure-per-second

= ~2m 30s of music

FILM

time code: 8m 39s to 11m 01s (first table leaning)

= 2m 20s of screen time

There is also the possibility that the decision to remove these 32 measures had less to do with the synchronization of the cue's endpoint, and more to do with the placement of

one of the cue's midpoints. At the beginning of the cue's D section, 122 measures into the piece, the music transitions into a 2/4 rendition of the popular children's song, "The More We Get Together" (p9). The score does not contain any notations that might indicate with which visual action this folk song is intended to align, yet a sudden and salient shift in musical style might indicate that the folk song is nonetheless intended to correspond to an appropriate visual action. If this were the case, then a likely action would be the long shot depicting Ojo and Unc Nunkie dancing and singing with a mule and with other munchkins outside Dr. Pipt's home (tc: 10m 08s to 10m 22s). The fifteen-second shot could align with the cue's D section without too much difficulty if the performers were to find a way to play these sixteen measures slightly earlier in the piece. The removal of 32 measures would accomplish such a task, and might therefore suggest that musicians did in fact attempt to re-align "The More We Get Together" with the image of the munchkins and the mule singing and dancing together.

While there is no direct evidence that the sixth cue's D section was specifically intended to accompany the dancing munchkins, this entire cue is itself evidence that questions of music's appropriate or expressive relationship to the image can become problematic inquiries if the score's synchronization points are not clear. It is not difficult to willfully align "The More We Get Together" to the dancing munchkins in order to create sound-image congruence, but heuristically doing so because it "sounds accurate" ignores the possibility that musical accompaniment in 1914 might actually sound strange. My focus on other structural attributes of the score avoids these pitfalls of congruence-centered analyses, and in turn reveals two prominent stylistic devices that repeat throughout the duration of the accompaniment.

First, there are clear patterns involving the incorporation of prolonged and structured

silences. Eighteen moments of silence are written directly into *Patchwork Girl's* score, twelve of which are more than 30 seconds in length. Several of these musical breaks provide an accent for small moments of dramatic action, but Gottschalk seems to structure his use of silences in order to create formal rhymes and even a sense of closure through their repetition. For instance, there is a pattern of prolonged silences for the married couple Margolotte and Dr. Pipt. Each time we see Margolotte sewing (e.g., p4–5, tc: 6m 48s and p5–6, tc: 8m 19s), and each time we see Dr. Pipt reading (p9, tc: 20m 01s and p19, tc: 46m 57s), the music stops entirely as if to suggest that these repeated and somewhat mundane actions are significant enough to the narration that they warrant their own system of silences.

Additionally, prolonged silences help to create formal rhymes for scenes involving transformations to and from petrified states. This first occurs during the second reel just after Scraps accidentally spills the petrification potion onto Unc Nunkie, Margolotte, and Danx (p9, tc: 18m 30s³⁷). This salient break in music then repeats during the final reel just before Dr. Pipt pours the petrification antidote onto the three motionless victims (p21, tc: 65m 35s). The similarity between the placement of silences in these two scenes not only provides stylistic unity across several reels of film, but by drawing a sonic link between the potion's crisis and the antidote's solution, the rhyming silences can then also accent the sense of closure already present in the film's finale.

While it is possible that Gottschalk's score is unique, there is evidence in the period's critical discourse to suggest that the use of silences were relatively widespread during the early 1910s. Altman's distillation of the period's accompaniment ideals indicate that "best practice" columnists like Sinn and Martin repeatedly instructed performers to provide uninterrupted music throughout

each film.³⁸ The need for these critics to keep presenting this argument as a weekly refrain would then suggest that the practice of providing continuous music was not a foregone conclusion at the time. A 1913 column in *Exhibitor's Times*, for instance, featured a quote from a theater manager who stopped the musical accompaniment during a film when he felt music was inappropriate.

I am willing to pay the wages of any musician to rest himself in the orchestra pit and be ready to play his part, even if this part should not consume five minutes of the entire show. I do not call for music all the time, as I believe certain scenes would create a better impression on the audience if minus music.³⁹

Sinn himself would at times contradict this need for constant music as early as 1910, when in his recommended cue sheet for Griffith's *The Golden Supper* (1910) he advises musicians to include a "Short pause" between the scarf dance and the moment when Lionel sees Camilla.⁴⁰ Additionally, when responding to a letter in 1911 Sinn would write that "Sometimes a distinct pause is effective," though he would also argue that if these pauses were too frequent they might—somewhat serendipitously—"give your work an incomplete and 'patch-work' effect, which is not satisfactory."⁴¹ Sinn's interest in silences would become even more pronounced by 1914, writing that the increasing number of quality films with longer durations led him to believe that there were many instances where "music could be introduced with great effect in certain scenes and situations only, remaining silent at other times the same as in the spoken drama."⁴²

By as late as the end of the decade these silences were now given prominent placement in several musical accompaniment manuals. Despite Erno Rapée's morbid recommendation that musicians never stop providing musical accompaniment—even if

the nitrate film were to explode in the projection booth⁴³—, Edith Lang and George West would argue that in certain scenes involving death “*absolute silence* is the only adequate description, dramatically, pictorially and musically.”⁴⁴ George W. Beynon would call for an even more widespread use of silence and suggest that the device was appropriate for many types of scenes depicting suspense, disdain, reverence and prayer, and inner-thought.⁴⁵ He would also go so far as to argue that these silences should form patterns across a film, citing Carli Elinor’s effective use of structured musical breaks each time we see the portrait of the Kaiser in Griffith’s *Hearts of the World* (1918).⁴⁶

In terms of actual practice, Gillian B. Anderson has noted in detail that the use of silence “was a regular feature of accompaniments for films by Griffith and other directors” after 1915, as exemplified by Victor Herbert’s score for *The Fall of a Nation* (1916), Elinore’s score for *The Eyes of the World* (1917), and most notably Breil’s score for Griffith’s *Intolerance* (1916).⁴⁷ Anderson even suggests the possibility that the many silences in *Intolerance*—like the silences in *Patchwork Girl* two years prior—were not used just to create an emotional effect but were perhaps structured to tie together thematically linked scenes, such as the legal proceedings of ancient Babylon and of modern-day America.⁴⁸

Further, there is reason to suspect that the growing frequency of this musical device during the 1910s was more common to—and perhaps corresponds to the emergence of—longer, multi-reel motion pictures. Shorter film narratives may not have warranted as many breaks in music, whereas films that were five-reels or more may have approached silences differently as a way to create formal unity across a larger musical composition. Marks seems to have noticed this trend in his comparison of the scores written by Walter C. Simon for Kalem’s one- to three-reel features

and the scores by Manuel Klein for All-Star’s five- to seven-reel features. Of the seven Klein scores residing in the Library of Congress, Marks notes that only one “comes close to being long enough to accompany a feature lasting an hour or more,” suggesting that like Gottschalk and Elinor, Klein also used prolonged silences with considerable frequency.⁴⁹

Second, in addition to prolonged and structured silences, there are also clear patterns involving which kinds of narrational elements receive musical punctuation. At several points in the score Gottschalk deploys such stylistic devices as key changes, shifts in musical genre, and the start of a new cue in order to help clarify for filmgoers either the beginnings of new narrative sequences or significant changes in setting. For example, when the film cuts from a) Ojo and Unc Nunkie leaving their home, to b) Dr. Pipt stirring chemicals in his laboratory (tc: 4m 29s), the music accents this change in setting and sequence by modulating from a) a slow waltz in D major to b) a faster A major melody of sixteenth notes in 6/8 time (p3). These changes in key, tempo, and style all function to punctuate Dr. Pipt’s introduction and perhaps help to clarify that Dr. Pipt is in a different location from Ojo and Unc Nunkie. The idea of using music to punctuate a new narrative sequence would later become a convention of classical film score composition,⁵⁰ if it were not already somewhat common by 1914. However, there are many points in *Patchwork Girl*’s score where Gottschalk does not adhere to this convention. As a result the music can give the impression that two separate actions should be understood as a single sequence. Moments when these two actions are extremely different from one another, and yet are unified by the same piece of music, can feel strange to those used to the aesthetics of later film scoring.

An instance of this type of non-punctuation in the music occurs when Ojo picks a six-leaved clover from the ground. In this

segment, we first see a title card introducing “The Soldier with the Green Whiskers” who guards The Emerald City gates (tc: 33m 13s). After watching him wake from a nap and march back and forth, we cut to a title card that reads, “Ojo Breaks the Law” (tc: 33m 47s) followed by a long shot of Ojo sneaking into frame and then plucking the clover (tc: 33m 54s). The music that begins this action is a 20-measure march in 2/4 that is first instructed to begin at the title card that introduces the soldier, and is then instructed to “play twice thru. (or more ad lib.)” (p12). While there is no tempo specified in the score, if we were to assume a tempo close to the speed at which the soldier is marching (roughly 120 beats per minute), the 40 measures of music would last for about 40 seconds of screen time, thus extending the march almost perfectly until the moment that Ojo steals the clover. The next cue is not instructed to begin until Ojo steals the clover, which would then seem to eliminate any need for “ad lib” unless the musicians were to have taken the piece at a faster tempo. During this segment the clover-picking action receives the greatest emphasis from the score, as the change in music is instructed to align with Ojo’s pluck. Notably, the change in scene between the Emerald City’s gates and the open field receives no emphasis from the score, despite how a shift in musical style might clarify for filmgoers that these are two disparate sequences of action. The consistency of the music therefore seems to unite the Soldier and Ojo within the same sequence, and suggest a proximity between the two characters that—according to the story—would not be accurate.

Another example occurs just after the munchkins are arrested for stealing this six-leaved clover. The segment begins with the munchkins marching into the gatekeeper’s office, where they are told to change into prisoner clothing (tc: 38m 23s). This lasts for about 90 seconds, after which we cut to an

Emerald City street where for an additional 90 seconds we see Scraps wrestling away the petrified and miniaturized Danx statue from a slew of young women who have all magically fallen in love with him (tc: 39m 54s). Once again a single march is instructed to play under the entirety of two disparate events (p15). This cue would then seem to conjoin both the march of shame and the fight over Danx into one unified sequence, when in fact there seems to be nothing in the narration indicating that these two settings and actions are related.

On one hand we might consider the score’s odd narrational punctuation to be a mistake made by a first-time film composer, for it seems possible that Gottschalk may not have known that the music would seem strange to audiences if it did not punctuate these significant changes in setting. On the other hand, audiences may not have considered this decision to be strange at the time of the film’s release. This type of musical punctuation may have been common and may have instead corresponded to the ways in which many within the industry were discussing and conceptualizing film narration during the early 1910s, particularly with respect to units of plot construction.

In their study of early cinema’s staging practices, Ben Brewster and Lea Jacobs argue that filmmakers during the 1910s had faced problems concerning how to structure motion picture narration, for films were growing longer in duration as multi-reel features were becoming the more common motion picture length.⁵¹ According to many photoplay writing manuals at the time, one solution to this crisis involved making use of the plot structures prevalent in nineteenth-century melodrama, a solution that meant conceiving of longer film narratives not as series of scenes but as a series of events known as “situations.” For Brewster and Jacobs, this meant that films would constitute a progression of either striking and exciting

circumstances, or expressively staged and sensational tableaux, both of which would arrest or block the linear progression of the plot so that filmgoers, as Ben Singer would later add, could “relish in the heightened dramatic tension” of the moment.⁵²

Concurrently, photoplay writing columnists like Epes Winthrop Sargent would speak of multi-reel plot structures in terms of “incidents” and “padding.” While in many cases the words incident and situation were used interchangeably, in Sargent’s columns for *Moving Picture World* incidents differed from situations in that they carried less of an innately expressive component. Further, in contrast to how the situation would function “independently of the particular plots and characters which motivate them,”⁵³ the incident was an integral part of the plot structure, if not the crux of the story itself. As Sargent would write, “Make certain first that your incident really tells a story. Then be certain that it tells an interesting story [. . .], no matter what the form, if the story is not there; if it does not grip, both the technique and the film have been wasted.”⁵⁴ Sargent would also advise filmmakers to not simply prolong a multi-reel feature with padding, i.e. actions like the Zoop chase that function independently and outside of the film’s narrative. “One thousand feet of action does not make two thousand feet of film,” wrote Sargent, “nor does eighteen hundred feet. There must be the full two thousand feet of story in action and every foot of the action must tell part of the story.”⁵⁵ Despite these differences, Sargent would continue to argue that an ideal film narration is one that is structured by a series of carefully placed incidents, a point he illustrates with the following metaphor:

In stretching a telegraph line poles are placed at regular distances for the double purpose of supporting the weight of the wire and preventing sag. If poles were three times as far apart as at present,

fewer poles would be needed, but the wire would sag so that more would be required and the strain put upon each pole would be so great that the additional weight during a sleet storm would pull down the lines. A story is much the same as a telegraph line. The wire of plot must be sustained by the prop of crisis or it will sag, if not actually fall.⁵⁶

If we were to accept the position of Brewster and Jacobs that the transition to multi-reel features posed new narrational problems for filmmakers, then we can infer from industry discourse that it was not necessarily common to conceive of a film’s plot structure in such classical terms as a *series of scenes and sequences* that were responsible for moving the story forward. Instead—similar to a line of telegraph poles—filmmakers saw film structure as a *series of situations and incidents* that should be evenly spaced without too much sag or padding in between. If Gottschalk were to have shared in this conception of multi-reel film narration, then he might have considered an important event like Ojo stealing the clover to be an incident that would call for a greater degree of musical punctuation than would such padding as the setting and sequence transitions that take place inside *The Emerald City*. We might therefore account for the music’s incident punctuations, as well as other non-classical scoring conventions, to merely be a reflection of the way that many filmmakers were conceptualizing film form during this period in the early 1910s when the structurally complex multi-reel feature was slowly emerging as the dominant motion picture length.

With this in mind, using such heuristics as “which sounds accurate?” and “which sounds less strange?” can become problematic if guided by the conventions of later film scores, and not by how composers like Gottschalk actually conceptualized the functions of musical accompaniment during the practice’s emergence. As a means to minimize

this distance between the ideals of the period's practitioners and those of contemporary historians, this article presented an analysis of the early 1910s which focused on the score for *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*, and which extended beyond typical discussions of music's semantic and expressive congruence with the image. What follows are two conclusions that can be drawn from this analysis.

First, musical accompaniment before 1915 featured repetitions of silences as well as punctuations of dramatic incidents, two aesthetic tendencies that provided solutions to the many narrational problems common to the rise of the feature-film. Specifically, prolonged silences in the music could be structured to strengthen formal coherence across multiple reels, while musical punctuations of only select dramatic actions could reinforce the structured pacing of longer story durations. These findings in many ways echo similar observations made by James Buhler, who noted that the industry's standardization of one-reel films before 1910 had also introduced new narrational concerns regarding storytelling complexity. According to Buhler, such concerns encouraged critics and musicians to discuss theatrical accompaniment techniques—particularly Richard Wagner's leitmotifs—in the trade press, and as a result these concerns arguably shaped the style of film music being written and performed starting in the one-reel period.⁵⁷ Though Buhler's observations focus solely on the semantic congruence of Wagnerian accompaniment, his research suggests the possibility that theatrical practices might have continued to directly influence film music style during the industry's transition to the multi-reel feature after 1910.

For instance, Anne Dhu McLucas argues that theatrical melodrama accompaniment had its own conventions regarding which types of scenes would receive musical emphasis and the amount of music that the typical melodrama would include.⁵⁸ Such

observations might then help to account for the prevalence of musical breaks and certain punctuational grammar in Gottschalk's score to *Patchwork Girl*. Conventions of live theater accompaniment might also explain why Gottschalk frequently relies on built-in repetitions when synchronizing a music cue to a series of actions. The previously mentioned underscore for the Woozy beast, for example, is a fifteen-second cue written for 73 seconds of screen time. In live theater, a scene featuring the same amount of slapstick comedy might vary in duration according to the speed of the actors and the responsiveness of the audience. The repetition of a short cue can therefore provide for this indeterminate performance length with relative flexibility. Cinematic actions, however, have fixed performance lengths, and yet Gottschalk strangely provides only fifteen seconds of an oscillating eighth-note melody for the Woozy's long introduction, a musical choice that might have unnecessarily irritated audiences when repeated *ad nauseum* (or perhaps *ad woozy*). The repetitions that structure this particular cue were likely influenced by Gottschalk's lineage as a theatrical conductor, composer, and perhaps even rehearsal accompanist, and are therefore an indication that conventions of theatrical accompaniment were shaping early film music aesthetics beyond the mere appropriation of Wagnerian leitmotifs.

Second, the musical and discursive examples offered in my analysis challenge the somewhat romantic narrative that there were few, if any, important aesthetic tendencies established by feature-film composers before the premiere of *The Birth of a Nation*. Such notions argue that the early 1910s instead saw immeasurable experimentation wherein the evolution of the film score was perhaps not a linear progression toward a foreseeable goal of classicism, but rather a slightly more rhizomatic field of musical ideas that connected to each other at random. Accordingly,

Patchwork Girl's structured silences and incident punctuations—or, for that matter, the stylistic patterning of any early feature-film score—could not be representative of the period for there would not have been any conventions to represent before 1915.

While a compelling narrative, it is more plausible that the period of filmmaking during the early 1910s was not entirely random but was instead an era of both musical experimentation and gradual standardization of accompaniment devices that were thought to enhance motion picture narration. The many documented instances of silences and dramatic punctuations in 1910s accompaniment, as well as the discussion of these aesthetic tendencies among critics and practitioners throughout the decade, all indicate the degree to which certain devices were being systematically developed as an integral feature of early feature-film scores. While *Patchwork Girl* is but one data point in history, additional analyses of overlooked scores from the early 1910s will continue to revise how we conceive of motion picture music's aesthetic history, and in turn how we determine “which is accurate?,” “which sounds accurate?,” and “which sounds less strange?” in our research and reconstructions. That said, until sufficient conceptions are in place these reconstructions are likely to involve a modicum of patchwork.

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NOTES

1. L. Frank Baum, *The Patchwork Girl of Oz* (Chicago: Reilly & Lee Co., 1913).

2. Michael Joseph Quinn, “Early Feature Distribution and the Development of the Motion Picture Industry: Famous Players and Paramount, 1912–1921” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1998), 312–20.

3. Gillian B. Anderson, “The Presentation of Silent Films, or, Music as Anaesthesia,” *The Journal of Musicology* 5 (Spring 1987): 291.

4. Louis F. Gottschalk, “Piano score for *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*,” Tams-Witmark Collection, Box 521A, University of Wisconsin Mills Music Library, Madison, Wisconsin, 19. There is no record for Gottschalk, Paramount Pictures, or the Oz Film Manufacturing Company having copyrighted the entire accompaniment. Gottschalk instead appears to have only copyrighted an excerpt arranged for piano in October 1914, see: “Gloria’s Dream Waltz: hesitation by Louis F. Gottschalk,” *Catalogue of Copyright Entries* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1914), 1405.

5. For more on the subject of pantomime, see Carlo Piccardi, “Pierrot at the Cinema. The musical common denominator from pantomime to film. Part III,” Gillian B. Anderson, trans. and ed., *Music and the Moving Image* 6 (Spring 2013): 4–54.

6. I have found no evidence indicating that Gottschalk had any experience composing or performing for the pantomime tradition proper. However, this article’s discussion of other Oz adaptations suggests that it was Baum who may have had an interest in pantomime and who may have wanted such moments of rhythmic congruence in the score for *Patchwork Girl*.

7. Charles Musser, “The Early Cinema of Edwin Porter,” *Cinema Journal* 19 (Autumn 1979): 1–38.

8. See: Charlie Keil, *Early American Cinema in Transition: Story, Style, and Filmmaking, 1907–1913* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2001), and David Bordwell, *On the History of Film Style* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

9. Gillian B. Anderson, “Geraldine Farrar and Cecil B. DeMille: The Effect of Opera on Film and Film on Opera in 1915,” in *Carmen: From Silent Film to MTV* (*Critical Studies* 24), ed. Chris Perriam and Ann Davies (Amsterdam: Edition Rodopi B.V., 2005), 29–31.

10. Martin Marks, *Music and the Silent Film: Contexts & Case Studies 1895–1924* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Carl Fischer’s promotion and approval of certain uses of classical music in film accompaniment as early as 1913 further corroborates Marks’s periodization, see: Gillian B. Anderson, “Musical Missionaries: ‘Suitable’ Music in the Cinema 1913–1915,” *Civiltà musicale* 51/52 (January–August 2004), 173–89.

11. Rick Altman, "musical scores," in *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema*, ed. Richard Abel (New York: Routledge, 2005): 463–464.
12. Earlier events in film scoring—such as Manlio Marza's accompaniment to *Cabiria* (1914) or Samuel Rothapfel's many orchestrated compilation scores from the same year—were already manifesting musical features that would help to define the period of film music after 1915, and that would directly influence Griffith's and Briel's decision-making regarding *Birth's* score. See: Gillian B. Anderson, "A Consummation and a Harbinger of the Future: Mortimer Wilson's Accompaniments for Douglas Fairbanks," *Film International* 13 (January 2005), 32., and Marks, *Music and the Silent Film*, 92–108.
13. Altman, *Silent Film Sound* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 246.
14. "To Film Fairy Tales," *The Billboard* (April 18, 1914): 70.
15. "The Week: Tik Tok Man All Wound Up," *Los Angeles Times* (March 30, 1913): III.1.
16. "Our Home-Grown Music Composer," *Los Angeles Times* (March 9, 1913): III.1., and Grace Kingsley, "Investigating Tik-Tok to See How He Was Made," *Los Angeles Times* (April 3, 1913): III.1.
17. "Oz Film Manufacturing Co." *Los Angeles Times*, (January 1, 1915): V156.
18. advertisement, *Moving Picture World* (October 3, 1914), 10–11.
19. Griffith would later use original accompaniments for similar gentrifying purposes, see: Gillian B. Anderson, "D.W. Griffith's *Intolerance*: Revisiting a Reconstructed Text," *Film History* (Fall 2013), 57–89. For more on early film music and its perceived potential to refine cinema's more plebeian qualities, see: Piccardi, "Pierrot at the Cinema," 4–6.
20. "NEWS OF THE THEATERS: L. Frank Baum in Fairylogue," *Chicago Tribune* (October 3, 1908): 10.
21. Michael Patrick Hearn, ed., *The Annotated Wizard of Oz* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1973), lxvi.
22. "TRIP TO THE LAND OF OZ: L. Frank Baum Repeats His Radio-Play and Fairylogue at the Hudson," *New York Times* (December 16, 1908): 11.
23. The performance was promoted as an "extravaganza in pantomime" in "Attractions in the Theaters This Week: Music and Other Notes," *Chicago Tribune* (September 13, 1908): H2. Further discussion of Baum's use of professional pantomime actors can be found in "Amusements: The Radio Plays," *Benton Harbor News-Palladium* (September 26, 1908): 2.
24. "LIVING PICTURED FAIRY TALES," *Variety* (October 10, 1908): 11.
25. Mark Evan Swartz, *Oz Before the Rainbow: L. Frank Baum's The Wonderful Wizard of Oz on Stage and Screen to 1939* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 47–50. Mann contributed two songs to Baum's 1902 musical—"The Different Ways of Making Love" and "It Happens Every Day"—while the rest of the music was written by theater composer Paul Tietjens.
26. Katharine M. Rogers, *L. Frank Baum, Creator of Oz: A Biography* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2002), 162.
27. Marks, *Music and the Silent Film*, 51.
28. Hearn, *The Annotated Wizard of Oz*, lxxi.
29. Andrew A. Erish, *Col. William N. Selig: The Man Who Invented Hollywood* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), 165.
30. "'WIZARD OF OZ' Bankrupt: Author-Illustrator, Oppressed by Debts Incurred Through Artistic Efforts, Seeks Legal Relief," *Los Angeles Times* (August 15, 1911): II.6.
31. advertisement, *Moving Picture World* (September 19, 1914), 1598–99.
32. cover, *Moving Picture World* (October 3, 1914), 1.
33. There are separate listings for Paramount and Oz Film for the first time in the column "Independent Release Dates," *Moving Picture World* (October 31, 1914), 714.
34. advertisement, *Moving Picture World* (December 19, 1914), 1743.
35. Clifford McCarty, *Film Composers in America: A Filmography 1911–1970, second edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 118–119. Despite leaving Oz Film, Gottschalk continued to collaborate with Baum on several small-scale comedic musicals performed for The Uplifters, a men's social club of which both were members. (Rogers, *L. Frank Baum, Creator of Oz*, 183). Other notable film projects would include the Rudolph Valentino vehicle *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1921), Ernst Lubitsch's *Rosita* (1923), and Triangle's 1930 re-release of *The Birth of a Nation*,

for which Gottschalk and his orchestra recorded a synchronous score that was optically printed onto the film itself ("To Remake Silent Successes Into Talkies," *Hollywood Filmograph* (June 28, 1930), 26.).

36. Origins of Film: *The Patchwork Girl of Oz*, DVD, staged by J. Farrell MacDonald (1914; Hollywood, CA: Image Entertainment, 2001). The piano accompaniment on the DVD is not the original score composed by Gottschalk.

37. The exact time code for the spilling of the petrification potion cannot be determined from the Library of Congress's print, as this footage is reportedly missing.

38. Rick Altman, *Silent Film Sound*, 246.

39. J.M.B., "Music and the Picture," *Exhibitor's Times* (May 17, 1913), 14.

40. Clarence E. Sinn, "Music for the Picture," *Moving Picture World* (December 24, 1910), 1465.

41. Clarence E. Sinn, "Music for the Picture," *Moving Picture World* (January 1, 1911), 27.

42. Clarence E. Sinn, "Music for the Picture: Incidental Versus Concert Music," *Moving Picture World* (April 25, 1914), 505.

43. Erno Rapée. *Encyclopaedia of Music for Pictures* (New York: Belwin, 1925): 15.

44. Edith Lang and George West, *Musical Accompaniment of Moving Pictures* (Boston: Boston Music Company, 1920), 58.

45. George W. Beynon, *Musical Presentation of Motion Pictures* (New York: Shirmer, 1921), 137–43.

46. *Ibid.*, 138. These arguments are a revision and expansion of his 1918 article dedicated entirely to the dramatic use of musical silence: George W. Beynon, "Music for the Picture: The Dramatic Effect of Silence So Loud That It Is Audible," *Moving Picture World* (October 12, 1918), 225.

47. Gillian B. Anderson, "'No Music Until Cue': The Reconstruction of D.W. Griffith's *Intolerance*," *Griffithiana* 38/39 (October 1990), 158–69.

48. Anderson, "D.W. Griffith's *Intolerance*," 77–80.

49. Marks, *Music and the Silent Film*, 262.

50. Kathryn Kalinak, *Setting the Score: Music and the Classical Hollywood Film* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 99.

51. Ben Brewster and Lea Jacobs, *Theatre to Cinema: Stage Pictorialism and Early Feature Film* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997), 18–32.

52. Ben Singer, *Melodrama and Modernity: Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contents* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 41.

53. Brewster and Jacobs, *Theatre to Cinema*, 24.

54. Epes Winthrop Sargent, "The Photoplaywright," *Moving Picture World* (November 22, 1913), 861.

55. Epes Winthrop Sargent, "The Photoplaywright," *Moving Picture World* (November 8, 1913), 606.

56. Epes Winthrop Sargent, "The Photoplaywright," *Moving Picture World* (October 16, 1915), 432.

57. James Buhler, "Wagnerian Motives: Narrative Integration and the Development of Silent Film Accompaniment, 1908–1913," in *Wagner & Cinema*, ed. Jeongwon Joe & Sander L. Gilman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 27–45.

58. Anne Dhu McLucas, *Later Melodrama in America: Monte Cristo (ca. 1883)* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1994), xiii–xxvii.