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Stefano Caiazza

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Berklee College of Music

Scoring for film, television and videogames

Culminating experience

HYBRID ORCHESTRATION:

The use of samples as integration to the acoustic recording in Maurizio Malagnini's Music



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ABOUT MAURIZIO MALAGNINI

“International award-winning composer Maurizio Malagnini (**The Paradise, Call The Midwife**) burst onto the scene in 2009, bringing to television his cinematic class and stunning melodies through his scores to numerous BBC hits.

In demand because of his ability to vary his palette of sounds and styles, each time bringing the audience to the heart of the story, Malagnini’s work on **The Paradise** has recently been recognized with an **EMMY® Award Nomination** and has been hailed as a ‘masterpiece of musical storytelling’.

His most recent projects include the **BAFTA Nominated film The C Word**, a BBC TV-movie based on the book and blog by Lisa Lynch, featuring a minimalistic and subtle score mixing electronica with string orchestra and the music for the fifth season of **Call The Midwife**. Maurizio also recently composed the epic full orchestral score for a 2-hour drama for ITV, **Peter and Wendy**, based on J.M. Barrie’s Peter Pan novel. The success of these recent projects have resulted in Maurizio winning the title of **Breakthrough Composer Of The Year** from the **International Film Music Critic Association** in 2016.

Italian-born Malagnini’s first musical love was Italian Opera, especially the lyrical melodies of Rossini and Puccini. During his ten years of academic studies in Italian conservatoire, he came into contact with the music of the greatest Italian film composers, in particular Ennio Morricone and Nino Rota. Upon completion of his degree in symphonic composition at the Conservatory in Italy, Malagnini headed to the UK to attend the Royal College of Music in 2006, where he graduated with a Masters Distinction in Composition for Screen.

In 2009, Malagnini was selected by BBC Worldwide to score the new animation show **Muddle Earth**. His adventurous, epic music was recorded by the 95-piece BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and contributed to the success of the 26-episode **BAFTA-nominated** series. The creativity in his composition impressed orchestra manager Richard Wigley, who commissioned Malagnini to compose the Symphonic Suite **Running In The Clouds**, broadcast nationwide on BBC Radio 3. The Suite was premiered in January 2012 by the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra to a standing ovation, inspiring the Arts correspondent Adrian Mullen to write: “Running In The Clouds received an amazing reaction from concertgoers. The composition painted a vivid musical landscape, every bit as evocative as a Ralph Vaughan Williams Symphony”.

Malagnini’s next BBC series was **The Body Farm**, a 6-episode spin-off from **Waking The Dead**. For this he created an energetic, hybrid score showcasing an edgier contemporary sound, blending strings with electronics.

In 2012, Malagnini was invited by producer Simon Lewis to score **The Paradise**, a TV series based on the French novel *The Ladies’ Paradise* by Émile Zola. **The Paradise** allowed Malagnini to turn to his first love, blending his operatic influences – this time from French Opera Comique – into his score. Malagnini’s music became the pulsating heart of the characters, a blanket of warmth around the storytelling and one of the pleasures of the series. **The Paradise**, which was broadcast in 132 territories, earned Malagnini’s creative talent international recognition, including **three Music+Sound Awards** and, in 2015, his first **EMMY® Award Nomination**. The soundtrack album of **The Paradise** was released worldwide by Silva Screen Records and it has been acclaimed by the critic, receiving 5 star reviews.

Continuing his relationship with the BBC, Malagnini was asked to compose the soundtrack for the fourth and fifth seasons of the wildly popular period drama, **Call The Midwife** (Neal Street). His sensitive approach to the score breathed new life and colour into the show, and as a result earned him his **fourth Music+Sound Award**.¹

¹ “Maurizio Malagnini – Cool Music.” Cool Music. Accessed June 18, 2016. <http://coolmusicltd.com/composers/maurizio-malagnini/>.

INTRODUCTION

Since 1983, the world of MIDI has developed to a point to redefine the entire process of creating music. Through the years this has led the client (such as a film director) to expect high quality mock-ups that give a true representation of the final work, while before that the composer used to play at the piano a minimal idea of a larger scale work. Convincing a client that spending the money about to be invested on the movie was worthy was a matter of trust, while nowadays technology has given the opportunity to the composer to fully prove his abilities. Having said that, technology has led to the issue that while in the analog era was enough to write the score to achieve a complicated orchestral arrangement, now the composer has to also be able in sequence it. This led to an impoverishment of film music, that sees less and less the advent of new composers like John Williams. But sample libraries and the sequencing process should not be seen as an obstacle: with the right tools the composer can still be able to produce fantastic music with no excessive efforts. Also, samples are a fantastic weapon in the hand of the composer to deliver a good product saving time and allowing him to use the budget the way he prefers with no need of having to record every single instrument included in the composition.

In this thesis I will talk about all this factors as seen from the perspective of an acclaimed composer in the UK such as Maurizio Malagnini, whom I had the privilege of studying with for many years. Most of the content of this thesis comes from an interview I had with him on April 29th 2016 in his house in London.

Chapter 1

The Use of Samples as Substitutions

The goal of this chapter is to assess various problems that might be encountered in orchestral recording sessions, and to analyse the recording techniques of some composers, such as Maurizio Malagnini, who prefers to use samples rather than record specific instruments. Due to the nature of certain instruments and timbres, technology has reached the point where we can now enjoy the luxury of these complicated recording tasks, as well as expensive tasks, by simply using samples. It is rather easy to see why many composers choose this option.

1. Harp

Perhaps the easiest instrument to sample would be the harp. Harp libraries today are at a high level of production and so it is somewhat obvious that this would be one of the first orchestral instruments to be replaced by samples. The first issue encountered when recording a harp is definitely its complex execution. Along with the demanding nature to the harpist, it is also a very noisy instrument which is extremely inconvenient in a recording sessions. Another common problem recording studios encounter is the availability of an adequate harpist. Furthermore, a harpist usually has to spend extra time proof-reading their parts due to the confusing notation of the instrument that not all composers have mastered. As well as demanding time from the performer, it also

takes time from the composing staff in making sure that the part is detailed and up to par.

Through years of experience what Mr. Malagnini discovered was that there are several obstacles to taking to consideration when recording an orchestra with a harp. To his surprise intonation seemed to be a recurring problem in his recording sessions. During the recording of *Muddle Heart* in 2009, he was disappointed to find that the harp was not fitting in with the rest of the ensemble. When Mr. Malagnini was recording the score of *The Paradise* at Air Studios with the BBC concert orchestra, he attempted to solve the harp issue by isolating it in the booth. Due to the time constraints of having to record 36 minutes of music and titles in 6 hours, he decided that was not possible to have extra takes to record the harp by itself.

The solution of having the harp in the booth resulted in a sound that was too percussive and too metallic for this particular project.

The harp, like other instruments, can be recorded in three different ways:

1. In the room with the rest of the orchestra (very risky if the harp has intonation problems or plays some mistakes that can compromise the recording).
2. In the booth (less risky but not ideal for the sound that loses the energy and character given by the room).
3. By itself in the room, before or after the recording of the orchestra (this implies that extra hours in the studio will be needed and could lead up to a cost of up to 5000£ to record the material of a standard TV series

recording – this solution is most of the time not affordable for many budgets).

Maurizio's idea of the harp sound was influenced by the sound of John Williams' and James Horner's scores produced during the late 80's and early 90's. During the recording of *The Paradise*, Spitfire Audio, a sampling company, released a harp library called *Skaila Kanga*(fig.1). Named after one of the greatest session harpists in London, it has found its place in professional recording projects. This library was recorded at Lyndhurst hall at AIR Studios with three mic positions: close, room, and surround. The advent of this library complimented Maurizio's idea of the harp sound, and also blended well with *The Paradise* score since both projects had being recorded in the same exact room. Obviously a sample library does not have the same musicality and fluidity of a real musician and can pose problems if the harp is a featured instruments.



fig.1: Skaila Kanga harp interface

During another recording for *The Paradise*, Maurizio contracted Isobel Griffiths' session orchestra, who Skaila Kanga was a member of at the time. For that recording Maurizio prepared the harp part with the Skaila Kanga sample library, but had the opportunity to hear the same player that was playing in the

sample, playing the same part live, in the same room where the library was recorded. In addition to this luck, Maurizio was also recording with the same engineer that produced the sample library, Jake Jackson. Upon being able to compare the sample library against the person who recorded it, Mr. Malagnini learned that the quality of the samples was very high. He also concluded that the real musician will always be better than the library because of the human element, but even with this in mind he realised that even a well produced library will require vast amounts of programming in order to achieve a convincing performance.

This experience led Maurizio Malagnini to not record the harp again. Of course one would probably consider hiring a harpist if the instrument has a significant importance in the narrative of the film. In addition to being difficult to record due to intonation issues, the harp also has portage expenses to be added to the standard 76£/h cost of a harpist which would easily be used by Malagnini to hire two more violins.

An example of sampled harp in Maurizio's music can be found in the main titles of *The Paradise*, particularly in the arpeggio played at the end of the track [\(link\)](#).

2. Piano

Piano is one of the most important instruments in Maurizio Malagnini's music, not only because it is his principal instrument, but because his conception of film music is heavily based on chamber music. For Maurizio, the piano has an

intimate role; it is an instrument that instantly define the space of a room, the distance between characters, of a whisper.

As a pianist, Maurizio is very picky with what piano he employs when recording his music. For his style of music, the preferred sound is that of Steinway, but not every Steinway let him achieve his favourite sound. For example, the Steinway B with only 210cm of the soundbox doesn't have the desired resonance that works with his music. Maurizio much prefers the the C and D models (respectively with 225 and 275cm soundbox – fig.2) that are more likely to give a pleasant result. When Maurizio encounters budget restrictions or is limited to the availability of Studio 2 at AIR studios (where only a B model is available), he will opt to sample the piano so that he has control of the specific sound that he desires.



fig.2: Steinway C model

As an accomplished pianist, a problem he was facing was the personal interpretation of his piano writing. Particularly in *rubato* passages, Maurizio could not get the session pianist to play his part to his liking. recordings, especially in *rubato* parts. Sometimes also, players were not able to play the like

A specific problem was when Simon Chamberlain, one of the main session pianists in London, couldn't play parallel tenths which is common in Maurizio's music and is something that is dependent on the size of the pianist's hands.

These issues led Maurizio to use sampled piano parts more and more in his recordings. The library he uses most of the time is *Ivory* by the company Synthogy (fig.3).



fig.3: Ivory interface

How to recognise a good piano library:

- 1) A good piano library has to reproduce well the polyphony of the piano.

Example: If you play a 5 note chord in the lower end of the piano while holding the sustain pedal, a 3 note chord in the mid range, and a 4 note arpeggio in the high end, the library has to be able to play 24 audio samples (the samples are in stereo, so for each note it has to reproduce 2 samples: $(5+4+3) \times 2=24$), without distorting the sound or overloading the machine.

- 2) A library has to emulate the interaction of all the samples with each other like an acoustic piano. A bad library would treat each individual sample as its own individual entity. This makes the library sound fake, unbalanced, and difficult to play.

Ivory accomplishes these factors to Maurizio's taste. Something to consider is that Maurizio's compositions are almost always accompanied by strings which mask the unreal qualities of a sample library. It is Maurizio's philosophy that "The most important thing a composer should care about is to move the audience emotionally, and if that happens it doesn't matter if the instrument is sampled or not. The crucial part is that the music being performed according to the composer's demand."²

It is also important to notice how relevant the quantity of reverb changes in piano parts in Malagnini's music: it changes according to the room size of the scene, the distance between characters, the type of dialogue, etc... to give it that intimistic feature that makes the scene and the music an unique and unseparable thing.

3. Celesta

One of the leading libraries for celesta is the celesta sample from Spitfire Percussion. The high quality offered by this library has allowed Maurizio to avoid recording celesta in his sessions. He much prefers this because it is an expensive instrument to have during recording sessions.

² "Interview to Maurizio Malagnini." Interview by Stefano Caiazzo. April 29, 2016.

3. Percussion

Like the harp, percussion instruments can also be very tricky to record successfully. Mistakes in percussion can easily compromise an entire take due to their heavy presence. On top of it being risky, percussion instruments add to the cost of recording even more than other sections in the orchestra. An option would be to have a separate take for percussion only but due to the nature of writing for television, it is not something Maurizio could do because time for this medium is vital. In *Peter and Wendy* for example, Maurizio had to record everything in 2 recording sessions (one in the morning and one in the afternoon) and could not take the risk of having a percussion section. In addition to that, he would almost always be more willing to spend the money in having more violins than in having percussion, because having more strings for his particular style of writing will have more impact on the final result making everything sound bigger.

Since Maurizio usually records at AIR Studios, his favourite choice for sampling percussion is Spitfire Percussion (fig.4), except for the snare which he prefers to use the one from True Strike by the company ProjectSam.



fig 4: Spitfire Percussion interface

As seen from the left side of the picture, Spitfire Percussion offers three microphone positions: close, tree, and ambience. To give to the engineer optimal control, three stems should be bounced with each microphone position by itself as to mimi chow it would have been recorded if it was done live. This will give the samples more realism because the stems will be emulating distance

The major downside to not recording percussion live is that the samples very quickly lose their unique quality. Some techniques like rolls or ruffles will sound repetitive because these samples are not recorded with any specific tempo in mind. Due to the way these techniques are recorded, composers often struggle with blending these percussion parts with the rest of the orchestra as they do not follow the music the way a real musician would.

4. Choir

The choir is very important in Maurizio's music, especially when the narrative of the film needs a magical element. For example, in his last work *Peter and Wendy* the choir is largely used because the story clearly needs a magical element to capture the storytelling element of this classic tale.

The issue with recording a choir is strictly a matter of budget. In order to achieve a good result with a symphonic choir, you need to hire a minimum of 40 singers which is most definitely going to increase the cost of the recording session. Television productions usually do not have the budget for this musical element. Maurizio's go to library for choir is 8dio's Requiem Pro (fig.5), which has set a high standard for vocal music, offering 14.5 GB of samples and more than 1.000 choral effects.



Fig 5: Requiem Pro interface

5. Woodwinds

It is not ideal to use sample woodwinds, but there might be some cases when the composer is not satisfied by the playing of the musician. It was the case of the theme of the barber played by the bassoon in the track *"The Dark Lake and Jonas"* from *The Paradise from 0:35*. Through the series this theme is "buffo" and comedic, but when the character is being killed it becomes more dramatic and in the style of *Bourne Ultimatum* ([link](#)). To record this theme Maurizio called the bassoon player in of *The Bourne Ultimatum*, Richard Skinner. But unfortunately Mr. Malagnini ended up recognising that the melody had a couple of high notes that were difficult to play with a satisfactory result, and decided to tacet his part and replace it with a sampled one. Of course it was a compromise and not an ideal choice, but was the only way to get the work done. The favourite woodwinds libraries for Maurizio are Berlin woodwinds by *Orchestral tools* and Vienna Symphonic library for the melodic parts, while Holliwood WWs by East West is his favourite choice for effects and runs.

Chapter 2

The Use of Samples With Acoustic Doubling

In this chapter I will analyse the use of some libraries to integrate and reinforce some acoustic recordings. During the years many sample library companies have developed the concept of reproducing an entire ensemble, different sections and different techniques all in one patch. This is a concept that differs from the early sample libraries in the 2000's. Libraries like the Vienna Symphonic Library introduced patches reproducing one instrument and one articulation at a time.

Reinforcing an orchestral performance with libraries is a common practice by many composers, as Danny Elfman explains in an interview for VSL ([link](#)). In the interview he states that he does not even record some techniques like pizzicato because prefers to have all the string players playing arco and not waste musicians for techniques that sound more than fine with samples. Also he says that he is never satisfied with the number of the players in the orchestra: "not even 50 cellos would be enough for the sound that I want to achieve", and for this reason he uses samples to reinforce the general sound of the orchestra.

I will analyse two libraries in particular, Symphobia and Albion (probably the two most used by many composers) that efficiently fill the need for reinforcing some parts that might sound weak in the recording or that need some kind of compensation. I will do this by analysing their use in some tracks composed by Mr. Malagnini

1. ProjectSam Symphobia 1 – Blockbuster



fig. 6: Blockbuster interface

Blockbuster (fig.6) is one of the “multis” (a nki file composed of different patches) included in Symphobia 1. It is made of a wind staccato patch, a string staccato patch, and a very peculiar patch in symphobia called “string brass stac + perc”. This last one in particular contains the following instruments divided in the following octaves: piano (from B0 to D1), timpani (from B0 to B1), brass (from G1 to C4), and strings (from B0 to C3). These three patches combined are very effective to emphasize accents, especially if used with octaves.

Mr. Malagnini uses it very much in his mixes, especially in his last work *Peter and Wendy*. We can find it for example in the first part of the main titles of the soundtrack ([link](#)) where he uses the patch playing octaves in the left hand (see attached score). It is also very noticeable in the track “Keep Your Eyes Opened” from 0:35 ([link](#)), in Captain hook ([link](#) – see attached score) and in

“We Fly of Course” from bar 3 where it is used by playing octaves in the left hand and three-note chords in the right hand (see attached score).

For this last cited track it is interesting to notice the difference between the mock-up, the rough mix and the final mix (see attached files). Particularly, it is important to hear the difference between the rough mix, where the Blockbuster sample is not present, and the final mix where it is included. This patch is definitely helping shape more definition in terms of accents, and is helping the recording to shine a little more.

2. [ProjectSam Symphobia 1 – Bigger Than Life](#)



Fig.7: BTL interface

This multi (fig.7) includes a string sustain patch, string brass + timpani, wind sustain, and low string octaves + synth patch. Unlike Blockbuster which is designed for staccato parts, this multi provides a big orchestral sustain sound in two different playability options. When it is played softly, the resulting sound is delicate and “dreamy” and is very effective when overlapped with high sustained violins that can sometimes sound a bit undefined or strident. An example of this usage can be found in the main love theme of *The Paradise* titled “*The Portrait*” right in the beginning ([link](#)).

On the other hand, when this patch is played forcefully, the presence of the bass instruments is much more noticeable as they have strong attacks that are accompanied by timpani. Therefore this patch can be used to give body to the low end of the orchestra during forte or fortissimo passages. An example of this can be found in “*We Fly of Course*” (see score and audio files attached from 1.41) in bars 61 and 63. Again it is interesting to notice the difference between the rough mix with no samples and the final mix, when thanks to Bigger than life, the orchestra has more body and thickness.

3. Albion – 8ve Cellos and Basses

In this patch, cellos and contrabasses are recorded in octaves, and the recording took place in Lyndhurst Hall at AIR Studios. It is useful to give more consistency and thickness to the low end of the string section when

needed. For example, in *“We Fly of Course”* the low string section was made of 6 cellos and 4 basses, but the sound we hear in the last portion of the track, especially from bar 83 to the end (from 2.19), is massive. Without the help of this patch it would have been impossible to achieve this effect. This patch was not written or specified in the score because its role is strictly to reinforce an already existing part. Matters of post-production don't necessarily need to be included in the score. It is also noticeable from the beginning of the track *“The dark lake and Jonas”* from The Paradise ([link](#)).

4. Symphobia 2 – Legato Ensemble Violins in Oct



Fig.8: leg. Ens. Vln in 8ve interface

There are some cases when violins have to take over a melody that another section is playing. This is the case in bar 11 of the main titles of *Peter and Wendy* (see score) when the violins have to enter after the main melody has been played by the trumpets. In most of these cases, especially during long sustained notes, the violins sound weak and need some support; this patch from Symphobia (fig.8) helps giving more power to the violins.

Chapter 3

Accompaniment or Phrase - Based Libraries

In the last few years a new breed of sample libraries has been released on the market, and its conception is quite different from all the libraries analysed until now. It's the case of phrase – based libraries, of which the company that is leading in the area is Sonokinetic. A phrase – based library is made by recording different phrases and patterns of isolated sections of the orchestra that can be combined by the composer to fulfill high demands with a very limited amount of programming. Usually with these libraries it is possible to achieve a full orchestral arrangement by just playing triads on the keyboard. For this reason they are now largely used by contemporary composers to find inspiration for an orchestral arrangement; to create a quick mock-up to show to a film director; or sometimes, to include them in the final mix in order to concentrate the efforts of the orchestra on only recording the vital parts of a track such as melody. In this chapter I will talk about some of the most used libraries by Sonokinetics, which all run on the sampler Kontakt.

1. Sonokinetic - Minimal

Minimal is probably the most famous library produced by Sonokinetic, and as the name says, it is used to create arrangements typical of the minimalistic style.

This is what the interface looks like:

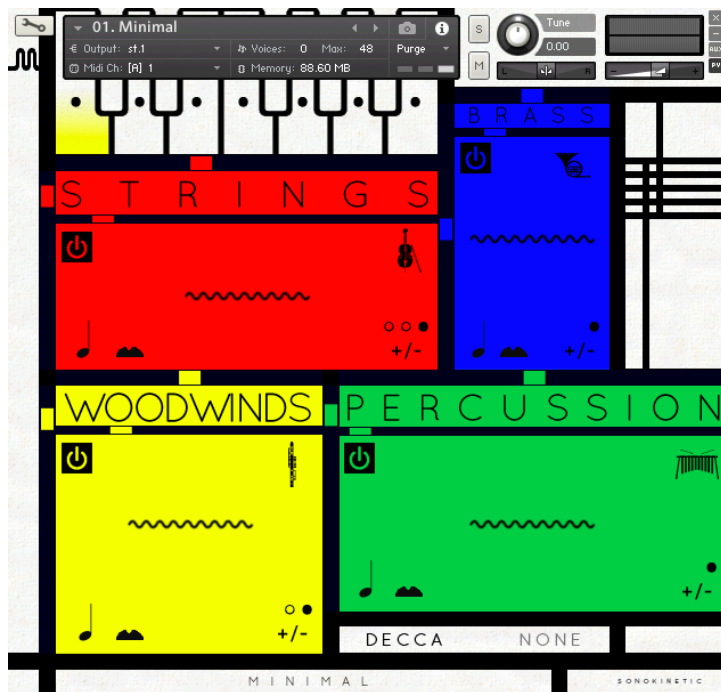


Fig.9: Minimal interface

It is divided into 4 areas, each of them assignable to a different orchestral section: strings, woodwinds, brass and pitched percussion. The library, with more than 32 GB of recorded orchestra, offers an incredible amount of possibilities.

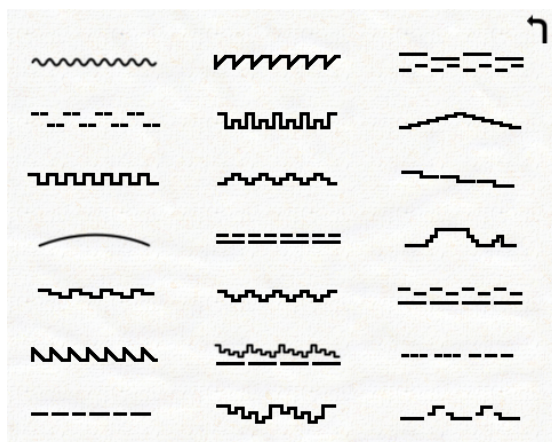


Fig.10: Minimal interface for selection of phrases

Minimal is very visual. It is enough to select a graphic figure (fig.10) to change the type of phrasing played by the specific section, and they can vary from staccato to legato, from crescendo to diminuendo, etc. Also, looking at figure 11, we can see some more assignable options offered by the library such as changing between many phrases included in the same style (with the three little circles on the right), the possibility to add sordino to strings (with the sordino symbol on the bottom left), and to change the rhythmic figure (by changing the note value on the bottom left). Also, it is possible to change volume and panning for each individual section.



Fig.11: editable options in Minimal

The use of this library can be noticed in the track “*Great Ormond Street Hospital*” from *Peter and Wendy* ([link](#)). The staccato accompaniment of the string section is a Minimal patch. The strategy employed by Maurizio in this track was to send the staccato accompaniment to the orchestra and then use violas and all the violins to record the melody which is the most important part of the track. Luckily, he managed to use extra time at the end of the session to record the staccato part with the real string players, which happened to be the ideal situation. Although that was not crucial for him, he would have also been satisfied by including the samples in the final mix.

Some people would argue that the risk of using libraries like Minimal could lead to an un-original composition that would make the composer sound “like many others.” In response to this argument, Maurizio jokingly replies by saying, “the staccato notes accompaniment of the strings has existed for centuries. We are not inventing anything new. What does really matter in this track is the melody, which is the theme of Lucy, an important character of the film, that is played many times in the film with different arrangements. This is the real unique element of the composition. Everything else is just working as a support of this melody. What makes a score unique is how thematic materials are interlaced with the story of the film, not the type of staccati that I may use”³.

2. Sonokinetic – Grosso and Capriccio

Grosso and Capriccio can also be two very useful tools. Even if they are two different libraries, the way they were conceived is really similar, like their interfaces:



Unlike Minimal, Grosso and Capriccio have different nki files for each section of the orchestra and each orchestral element can be divided in low, mid, and high

³ "Interview to Maurizio Malagnini." Interview by Stefano Caiazzo. April 29, 2016.

registers. By choosing a graphic figure on the interface, different phrases will be triggered (similarly to Minimal).

A very interesting use of Capriccio can be found in the track titled "*I Believe in Fairies*" from *Peter and Wendy* ([link](#)) starting from minute 1.47. A fast violin arpeggio, played on all the 4 strings, is audible in the background of the track. This type of arpeggio is in the style of Paganini (it can also be prominently found in Mendelssohn's music, notably in his Violin Concerto in E minor after the cadenza) and may be quite tricky to record with an orchestra, since it may require alternating between violin I and violin II at every chord change. "In the final part of this very emotional track, I needed a fast arpeggio to be played by the violins in order to create some motion and to break away from the previous part. I didn't even think twice to record that part with real violins because it probably would have used one hour of recording time just to do that, and instead I used Capriccio. Another reason that led me to this decision was that I wanted the entire orchestra to be free to play the big melodic choral above. I see sample libraries as additional instruments to my compositions. Someone might say that this same arpeggio found in Capriccio may be used in the same way by another composer. Yes this is true, but we have to bear in mind that those arpeggios are not a crucial part of the track and that they are nothing new; violinists all over the world have been studying Paganini for decades".⁴

⁴ "Interview to Maurizio Malagnini." Interview by Stefano Caiazzo. April 29, 2016.

Chapter 4

How to Deal With Pro Tools Sessions for the Recording

Preparing the Pro Tools session for has a vital importance for the success of a recording. Everything has to be done in the most effective way in order to avoid waste of time, that, as I already stated, in a production for television is very little: straight after the recording stage the composer and the engineer instantly go into the production process, and usually a recording session leads to the final mix in the same day of the recording itself. In this chapter I will talk about how Maurizio Malagnini deals with his own Pro Tools session with the help of his team.

For The Paradise Maurizio used to prepare one session for the recording and one for the mixing, while for Peter and Wendy due to time issues he had to create only one for both situations. Each session has always the mock-up included, because if during the mixing stage the engineers takes a direction that is too different from the one from the mock-up, Maurizio will ask him to take a listen to have a comparison. Also included is the dialogue of the scene (see tracks 1 and 3 in fig.11)

Talking about the metronome, in the session there is a consolidated one, and two tracks with small audio clips that are single metronome clicks: in one track are placed on every beat and in the other every 8th. This is to allow a quick change in

case in the recording the orchestra prefers to have a click in 8ths instead of in semiminims. (see tracks 4, 5 and 6 in fig.11).

Then, going in order, we find some wet stems (the blue tracks in fig.11) that are the ones going to be played to the orchestra during the recording, and the reverb used in these stems is the one coming directly from the mock-up. On the other hand the orange ones are dry stems that are going to be used in the mixing stage after the recording. They are obviously dry in order to have more flexibility in terms of quantity of reverb to be assigned during the mixing process. But just in case, at the bottom of the session there is a reverb track (with a light yellow colour) that contains the reverb of those dry stems in case the engineer might need to listen to it as a reference.

The screenshot displays the Pro Tools digital audio workstation interface. At the top, the system tray shows the date and time as 'Fri 29 Apr 17:46' and the user as 'Maurizio Malagnini'. The main window title is 'Edit: 8m01_CTM5'. A large, prominent red '-111000' is overlaid on the interface, indicating a significant gain reduction. The interface is divided into several sections: a top transport and timeline area, a central track area with multiple tracks, and a bottom track list area. The tracks are color-coded and labeled with various instrument and effect names, including '8m1_CTIME_Ensemble', '8m1_CTIME_Honky_Wgt', '8m1_CTIME_Jazz_Bass', '8m1_CTIME_Pizz_Wgt', '8m1_CTIME_REALS_STRINGS_Wgt', '8m1_CTIME_HONKY', '8m1_CTIME_Jazz_Bass+', '8m1_CTIME_2nd_VIOLINS+', '8m1_CTIME_PIZZICATI_BOUNCES+', '8m1_CTIME_VI LEG+', '8m1_CTIME_Small Strings+', '8m1_CTIME_VIO LA LEG+', '8m1_CTIME_CELLI LEG+', '8m1_CTIME_String Ensemble+', and '8m1_CTIME_REVERB+'. The track list at the bottom includes various instruments and effects such as 'Dialig', 'Temp', 'Reference', 'Click 1-4', 'Click 1-8', 'Click', 'Honky_Wet', 'Jazz Bass_Wt', 'Pizz_Wet', 'REALSTRIN', 'Honky', 'Jazz Bass', '2nd Violins', 'Pizz', 'Vln 1 Leg', 'Small Strings', 'Viola Leg', 'Celli Leg', 'StringEnsemb', and 'Reverb'. The interface also shows various control buttons and meters for each track.

Fig.11: A typical Maurizio's PT session

CONCLUSION

The use of samples helps a recording to shine and achieve a quality sound that is both unique and un-unique, but of course, sometimes worth the imperfection. Samples can actually be compared to what photoshop is for an image: a picture of a normal person can magically become the one of a model. As seen in previous chapters, the use of samples in orchestral compositions is not always accepted by the composers community, because some may think that it could lead to a lack of originality or take away the pureness of the recording.

Like heard through the examples in this thesis, Maurizio Malagnini's compositions never have samples as a fundamental element, but are actually used as a background element that for many reasons allow him to get the most out of the recording session and to reach a sound that would be impossible with a normal orchestral ensemble. Although let's not forget that the first goal of the composer, apart from delivering a satisfactory product to the employer, should be to move the audience emotionally. For the end product it should not matter if there are samples in the final mix as long as the end justifies the means.

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