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Distinguishing Characters: The Use of Pop and Western Art Music in Fernando Meirelles' *The Two Popes* (2019)

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Abstract

The use of popular and western art music throughout The Two Popes exemplifies the efficiency and detail with which music can provide narrative information—specifically through the characterization of the titular pontiffs: Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis, played by Sir Anthony Hopkins and Jonathan Pryce, respectively. The contrasting use of these musics immediately set these men apart to establish the underlying dilemma of the film: should the Catholic Church reinforce conservative dogmata (represented by Pope Benedict XVI and western art music) or move towards reform (represented by Pope Francis and popular music). By investigating music that emanates from the narrative—diegetic music—this article traces how works like ABBA's 'Dancing Queen' and Claude Debussy's 'Clair de lune' can progress the narrative, shape our interpretation, and conform to—or deviate from—established tropes associated with popular and western art music.

This research is informed by Jonathan Godsall's Reeled In (2019) and Robynn Stilwell's 'fantastical gap' (2007), as well as touchstone-concepts like Claudia Gorbman's 'diegetic music' (1987), David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's 'fidelity' (1979), and Stuart Hall's 'encoding/decoding' model (1973). Armed with these conceptual tools, this analysis aims to contribute towards our broader understanding of popular and western art music as sociocultural phenomena in both the 'reel' worlds of cinema and the 'real' worlds of our everyday life.

Anika Babel is a doctoral candidate at the UCD School of Music. Her thesis, supervised by Dr Laura Anderson, explores the narrative role of the diegetic piano in contemporary Hollywood cinema and pays particular attention to representational issues surrounding class, gender, and race. Anika is the founding president of the Dublin Musicology Collective and the co-editor of this journal.

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Prelude

Upon the death of Pope John Paul II in 2005, the Catholic Church found the papacy at a crossroads: should it reinforce conservative dogmata by electing Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger or move forward with the reformist Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio?[1] In the film *The Two Popes*,[2] these figures, played by Sir Anthony Hopkins and Jonathan Pryce respectively, are immediately polarized. Though this is delineated through a number of narrative and cinematic techniques,[3] the use of music is remarkable in how it efficiently distinguishes the way that both men are characterized in the film—from the solemn German intellectual to the jovial Argentinian man-of-the-people. This tension is illustrated through the contrasting use of western art music (chiefly piano works) and popular music, specifically ABBA and The Beatles. Interestingly and despite the discord maintained between these characters for much of the film, it is at the intersection of pop and western art music (WAM) that the pair eventually find commonalities.

This paper is divided into three parts. Part one—the introductory section—elaborates on the film's premise and introduces the framework through which the use of music in *The Two Popes* is analysed. In part two, I scrutinize four key scenes to highlight the intertextual and narrative significance of the music featured. Finally, in part three—the concluding section—I evaluate the impact of the music and the extent to which film's precise use of pop and WAM conforms to cinematic norms. Here, I also reveal how the film departs from established pop and WAM tropes.

Part One: Introduction

Originally written for the stage as *The Pope* and later released as a novel,[4] Anthony McCarten's story traces Pope Benedict XVI's tenure as pontiff and Cardinal Bergoglio's reluctant rise to the papacy. The film adaptation is set in 2012 and centres upon fervent debates and profound conversations between these two dialectically opposed men. While the narrative is based on real events, the content of Ratzinger[5] and Bergoglio's conversations is imagined, despite much of the dialogue being gleaned from authentic speeches, writings,

[1] My deepest gratitude goes to Dr Laura Anderson, my supervisor, for her unfaltering support, guidance, and enthusiasm for this research. Thank you to the organisers and delegates of the 2021 Sound on Screen conference, where an earlier version of this research was presented. Special thanks to the anonymous peer reviewer and the editors for their considered and deeply valued feedback.

[2] Fernando Meirelles, *The Two Popes*, Netflix, 2019.

[3] Alongside standard cinematic techniques such as lighting, framing, camera dynamics, colouring, etc., several of the men's attributes are pitched against each other. For but a few examples, referring to Ratzinger and Bergoglio respectively: Northern Hemisphere (relative financial wealth) versus Southern Hemisphere (relative financial poverty); Formula 1 Racing (an elite solo sport) versus soccer (a ubiquitous team game); eats traditional Bavarian food alone versus sharing pizza (breaking bread); strong intellectual intelligence versus strong emotional intelligence; luxurious lifestyle and attire versus living simply; austerity versus vulnerability; and, as this article explores extensively, western art music versus popular music.

[4] Anthony McCarten, *The Pope* (London: Oberon Books, 2019).

[5] As in McCarten's script, I refer to the character Pope Benedict XVI as Ratzinger.

and correspondence.[6] By harnessing pre-existing and specially composed music into the augmented soundscape of narrative film, the role of diegetic and non-diegetic music becomes expanded in the screen adaptation. As noted by the film's composer, Bryce Dessner, music was central in re-imagining McCarten's script for the screen:

> [The play] does have this incredible intimacy about it, almost like a Samuel Beckett kind of play, which is largely these conversations about theology between two old men, two incredible actors. I think to stage that in a cinematic way was a challenge—to figure out how you make a movie out of dialogue between these two characters. Music, among other tools that Fernando had, was one of the ways to make it cinematic and to bring energy into certain scenes. … You think of a movie about two popes and humour is not really the first thing you think of. But this movie is quite funny, actually, and the use of music accents that.[7]

The diegetic source music and the non-diegetic underscore are complementary in how they embody Ratzinger and Bergoglio's seemingly incompatible ideologies. Similar to the play, this is achieved by exclusively affiliating WAM with Ratzinger and popular music with Bergoglio. These genres furnish a crystalline characterization, accomplished by playing on long-established conventions relating to cinematic uses of pop and WAM; specifically upon their distinct set of associations. As a result, this helps to narrow the gap between the filmmaker's intentions and the audience's interpretations of the narrative. Instances of diegetic music in particular not only drive the narrative forward, but also play a pivotal role toward understanding the tumultuous relationship between Ratzinger and Bergoglio. Accordingly, diegetic music is the primary area of investigation throughout this article.

Since there has not been any prior detailed analysis of *The Two Popes*, my approach is informed by Jonathan Godsall's 2019 monograph *Reeled In: Pre-existing Music in Narrative Film*.[8] Borrowing Godsall's terminology, I aim to highlight the intertextual nature of using 'pre-existing' and 'post-existing' music in *The Two Popes*. Pre-existing music is 'music that existed prior to its use in a film' that has been 'appropriated by a film, not composed for it'.[9] Once appropriated in a film, a pre-existing piece 'is "reeled in" to the cinema and forever changed because of it'.[10] In other words, its filmic appropriation creates a post-existence[11] that draws on 'previous associations but also creat[es] new ones.'[12] Godsall points to Richard Strauss' *Also sprach Zarathustra* in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*[13] as a prime example of post-existing music, noting that subsequent encounters with the piece are, for many people, intertextually informed by its famous use in the sci-fi film.[14] The terms pre-

[6] Alejandro De La Garza, "The True Story Behind the Movie *The Two Popes*," *Time*, December 20, 2019, https://time.com/5753982/the-two-popes-movie-true-story/
[7] Bryce Dessner quoted in Elizabeth Shaffer, "'Two Popes' Walk Into Abbey Road Recording Studio (No Joke)," *Variety*, December 6, 2019, https://variety.com/2019/music/news/the-two-popes-abbey-road-1203426948/.
[8] Jonathan Godsall, *Reeled In: Pre-existing Music in Narrative Film* (New York, Routledge, 2019).
[9] Ibid., 4–5.
[10] Ibid., 1.
[11] Ibid., 131.
[12] Ibid., 1. Emphasis preserved.
[13] Stanley Kubrick, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1968.
[14] For more, see: Godsall, "Post-existing music," in *Reeled In*, 131–161.

and post-existing music correspond to associations with music heard in the *real* everyday world (pre-existing music) and music experienced in *reel* film encounters (post-existing music).[15] More generally, the terms *real* and *reel* correspond to extra-textual knowledge and knowledge of cinematic codes, respectively.

As mentioned, my analysis focuses on diegetic music. This is a contentious term and I draw upon recent arguments surrounding the classification of music in audio-visual media—especially the works of Ben Winters and Robynn Stilwell.[16] Despite continued debate concerning the meaning(s) of diegetic and non-diegetic music, I apply Claudia Gorbman's touchstone definition of diegetic music as 'music that (apparently) issues from a source within the narrative.'[17] Here, 'the narrative' denotes the *diegesis*, meaning the *filmic universe*—defined as the 'narratively implied spatiotemporal world of the action and characters' by Gorbman.[18] David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's classic definition of 'fidelity' is also adhered to, since the sound design in *The Two Popes* subtly influences our interpretation of specific scenes by problematizing the diegetic/non-diegetic status of music. Fidelity 'refers to the extent to which the sound is faithful to the source as we [the audience] conceive it … Fidelity is thus purely a matter of expectation.'[19] Furthermore, I use Stuart Hall's "Encoding/Decoding" model[20] to facilitate an examination of how the music in *The Two Popes* limits the interpretive outcome for audiences, as consistent with the symbolically-loaded design of the film.

These concepts and perspectives are more readily grasped through examples, four of which are presented in Part Two of this article: the ABBA scene; the Debussy scene; the piano scene; and the tango scene. These occur chronologically and reveal Ratzinger and Bergoglio's protracted transition from foes to friends—a shift, I argue, that is attributed to a shared moment of brotherhood facilitated by a tune that moderates the seemingly oppositional realms of pop and WAM. Each of these scenes are brief (with the exception of the five-minute-long piano scene), yet their contribution to the overall narrative merits a careful examination.

There is one other significant encounter with diegetic music in *The Two Popes*,[21] and this occurs during a flashback to young Bergoglio in 1955, Buenos Aires (00:41:00). The sound

[15] For more, see: Ben Winters, "The Real Versus the Reel," in *Music, Performance, and the Realities of Film: Shared Experiences in Screen Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 18–66.
[16] (a) Winters, *Music, Performance, and the Realities of Film*. (b) Ben Winters, "The Non-Diegetic Fallacy: Film, Music, and Narrative Space," *Music & Letters* 91, no. 2 (2010): 224–244. (d) Robyn Stilwell, "The Fantastical Gap between Diegetic and Nondiegetic," in *Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema*, eds. Daniel Goldmark, Lawrence Kramer, and Richard Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 184–204.
[17] Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies*: *Narrative Film Music*, (London: BFI Pub; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 22.
[18] Ibid., 21.
[19] David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith, *Film Art: An Introduction*, twelfth edition (New York: McGraw-Hill Education, 2020 [1979]), 284.
[20] Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," in *Media and Cultural Studies*, eds. Meenakshi Gigi Durham and Douglas M. Kellner, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, [1973] 2006), 163–173.
[21] This statement does not account for ambient sounds and sound effects which—like the music, the dialogue, and the images—have a substantial role towards delivering the narrative. Due to the practical constraints and necessary limitations of this article, my perspective on diegetic music here stretches little beyond the orthodox sense of music that is performed in—or that emanates from—the diegesis. In doing this, I mean not to deny the musicality of the editing or the sound design (for one prominent example, see the climax of Ratzinger and Bergoglio's argument at the Castle Gandolfo gardens accompanied by a tense

of a saxophone lures Bergoglio into the Flores Basilica where a priest offers him the divine sign that he forgot he had been waiting for: his calling to the priesthood. The saxophone, heard later in Dessner's score, retrospectively comes to symbolise 'key religious moments for Bergoglio.'[22] Dessner's music is unobtrusive and never competes with the all-important dialogue between Ratzinger and Bergoglio (which is most often accompanied by a complete musical silence rather than a non-diegetic underscore). Dessner states that his music does echo the 'two different sound worlds [that] embody each of these powerful characters'[23]—saying that: 'the Wagnerian orchestral sound relates to Benedict and the more folkloric South American guitar inspired music [is] for Francis [(Bergoglio)]. But actually the sound of the film becomes more unified as their understanding for one another grows.'[24] While the non-diegetic score and the diegetic music mirror each other in this sense, Dessner's score is comparatively inconspicuous and operates more covertly, relative to the music that originates from within the diegesis. Hence, the score is secondary to my analysis and will subsequently be mentioned in passing references.

Throughout the analysis, I stretch the parameters of diegetic music to consider all kinds of musicking[25] within the diegesis—notably conversations about music as well as musical performances and music in the mise-en-scène (the mere presence of a piano, for example). I do this because I am interested in how filmmakers enlist music as a sociocultural phenomenon to convey narrative information—particularly regarding characterization and surrounding issues such as class, gender, and race. This is done to peer into how music (especially WAM) is understood in the popular imagination as reflected in, and shaped by, film. I agree with Gary C. Thomas when he remarks: 'we *all* go to the movies. And, thus, what we see and hear on those screens—and how we see and hear it—matters more than ever.'[26] This statement points towards my interest in *The Two Popes*, since the clarity with which pop and WAM is used enables me to effectively interrogate the mediatory relationship between our shared realities of everyday life and screen fiction. In other words, analysis of

crescendi of raucous insect noises). For more on holistic approaches to the integrated soundtrack, see: Danijela Kulezic-Wilson, *Sound Design is the New Score: Theory, Aesthetics, and Erotics of the Integrated Soundtrack* (New York: Oxford, 2020).

[22] Bryce Dessner, quoted in Shaffer, "'Two Popes' Walk Into Abbey Road Recording Studio (No Joke)."

[23] Marine Wong Kwok Chuen and Valentin Maniglia, "One composer for Two Popes: Bryce Dessner," *Score it Magazine*, December 20, 2019, http://magazine.scoreit.org/one-composer-for-two-popes-bryce-dessner/.

[24] Bryce Dessner, quoted in Charles Steinberg, "Keeping Score—Bryce Dessner Discusses Film," *Under the Radar*, June 7, 2020, https://www.undertheradarmag.com/interviews/keeping_score_bryce_dessner_discusses_film_composing_for_the_revenant_and_t. Given Dessner's rationale, it is uncertain whether an intentional link is being suggested between Wagner (with his anti-Semitic views), Hitler (and the propagandic appropriation of Wagner's music during the Third Reich), and Ratzinger (who grew up in war-torn Germany, when enrolment in Hitler Youth was mandatory). In the film, accusations of Ratzinger being a Nazi are voiced during a montage of news clips, shown directly after he becomes pope (00:15:40). In the interview cited above, Dessner expressed that he wanted to infer a German tradition in the music associated with Ratzinger and that he took inspiration from Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*, which was formerly used in the temp track. However, Hollywood has long exploited the link between Wagner and Nazism in its soundtracks. For more, see: Alex Ross, *Wagnerism: Art and Politics in the Shadow of Music*, (London: 4th Estate, 2020), especially 581–587.

[25] Musicking is 'to take part, in any capacity, in [~~a~~] music[~~al performance~~]'. Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*, (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 9.

[26] Gary C. Thomas, "Men at the Keyboard: Liminal Space and the Heterotopian Function of Music" in *Beyond the Soundtrack: Representing Music in Cinema*, eds. Daniel Goldmark, Lawrence Kramer, and Richard Leppert (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 277, emphasis preserved.

diegetic music in *The Two Popes* illuminates common (mis)conceptions, tropes, and stereotypes associated with pop and WAM. Like Thomas and Ben Winters throughout his monograph *Music, Performance, and the Realities of Film: Shared Experiences in Screen Fiction*, I do not underestimate the impact film can have on its audiences, particularly in relation to WAM.[27] I argue that this is because WAM is experienced more frequently during incidental screen encounters in our media-saturated world than in concert hall venues. Pre- and post-existing examples of WAM that permeate all forms of new, old, and advancing audio-visual media are unavoidable. Thus, I argue that the everyday person's impression of WAM is largely shaped by screen encounters.

Before analysing the ABBA scene in which audiences first see Ratzinger and Bergoglio together, I want to contextualize their character development by summarizing the introductory scenes that forge our initial impressions of these characters. At the outset, director Fernando Meirelles paints 'Pope Francis [as] the good pope, and Pope Benedict XVI [as] the bad one.'[28] Audiences first meet Bergoglio in his element as he gives an open-air Mass in urban Buenos Aires (0:01:14). The scene is markedly vibrant—both sonically and as a spectacle of colour. Bergoglio is amid a huge adoring congregation, delivering a light-hearted sermon which features jokes about football. Later in the film, Bergoglio jests that as an Argentinian 'football and tango are compulsory' (00:23:40). After Mass, the tone changes when Bergoglio learns that Pope John Paul II has died.

Consequently, all cardinals are called to the Vatican to form a papal conclave and elect a new leader. This is when audiences meet Ratzinger—whose introduction could not be more different (0:04:37). Ratzinger and his assistant are seen in a vast foyer; luxurious, but empty. The cold lighting can almost be felt in the reflection off the hard marble. There is no music (unlike the bandoneon-infused hip-hop that underscores Bergoglio's introduction) and we hear their solitude reverberate in the empty foyer. Ratzinger's assistant is helping him to learn the names of the papal conclave so that he can lobby them with his manifesto, delivered verbatim to his fellow cardinals. Ratzinger's impersonal approach to what should be personable moments aids in relegating him to the antagonistic role. This is achieved without audiences needing to recall any *reel* or *real* references, though as we shall see with the four scenes analysed in Part Two, the links to pre- and post-existing musical experiences enrich the narrative. Before this analysis, I offer a succinct synopsis of the remainder of the film: After sullying Bergoglio's reputation to the conclave, Ratzinger is elected pope. We then jump to 2012: Bergoglio wants to retire but his requests are ignored. He flies to Rome to oversee the signing of his retirement papers, which Ratzinger denies. The all-important conversations take place. Finally, in 2013 Ratzinger announces his retirement from the papacy and Bergoglio becomes pope—which, according to the film, was only made possible by the pivotal conversations carried out between the pair during Bergoglio's visit to Italy.

[27] Winters, *Music, Performance, and the Realities of Film: Shared Experiences in Screen Fiction*, 2014.
[28] Fernando Meirelles, quoted in Kaleem Aftab, "Fernando Meirelles — Director of *The Two Popes*," *Cineuropa*, November 29, 2019, https://cineuropa.org/en/interview/382055/. This was his interpretation of the characters upon reading McCarten's play.

Part Two: Analysis

The ABBA Scene

00:05:36–00:06:05

During a break from the 2005 papal conclave, Bergoglio bumps into Ratzinger in a Vatican washroom. Their exchange is just shy of thirty seconds. Despite its brevity, the comedic nature of the scene makes it memorable, and this memorability is entirely attributable to the music central to this encounter. Bergoglio whistles ABBA's 'Dancing Queen' and Ratzinger enquires about what he presumes to be a 'hymn' (see Image 1). Both the song choice and the telling conversation that ensues are worthy of a closer reading. As influenced by Christopher Small's musicking concept, I consider both aspects to be of equal importance.[29] There is no underscore and the music in question takes place firmly within the diegesis. For reference, an extract from the script is shared below (see Figure 1).

Image 1: Bergoglio whistles ABBA's 'Dancing Queen' beside Ratzinger, Vatican washroom (00:06:02)

This is the first time that audiences see Ratzinger and Bergoglio interact. The song choice serves to distinguish the characters by highlighting Bergoglio's pop-culture proficiency, which represents his progressiveness; and by revealing Ratzinger's pop-culture deficiency, which indicates that his life is detached from the everyday person's. ABBA's 'Dancing Queen' needs little by way of introduction. Upon its release in 1976, it was an instant, far-reaching hit. Nearly half a century later, this classic pop song continues to be sought after and celebrated by diverse listeners.[30] It has a rich post-existence and I touch upon some of the *real* and *reel* examples that may influence how we interpret this scene throughout the following paragraphs.

[29] Small, *Musicking*, 9.

[30] See for example: (a) Jackie Mansky, "What's Behind ABBA's Staying Power?" *Smithsonian Magazine*, July 20, 2018, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/whats-behind-abbas-staying-power-180969709/. (b) Phil Gallo, "Abba's appeal is strong, inexplicable," *Variety*, July 21, 2008, https://variety.com/2008/music/columns/abba-s-appeal-is-strong-inexplicable-1117989264/.

INT. BATHROOM/ SISTINE CHAPEL (2005) – DAY

Ratzinger is washing his hands. He pauses. Someone is whistling, a lovely, slow melody in the cubicle. He turns and looks at the cubicle. Out of the cubicle comes BERGOGLIO.

They nod at each other. There is no love lost here. A moment of pause, then Ratzinger's diplomatic skills kick in. He asks a politely neutral question in Latin.

RATZINGER:	RATZINGER:
What's the name of the hymn you are whistling?	Quid est nomen carmines quod cantas?
BERGOGLIO:	BERGOGLIO
Dancing Queen	Regina Salans

Ratzinger looks [very] puzzled. Bergoglio goes into detail.

BERGOGLIO: (CONT'D)	BERGOGLIO: (CONT'D)
By ABBA	Cantant ABBA

RATZINGER:

Ah! That's good.
[Chuckles]
AB-BA

Figure 1: 'ABBA Scene.' Anthony McCarten, *The Two Popes*, 2019, 10. Dialogue edited to reflect what is delivered by the actors.

As seen from the script, the inclusion of 'Dancing Queen' was decisive, as is the case for most uses of pre-existing music. Godsall stresses, 'uses of pre-existing music foreground specific intertextual knowledge and experience is key to the construction of meaning'.[31] Filmmakers know the music and have enlisted it to relay specific narrative information. However, in using pre-existing music there is always a risk of it not being recognised by audiences and, consequently, the filmmaker's desired (external) reference may be missed. Anahid Kassabian, in *Hearing Film: Tracking Identifications in Contemporary Hollywood Film Music*, argues that 'there is a certain degree of consistency among productions and receptions, but not complete consistency, and the relationship between productions and receptions is *by no means either simple or unidirectional*.'[32] Given the fame that ABBA and 'Dancing Queen' enjoy, I argue that this particular pre-existing song limits such inconsistencies, by aligning—what cultural theorist Stuart Hall calls—the 'frameworks of knowledge' that filmmakers use to encode a sign with the 'frameworks of knowledge' that audiences have to decode the very same sign to create a '"meaningful" discourse'.[33] When these frameworks align, the

[31] Godsall, *Reeled In*, 52.
[32] Anahid Kassabian, *Hearing Film: Tracking Identifications in Contemporary Hollywood Film Music*, (New York: Routledge), 20. Emphasis added.
[33] Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," Figure 13.1, 165.

dominant reading emerges: viewers interpret the scene as intended by filmmakers (as opposed to a negotiated or oppositional reading).[34]

I suggest that 'Dancing Queen' makes three significant contributions to the narrative. First, it strengthens Bergoglio's characterization as the progressive protagonist. This is achieved in several ways. For instance, a link may be forged between the song's status as a gay anthem,[35] further highlighting Bergoglio as the tolerant Cardinal who leads by example. The post-existence of 'Dancing Queen' in films such as *Muriel's Wedding* or *Mamma Mia!* may also influence audience's interpretation of this scene.[36] Catherine Haworth's analysis of *Muriel's Wedding* finds that scenes featuring ABBA's music are 'sequences with true emotional resonance, marking moments of honesty, transparency, and real celebration in an otherwise convoluted and artificial existence.'[37] This is much like how Bergoglio is presented to us: a down-to-earth cardinal who prefers simplicity over the grandiosity that he fears his Church suffers from. More pertinently, Haworth investigates the use of ABBA in *Muriel's Wedding* through a queer lens and points to the reprise of 'Dancing Queen' in the closing scene as a confirmation that Muriel and Rhonda's relationship is moving beyond heterosexual.[38] Similar to Muriel, the characters of *Mamma Mia!* navigate their world via ABBA songs—with the band's music coming to represent female empowerment in this film and its sequel. Together, these well-known post-existing uses of 'Dancing Queen' reinforce the progressive connotations that I suspect the filmmakers hoped to draw upon in their characterization of Bergoglio. Furthermore, his performance of a secular, smash-hit song makes Bergoglio more than an ally of the everyday person; it reinforces that, despite being a cardinal archbishop, he is an ordinary man who enjoys ordinary pleasures as much as anyone. Thus, ABBA's 'Dancing Queen' helps to animate Meirelles' desire to reveal the men underneath the cassocks when bringing *The Two Popes* to the screen.[39]

Second, Ratzinger's ignorance begs the question: 'does popular culture register with him at all?' Through not recognizing the tune, it is suggested that Ratzinger has a life-long disconnect from popular culture, especially considering that 'Dancing Queen' was released

[34] Ibid., 171–172. It is the dominant reading that I will be exploring throughout this article (or my subjective guess at what the objective dominant reading may be), since the possible negotiated and oppositional readings are too manifold to list, never mind explore in satisfactory detail. Scholars like Lauren Anderson have called for direct research with audiences to support (and indeed debunk) claims made about audiences and their assumed perceptions. My analysis is not absolute and seeks only to put forward possible interpretations—as surmised through critical evaluation and reference to pre- and post-existing examples. See: Lauren Anderson, "Beyond Figures of the Audience: Towards a Cultural Understanding of the Film Music Audience," *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* 10, no. 1 (2016): 29.

[35] 'We found out quite early that Dancing Queen had become an anthem and we were very proud that we've been chosen by the community.' Björn Ulvaeus, quoted in William J. Connolly, "Björn Ulvaeus interview: 'ABBA returned to music because of gay community,'" *Gay Times*, n.d., https://www.gaytimes.co.uk/originals/bjorn-ulvaeus-interview-abba-returned-to-music-because-of-gay-community/.

[36] (a) Paul John Hogan, *Muriel's Wedding*, CiBy 2000, 1994. (b) Phyllida Lloyd, *Mamma Mia!*, Universal Pictures, 2008.

[37] Catherine Haworth, "Introduction: Gender, Sexuality, and the Soundtrack," *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* 6, no. 2 (Autumn, 2012): 123.

[38] Ibid., 122–123.

[39] Zach Laws, "Fernando Meirelles ('The Two Popes') on his 'entertaining' tale of two pontiffs with 'a lot of jokes' [EXCLUSIVE VIDEO INTERVIEW]," *Gold Derby*, November 25, 2019, https://www.goldderby.com/article/2019/fernando-meirelles-the-two-popes-director-interview-oscars-netflix-news/.

close to fifty years ago. While it is difficult to compare the experiences of public figures to evaluate the singularity of Pope Benedict XVI's apparent disconnect, one might consider Queen Elisabeth II as somewhat commensurate to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, especially given that they are of similar repute, status, and age.[40] The Queen is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England and Ratzinger was the Holy Father of the Catholic Church. Only one year separates these leaders in age, yet even Queen Elizabeth II cannot resist the appeal of ABBA, quoted as saying 'I always try to dance when this song comes on because I am the Queen and I like to dance.'[41] By not recognizing the song and assuming Bergoglio was whistling a hymn, Ratzinger reveals himself to be singular in his piety and theological endeavours, and that the realm of the everyday person is not a sphere he interacts with. His puzzled expression and slow, articulate, and disjointed utterance of 'AB-BA' emphasize his detachment from everyday life. His reaction to the song immediately puts Ratzinger in contrast with Bergoglio.

Third, pre-existing music can calibrate the spatiotemporal context of the film. Pre-existing songs potentially distract from the narrative because of audiences' subjective prior experiences. Such experiences may forge associations with the music that filmmakers can neither predict nor want to beckon.[42] Pre-existing music can also uncover a film's inherent unreality by calling itself to attention—revealing a jarring disparity between the *real* and *reel* worlds. In the case of *The Two Popes*, 'Dancing Queen' actualizes the diegesis by situating it within a time and place shared between audiences and characters. As Godsall puts it: 'Pre-existing music is, literally, *real music* that refers to its own existence outside of the film. Its deployment as source music can therefore be a particularly effective means of authentically furnishing real-word settings.'[43] In other words, 'Dancing Queen' 'points audiences outwards in order to draw them back in.'[44]

Such a link may not be desirable in films like James Cameron's *Avatar*, which seeks to detail a world unlike our own.[45] However, *The Two Popes* portrays two very real men and follows events that likely reside in the general population's recent memory. Yet, films are not real. They are not supposed to be. Nevertheless, an illusion of *a reality* needs to be upheld to foster an audience's cooperation in an implicit game of make-believe. Winters describes entering a cinema theatre or rolling a film as contractual—that audiences know that they are engaging in fiction, but to participate in filmgoing we must enter a state of play; a game of make-believe where our reality is suspended in favour of the narrative's.[46] What is essential, however, is that the illusion is not jolted beyond our willingness to believe. It is a delicate balance, with Francesco Casetti elaborating: 'Reality has always occupied a double position

[40] Indeed, at 50:29 (during the piano scene) a framed photograph of Ratzinger and Queen Elizabeth II can be seen. My thanks to Laura Anderson, who drew this to my attention.
[41] Ally Foster, "This is the one song the Queen cannot resist dancing to," *New York Post*, July 20, 2017, https://nypost.com/2017/07/20/this-is-the-one-song-the-queen-cannot-resist-dancing-to/.
[42] Godsall refers to music (fondly) recognized by audiences as 'our music'; music that is shared between *reel* and *real* spheres. Such instances are 'likely to initiate debate because it is *our* music, and we often care deeply about it.' Godsall, *Reeled In*, 1.
[43] Ibid., 94.
[44] Ibid., 121.
[45] The music featured in *Avatar* is specially composed for it by James Horner. James Cameron, *Avatar*, Twentieth Century Fox, 2009.
[46] Winters, "The Non-diegetic Fallacy," 232. See also: Ben Winters, "Corporeality, Musical Heartbeats, and Cinematic Emotion," *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 3–25, especially 6–8.

in film theory … reality is both a precondition and a construct. This double status leads us to consider not simply the genesis of the filmic image, but more generally the "effects" that it triggers.'[47] This debate occupies a large proportion of film theory literature and is an issue palpably discerned in discourse surrounding pre- and post-existing music. In film musicology, Winters again points to the problem of this balancing act in referring to Hanns Eisler and Theodor Adorno's influential 1947 text *Composing For the Films*:[48] 'Adorno and Eisler seem to have underestimated the willingness of an audience to participate in a game of make-believe, and overestimate their propensity to be fooled into a state of illusory belief by film.'[49] Using pre-existing music invites audiences to negotiate the game in a way that filmmakers cannot control or in a way that might tip the sensitive balance that sustains the diegesis. For a dominant reading to emerge, Hall stresses that the disparity of meaning ('degrees of symmetry') between the filmmakers ('encoder-producer') and the audience ('decoder-receiver') must be minimal.[50] Hence, our prior experiences with pre-existing music have significant potential to distort filmmaker's intentions—inviting negotiated and even oppositional readings of the narrative.

Despite these risks, the use of 'Dancing Queen' is deliberately foregrounded. An arrangement of the song is woven into the film's soundscape moments later to non-diegetically underscore the montage of the cardinals' formal procession into the Sistine Chapel (00:07:06). This repetition exemplifies how, despite the score's clear departure from Classical Hollywood conventions, Dessner's music conforms with Gorbman's principles of Classical Hollywood scoring practices, particularly the principles of narrative/referential cueing, continuity, and unity.[51] The above analysis addressed how the narrative/referential cueing found in 'Dancing Queen' shapes the characterization of Bergoglio (and Ratzinger, by contrast). Its non-diegetic reprise in the montage provides continuity by facilitating a smooth transition between times and/or places. Recapitulating Bergoglio's whistling, the repetition of the song unifies the soundtrack by assimilating Bergoglio and Ratzinger's strange encounter with the pompous ceremony of the papal conclave that is far removed from everyday life. In this processional scene, an orchestral arrangement of 'Dancing Queen' surreptitiously emerges out of a diegetic performance of 'Litaniae Sanctorum' (Litany of the Saints)—which is chanted by the conclave as they make their way to the Sistine Chapel, in keeping with tradition. Once established, 'Dancing Queen' swiftly evolves from a string arrangement to an upbeat orchestral arrangement of the chorus, faithful to the energy of the original pop hit. However, the intimacy that the song afforded in the private space of the washroom is ceased when the non-diegetic iteration abruptly stops, synchronized with the closing (and locking) of the Sistine Chapel doors. Neither ABBA nor the everyday person can penetrate the secret ballot of the papal conclave. Just like the conversations and debates that occur later in the film, the seriousness of such moments is not accompanied by music of any kind. Moreover, this fusion of WAM and pop suggests that rivals Ratzinger and Bergoglio both have potential to become pope, while also accentuating their respective traditional and progressive leadership styles.

[47] Francesco Casetti, "Sutured Reality: Film, from Photographic to Digital," *October*, 138 (Fall 2011): 97–98.
[48] Theodor Adorno and Hanns Eisler, *Composing for the Films* (London: Contiuum, 2005 [1947]).
[49] Winters, "The Non-diegetic Fallacy," 228.
[50] Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," 165–166.
[51] Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies*, 73.

ABBA's 'Dancing Queen' efficiently characterizes Bergoglio and Ratzinger, and enriches the washroom scene via well-known pre- and post-existences that audiences may draw upon in their interpretation of the scene. While pre-existing music can invite negotiated or oppositional readings, given the renown of the song, 'Dancing Queen' helps to convincingly fabricate a *reel* simulacrum of our *real* world: the diegesis seems like our universe; Jonathan Pryce looks remarkably like Bergoglio; and the set and costumes are quite convincing. 'Dancing Queen' efficiently aids this illusion and facilitates the game of make-believe. Of most interest to me, it succeeds in separating these two men who are distinguished through their affiliations with either popular music or WAM; genres that are presented to us as incompatible. This incompatibility is reinforced during the next two scenes for analysis, where Ratzinger is in command of the piano.

The Debussy Scene

00:14:56–00:15:53

This scene occurs directly after Ratzinger's election to the papal office. It sees the new pontiff retreat to his piano to play Claude Debussy's 'Clair de lune'—one of cinema's most prolifically-featured piano pieces.[52] Via a montage facilitated by the music, we are taken from 2005 to 2012, from which point the rest of the film builds (with the exception of flashbacks). In a mosaic-like fashion, the montage assembles three narrative strands simultaneously: Ratzinger at the piano; Ratzinger at the beginning of his new leadership role; and a collage of international news clips that rapidly move from positive reactions to Ratzinger's win to condemnation and slander. In this section I analyse the piece from two perspectives: first through a technical approach to investigate the impact of how 'Clair de lune' is presented; and then by considering the significance of the work itself in this setting—as influenced by possible pre- and post-existing encounters.

Throughout the one-minute performance, 'Clair de lune' is curiously presented. Reverberation is not applied consistently. Instead, the piece oscillates between wet and drier levels of reverberation to play with our expectations. This problematizes the source of the music by blurring whether it emanates from a diegetic or non-diegetic provenance. The first fourteen bars (typically typeset as the first page of the score, and commonly referred to as the first half of the A section—if interpreting the piece as a modified ternary form) make up the majority of the extract used in this scene.[53] However, the extract is split and spliced to fit the editing pace of the scene and the temporal requirements of the film; the music is altered to suit the images. To the credit of the music editors, this is done seamlessly and the alterations are not likely to jar with audience members. However, well-acquainted listeners may notice some discrepancies. These include the cutting of most of bar six and the reorganisation of bars twelve to fourteen. From here, the music is spliced directly to the second broken chord of bar twenty-five and continues as far as bar twenty-six (the cadence that leads into the B section). The music stops here—unresolved—on the dominant seventh (A-flat).

[52] Gurminder Kaur Bhogal, "Resonances of Clair de Lune," in *Claude Debussy's Clair de Lune* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), see especially: 32–47.

[53] As Brent A. Ferguson notes in his thesis "Moonlight in Movies," 'the piece in its entirety rarely appears in film.' See: Brent A. Ferguson, "Moonlight in Movies: An Analytical Interpretation of Claude Debussy's 'Clair de lune' in Selected American Films" (MMus diss., Texas State University, 2011), 12.

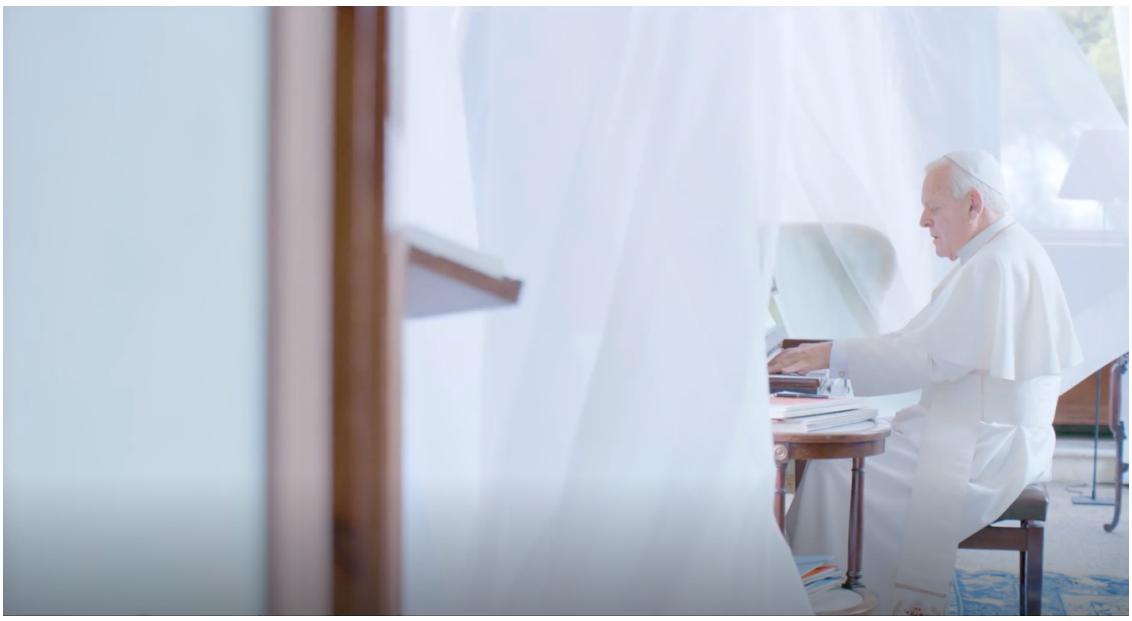


Image 2: Ratzinger performing 'Clair de lune' by Claude Debussy after being elected Pope (00:15:11)

Audiences are acousmatically introduced to 'Clair de lune,' meaning that the sound of the piano precedes a visual confirmation of its precise source. The function of acousmatic sound, as defined by Michel Chion in *Audio-Vision*, is to draw 'our attention to sound traits normally hidden from us by the simultaneous sight of the causes.'[54] The unmistakable dyads that open 'Clair de lune' (which commit neither to D-flat major nor F minor) are heard at the end of a conversation between Bergoglio and Hummes (the scene prior to the one in question). Cardinal Hummes is a fellow 'southern hemispherer,' and the pair are trying to process Ratzinger's election success. Hummes asks what Bergoglio will do next. Disappointed—not in his loss (indeed, he is relieved in that sense), but by who won—Bergoglio laments that 'the church has just voted to make sure overdue reforms remain overdue. I can probably do more good as a simple parish priest.' Hummes exits and Bergoglio, in a typically gracious manner, says to himself 'I'll pray for him' (referring to Ratzinger). The music starts in synchrony with Bergoglio's utterance of 'him'. Much like the modal opening of 'Clair de lune,' the piece's acousmatic introduction is mysterious. The reverberation with which it is presented alters its fidelity and places the music at a distance from the characters and the space that they occupy. This impacts our expectations by leading us to believe that the music is external to the diegesis; that it belongs to the non-diegetic underscore heard only by audiences and not by the characters. A few seconds later the source of the music is revealed: we see Ratzinger, obscured by two wind-swept lace curtains, playing a large upright piano (see Image 2).[55] This shows us that 'Clair de lune' is not exclusively part of the underscore and that it is performed within the diegesis. Yet, it still sounds strange. Given the small size of the piano room and the incongruous amount of reverberation, there is a disparity between what we see and what we hear. This is important

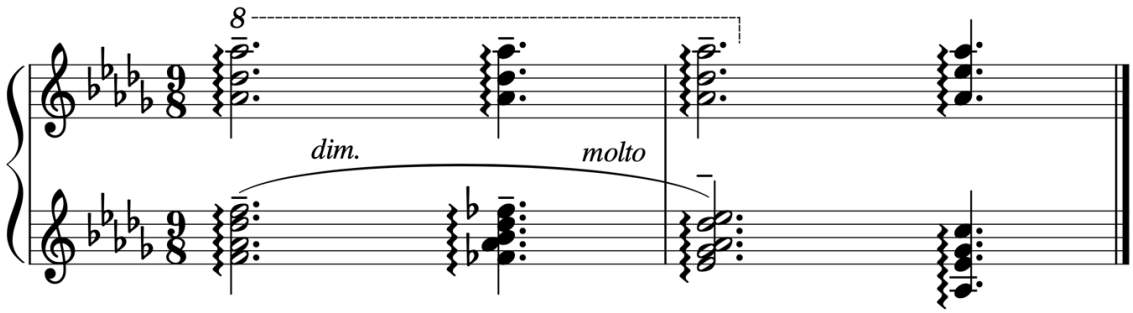
[54] Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, trans. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 32.
[55] Probably the Yamaha U3 Polished Mahogany that is also used during the piano scene at Castel Gandolfo and the final scene of the film at Ratzinger's residence. It is considered to be one of the finest upright pianos manufactured in recent decades.

because 'fidelity' does not refer to the *quality* of the sound, but rather to an audience's expectations of *how* it should sound. When a sound is unfaithful to its source, we are led to notice it.[56] I argue that what audiences notice through the artificial reverberation is an enforced distance, signifying that Ratzinger does not have close relationships; even we cannot get close. This is mirrored in our obstructed view of Ratzinger at the piano; he is shrouded by the curtains. Accordingly, this subversion of our expectations accentuates the peculiarity of the scene: why has Ratzinger chosen to be alone? Why is he not celebrating his election with his peers and the massive congregation who have crowded Saint Peter's Square? When initial suspicions of the music belonging to the underscore are dispelled, the distance then comes to signal Ratzinger's aloof nature. Indeed, the entire scene points towards his tendency to be alone.

In moving towards the significance of using Debussy's 'Clair de lune,' I make a brief return to Kassabian who centralizes the role of the audiences by calling them 'perceivers.'[57] The application of her approach yields fruitful insights by elevating filmgoers from 'passive audience members' to 'active perceivers.' The mysteriousness of the Debussy scene calls for active perceivers so that Hall's '"meaningful" discourse' can be generated.[58] In this regard, perceivers need to exercise their competence[59] in decoding the use of 'Clair de lune,' particularly when combined with the news interviews onto which the music is layered. These news snippets start with complimentary statements, such as an American priest celebrating Ratzinger's 'sharp mind' to a woman delighting that Ratzinger will protect 'the Doctrine of the Faith' [said in French]. The pleasantness of the music seems to align with these comments. However, these interviews rapidly turn sour: his election is bad 'for the poor in the world' [in Brazilian Portuguese], 'people are abandoning Catholicism because it is too conservative' [in Spanish], and finally 'the Nazi shouldn't have been elected' [as declared by a North American man]. A tension emerges between the serene music and the defamatory allegations. The clips of Ratzinger carrying out his papal duties commence in synchrony with the negative comments. He is seen alone in grand spaces completing paperwork or praying. Alongside these clips, the soundtrack becomes increasingly noisy. Traffic noises emerge from the background of interviews and are raised in the mix, as if joining to protest Ratzinger. The final clip in the montage is a medium close-up shot from behind, showing the pontiff kneeling in a dark oratory. Church bells and the rumbling of thunder introduce a pathetic fallacy. Collectively, these noises add to the hostility—a sonic hostility that grates against the beautiful music Ratzinger plays. During this last clip in the oratory, Ratzinger's solitude is underscored by the three forlorn broken chords that end the except of 'Clair de lune' (see Example 1). By skipping the opening chord in bar twenty-five (D-flat major), we hear first the uneasy modal minor (an inverted D-flat minor with an added sixth). Not only do these final chords have the most reverberation applied to them, but this modal D-flat minor chord is embellished with another sonic modification. The decay of this chord is

[56] Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art*, 284.
[57] This is not immediately expressed, though Kassabian's repeated use of the term 'perceivers' and the absence of 'audience' implies as much. Kassabian, *Hearing Film*.
[58] Hall, "Encoding/Decoding," Figure 13.1, 165.
[59] Kassabian defines such a competency as 'a culturally acquired skill possessed to varying degrees in varying genres by all hearing people in a given culture.' Kassabian, *Hearing Film*, 20.

reversed and added pre-emptively before it is struck. This creates an unnatural crescendo that forefronts the chord, further accentuating the instability of the situation.



Example 1: Claude Debussy, 'Clair de lune,' bars 25–26. The first chord is absent in the film.

In both the *real* and *reel* worlds, 'Clair de lune' retains its reputation for provoking emotional reactions.[60] It evokes themes of beauty, romance, epiphanies, nostalgia, and bittersweetness, for example. In other words, it is generally positively received. Set against the negativity of the latter part of this scene, its use becomes complicated. Such a complexity makes a 'simple or unidirectional'[61] dominant reading difficult and perceivers must negotiate their own interpretation of the scene. Therefore, competency is essential in influencing our perception of it. To this end, I will now delineate several potential negotiated readings of the scene by referencing pre- and post-existing experiences of 'Clair de lune' that perceivers with varying competencies may draw upon in forming their interpretation of this scene.

The ability to play 'Clair de lune,' or any of Debussy's piano works for that matter, is often met with admiration. The ability to play it well will impress most listeners. The generally positive attributes associated with 'Clair de lune' in our *real* world are largely mirrored in the piece's appropriation onscreen.[62] Here, I think of films such as *Ocean's Eleven*, *Frankie and Johnny*, and *Fantasia 2000*.[63] In each of these examples, the piece (often augmented with a rich orchestration) adds serenity or a romantic air, and it usually complements a night-time setting—as is fitting with its title. Janet K. Halfyard, in their chapter "Screen Playing," explores classical music performances onscreen, describing how playing the piano can signal malevolence—particularly regarding male characters and especially male characters in a position to abuse their power.[64] Up until now, we have been encouraged to view Ratzinger as the antagonist, so perhaps Halfyard's observations could be applied here. However, I would suggest consideration of alternative readings, like how the piano might serve to re-humanize Ratzinger—that his pianism is a force for good, or at

[60] As summarized by Roger Chaffin, '*Clair de Lune* from the *Suite Bergamasque* by Claude Debussy is one of the most beloved pieces in the piano repertoire. Its ability to evoke feelings of tranquillity, mystery, and pathos have made it popular for generations' 380. Roger Chaffin, "Learning Clair de Lune: Retrieval Practice and Expert Memorization," *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 24, no. 4 (April 2007): 380.
[61] Kassabian, *Hearing Film*, 20.
[62] Bhogal, "Resonances of Claire de Lune," 13.
[63] (a) Steven Soderbergh, *Ocean's Eleven*, (Warner Bros., 2001). (b) Gary Marshall, *Frankie and Johnny*, (Paramount Pictures, 1991). (c) James Algar, Gaëtan Brizzi, and Paul Brizzi, *Fantasia 2000*, (Walt Disney Pictures, 1999 [1940]).
[64] Janet K. Halfyard, "Screen Playing: cinematic representations of classical music performance and European identity," in *European Film Music*, ed. Miguel Mera and David Burnand, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 73–85.

the very least a vessel through which to empathize with him. Such a technique has been applied to supposed villains before. For example, the character Edward Cullen, from the *Twilight* franchise of teen dramas, is a 108-year-old vampire who acquaints himself with the arts in an effort to be more human.[65] Edward highlights these pursuits to Bella (the protagonist and his human love interest). He plays her a recording of 'Clair de lune' before serenading her at the piano. Bella and perceivers may recognize the considerable amount of time and commitment that it takes to be a proficient musician. Edward's command of the piano may signal that he endeavours to resist evil temptations (to drink human blood, for example) by occupying his eternal and sleepless life with tasks to better himself; to re-humanize himself. This includes listening to and possibly playing 'Clair de lune' because he is a *good* vampire. Is retreating to private quarters to play the piano an acknowledgment that, like Edward, Ratzinger is aware of his 'bad' qualities? Does Ratzinger find solace at the keyboard? Does the music invite us to relate to Ratzinger? As Thomas reminds us, 'playing the piano … is an inherently singular—monadic, if you will—experience. Pianos may be played against an orchestra, but they don't normally become part of one.'[66] Whether 'good' or 'bad', Ratzinger's solitude is certainly amplified at the piano.

Debussy's music is recognisably within the generic parameters of WAM. This allows us to extend beyond this piece of post-existing music to consider post-existing experiences with WAM more generally. This consideration is worthwhile since Ratzinger's austere characterization is fortified with WAM in both the non-diegetic soundtrack (Wagnerian style orchestration, and plainchant) and the diegesis (as will be highlighted further in the forthcoming analysis of the piano scene). Returning to Halfyard's argument, instances of classical music have close ties with antagonistic characters in screen fiction—to which Sir Anthony Hopkins provides two notable post-existing examples that may shape our reading of the scene. These are found in *The Silence of the Lambs* and *Westworld*, which I probe below.

In *The Silence of the Lambs*, Hopkins' portrayal of the serial killer Hannibal Lecter, is scorched into the memories of those who have experienced this horror film.[67] A particularly memorable scene comes when Lecter, caged for everybody's safety, violently escapes by killing and partially cannibalizing two prison guards. This scene is accompanied by Bach's "Goldberg" Variations, heard on a cassette player. In an in-depth analysis of this scene, Carlo Cenciarelli states that Bach 'provides a suitable match for the killer genius's "lethal cerebrality.'"[68] This corroborates Halfyard's argument and parallels Ratzinger's intellectual inclinations. In Stilwell's analysis of the same scene, however, she explores how the use of Bach (or any music, for that matter) may help us to relate (or not relate) to characters; if it (1) enables empathy or anempathy; or indeed whether (2) the music serves as an objective or subjective narrator along with (3) the 'aural perspective (here/there)' it offers.[69]

[65] Catherine Hardwicke, *Twilight*, (Summit Entertainment, 2008).
[66] Thomas, "Men at the Keyboard," 278.
[67] Jonathan Demme, *Silence of the Lambs*, (Strong Heart/Demme Production, 1991).
[68] Carlo Cenciarelli, "Dr Lecter's Taste for 'Goldberg', or: The Horror of Bach in the Hannibal Franchise," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 137, no. 1 (2012): 110.
[69] Stilwell, "The Fantastical Gap between Diegetic and Nondiegetic," 190–193

Before commenting on how 'Clair de lune' satisfies these three axes, let us consider one final post-existing example from the television series *Westworld*.[70] Hopkins features again, however this time we are under no illusions as to whether or not he is the antagonist. In this dystopic sci-fi series, his character Dr Robert Ford comes to play the role of the devil in an augmented-reality theme park that Ford designed as a lawless playground for the wealthy. In "Contrapasso," the fifth episode of season one, Ford performs 'Clair de lune'. Such is the concentration of evil embodied by this character, that he eerily admonishes any positive attributes of the piece. Thus, experiences of this scene could strongly affect the interpretation of Ratzinger's rendition—especially given the three short years that separate *Westworld* and *The Two Popes*.

Tying back in with Stilwell's axes, perceivers will subjectively determine whether 'Clair de lune' helps us to empathize with Ratzinger. Similarly, our prior experiences will colour whether or not we perceive the music as an impartial or biased commentator. Lastly, the aural perspective suggested by the music plays into Stilwell's influential concept of 'the fantastical gap'—which considers movement through the diegetic and non-diegetic divide.[71]

'Clair de lune' has different technical functions throughout the Debussy scene. As explored earlier, the piece's acousmatic introduction leads us to hear the music as non-diegetic, yet moments later we see Ratzinger playing the piece. This visual confirmation of its source should indicate that the music emerges from within the diegesis, however the applied reverberation problematizes a clear designation of the music. Regarding the overall construction of this scene, the reverberation makes the music more suitable as an accompaniment to the tripartite montage that assembles Ratzinger at the piano, Ratzinger as pope, and the news interviews. Specifically, the reverberation prevents the music from infringing upon the interviews so that the dialogue can be heard easily. So where does this leave the music, and does a categorization really matter? On the latter: no, a precise categorization of the music is not vital to the overall comprehension of the film. Nevertheless, the ambiguity created by the music's concomitance to both diegetic and non-diegetic provenances is of importance. This is elucidated through Stilwell's 'fantastical gap' concept, which notes that movement through the diegetic/non-diegetic gap is not random; rather such transitions are 'important moments of revelation, of symbolism, and of emotional engagement with the film.'[72] In this instance, 'Clair de lune' occupies the fantastical gap to facilitate an insight into Ratzinger's solitary life and the instability of his new position.

The Debussy scene may not offer a crystalline characterization of Ratzinger just yet, but with hindsight, its narrative impact becomes clarified as it merges with the broader portraiture of Ratzinger—the WAM afficionado. I shall reference his pianism in the following example and return to how it shapes our understanding of Ratzinger in the concluding section.

[70] I am indebted to the delegates of the 2021 Sound on Screen conference who drew my attention to this noteworthy example. Jonny Campbell, "Contrapasso," episode five, season one of *Westworld*, (aired October 30, 2016, on HBO).

[71] 'The border region—the fantastical gap—is a transformative space, a superposition, a transition between [the diegetic and non-diegetic] stable states.' Stilwell, "The Fantastical Gap between Diegetic and Nondiegetic," 200.

[72] Stilwell, "The Fantastical Gap between Diegetic and Nondiegetic," 200.

The Piano Scene

00:45:35–00:50:26

Since the Debussy scene, Bergoglio has come to Rome to ensure that his retirement papers (thus far ignored) are signed by Ratzinger. He meets the pontiff at his summer residence, Castel Gandolfo, where the men engage in tempestuous debates. They are at complete loggerheads and their incompatible ideologies are entirely exposed. Alas, it appears that they share nothing in common. After their separate dinners, tempers have cooled slightly. In the late evening, Bergoglio tries to hand his retirement papers to Ratzinger again. The pontiff, tired of arguing, initiates a ceasefire: 'No, this evening, please. I know we have our differences, our disagreements, but please. This evening, let's be simply brothers together, shall we?' Bergoglio came to Rome to get his papers signed and his patience is beginning to wear thin. Ratzinger tries again: 'Do you play the piano or any other instrument?' Bergoglio does not play an instrument. However, he knows that the pope recorded an album *Music from the Vatican: Alma Mater*.[73] Entertaining the ceasefire, Bergoglio asks if Ratzinger might play something. Ratzinger obliges. The remainder of the scene is constructed around five pieces interwoven with conversations. Ratzinger begins by playing a piece by his 'favourite Czech composer Bedřich Smetana' before a conversation about The Beatles is attempted—similarly underpinning the pop culture disconnect established during the ABBA scene. He then plays a cabaret piece 'made famous before the war by a singer called Zarah Leander.' For the last of the live performances, we hear two short excerpts from works by Enrique Granados and Karlheinz Stockhausen. We are then acousmatically introduced to Thelonious Monk's 'Epistrophy,' which is being broadcast on television. Ratzinger's music transforms from a mode of estrangement to a vehicle for reconciliation, making the piano scene a transformative moment in their relationship. Each of these musical moments in the piano scene may be traced as follows:

THE SMETANA LULLABY: Hopkins plays the piano throughout the film and had creative input when choosing the repertoire. His role in this regard is most clear here. The Smetana piece has a distinct Romantic flair and is quite sombre—as reinforced by Ratzinger saying 'he [Smetana] had a very sad life'. The lullaby transfixes Bergoglio and its climax triggers a painful memory, shown to us as a flashback. During this flashback sequence we see Bergoglio breaking the news to his fiancée that he is calling off their engagement to become a priest. A poignancy in the music accompanies Bergoglio's painful memories. Sonically, this is heightened through an alteration of the piano's fidelity. The reverberation that previously marked distance between us and Ratzinger now signals Bergoglio's distance as he is swooped away into memories. Faithful to Stilwell's fantastical gap always carrying meaning, this variation in diegetic status highlights a notable change in emotions.[74] As is typical of Meirelles, when things get too heavy or too serious, the mood is promptly lightened. Ratzinger abruptly stops his performance, bringing Bergoglio's attention back to the present, and a conversation about The Beatles commences. While the lullaby is indeed a pre-existing

[73] This is a real album, recorded by Pope Benedict XVI in London's Abbey Road Studios in 2009. Pope Benedict XVI, *Music from the Vatican: Alma Mater*, Polydor, 2009, CD.

[74] The Fantastical Gap between Diegetic and Nondiegetic," 200.

composition, it is not the kind that we are led to believe. Jonathan Pryce unveiled the production secret in an interview with *Vanity Fair*, saying:

> In that sequence he [Anthony Hopkins] was supposed to play a bit of Mozart, and he'd gotten in touch with Fernando, the director and said, I don't think Mozart's right for this sequence. But there's a piece of Smetana that I'd like to play. It's very dark and Smetana had a very troubled life and I think it's right for the moment. So we filmed this with him playing the Smetana and then the booker went away to get the clearance for this piece of music and discovered that this piece of music didn't exist. And it was in fact written by Tony [Anthony Hopkins].[75]

The 'Smetana Lullaby' apparently resides in a category just as obscure as Stockhausen and Granados, since several reviews, articles, blogs, and forums initially failed to realize the duplicity. I suspect this musical choice was to remain confidential as the piece is not listed in the credits. Hopkins, having kept the true authorship hidden from most of the cast and crew, perhaps wanted to do the same with audiences. I do not think that this is simply humility, but rather that it is the actor's charismatic sense of humour—which many Hopkin's fans may appreciate. Hopkins has performed the nameless piece publicly and videos of him doing so are available online—thanks to the curation skills of his fans (the lullaby seems to be Hopkins' 'signature piece').[76] While it can technically be classified as pre-existing music, it would not have been particularly well known before the release of *The Two Popes*. Thus, we have an instance of bespoke pre-existing music. Godsall places import on 'the *referentiality* of the music within the film', saying that it 'is central to the deployment and interpretation of pre-existing music in the cinema.'[77] While perceivers might not be familiar with the piece itself, its framing points to traits long-affiliated with the genre of WAM—both on and off screen—that can inform our interpretation of the scene. This framing includes Ratzinger announcing the name and nationality of the piece's supposed composer; bringing a certain clout with its relatively lesser-known status. Arguably, the resulting additional cultural capital furnishes an 'esotericism' that is 'the bogey that haunts' WAM, as problematized by Lawrence Kramer.[78] The framing also includes Bergoglio's response to the piece. He remains silent, though his expression (mouth open in astonishment) is revealing. Winters emphasizes the influential role that characters play in how we respond to the same music: 'In showing us the reactions of characters to the music that surrounds them, these scenes offer us both a reflection of our own responses to the music we hear in the cinema, and suggest ways of interpreting characters' reactions to music less obviously heard'.[79] Therefore, Bergolio's reaction assists us in decoding the unfamiliar piece.

[75] Jonathan Pryce quoted in Vanity Fair, "The 'Donkey Work' and Religious Reawakenings That Went Into The Two Popes," *Vanity Fair*, December 19, 2019, https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2019/12/little-gold-men-podcast-two-popes-interview.
[76] For one example, see: ThomasAquinasCollege, "Sir Anthony Hopkins plays the piano at Thomas Aquinas College, California," YouTube Video, 3:03, July 26, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7unO4P87eKc.
[77] Godsall, *Reeled In*, 92.
[78] Lawrence Kramer, *Why Classical Music Still Matters* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), 42.
[79] Winters, *Music, Performance, and the Realities of Film*, 5.

Three conditions must be met for Hopkin's composition to masquerade as an authentic Smetana piece. First, that filmmakers expect perceivers not to recognize the music (or know Smetana's oeuvre). Second, that perceivers are required to accept that it is relatively normal to not identify (non-canonical) works of WAM. Third, that perceivers will not question the work's unfamiliarity during the screening (i.e., be distracted by the work). Until Pryce revealed the duplicity to the press, the piece's status as an authentic Smetana composition remained largely unchallenged. By successfully deceiving audiences, Ratzinger's characterization as an arcane figure is reinforced. This is achieved by playing upon WAM's esoteric reputation—particularly in relation to non-canonical works, like this piece purports to be (to all, save a few Smetana scholars).

Thus far, WAM and pop have been allocated to Ratzinger and Bergoglio, respectively, unequivocally, and exclusively. This oppositional characterization continues to have a narrative purpose throughout the piano scene, as is particularly discernible in the following example.

THE BEATLES CONVERSATION: Seven years on from their encounter in the Vatican washroom, Ratzinger's knowledge of popular culture seems not to have progressed. Reminiscent of the ABBA scene, the pair talk about where *Music from the Vatican: Alma Mater* was recorded. The conversation that ensues comically offsets the poignancy of the Smetana lullaby. Below is an extract from the script, with this conversation commencing immediately after the lullaby:

> RATZINGER:
> You know the album – It was recorded at a world famous studio in London – I was told I should be honoured because The Beatles had been there – Do you know The Beatles?
>
> BERGOGLIO:
> Yes. I know who they are. [chuckles]
>
> R: [laughs] Of course you do.
>
> B: "Eleanor Rigby."
>
> R: Who?
>
> B: You know, *Yellow Submarine*.
>
> R: Sorry, I don't know.
>
> B: The album. *Yellow Submarine*. [sings: da dum dum]
>
> R: That's silly. That's very funny.
> I can't remember where the studio was – It was like a church or something.
>
> B: Abbey Road?
>
> R: Abbey, the Abbey? Yes, the road.
>
> B: Abbey Road! You went to Abbey Road?
>
> R: No, no. no. That would not have been appropriate.

Figure 2: 'The Piano Scene.' Anthony McCarten, *The Two Popes*, 2019, 56–57. Dialogue edited to reflect what is delivered by the actors.

Ratzinger plays the beginning of the Smetana Lullaby again and he shares a rare insight into his past. He says: 'I once thought I had a calling for music. But I'm afraid, at the keyboard, [pause] I'm not infallible. But I enjoy it.' There is slight Mickey-Mousing enacted between what Ratzinger plays and what he says; with the high cadence occurring at the '[pause].' Ratzinger's admission reminds us that, unlike papal infallibility, he is allowed to be imperfect at the piano. Thus, the instrument again serves to re-humanize him. Ratzinger has opened to Bergoglio, and things are looking hopeful between them. This is most keenly shown in the cabaret piece that begins after this conversation.

THE ZARAH LEANDER CABARET: Bergoglio is instantly charmed by the upbeat piece, and he delights in the brighter mood it brings: 'It's different. It's wonderful!' Chuffed, Ratzinger invites Bergoglio to pour himself some wine. Whilst decanting, Hopkin's impromptu line foreshadows what is to come later: he sings the words 'Sweet Auf Wiedersehen' ('Sweet goodbye'). As revealed later in the film, this bonding moment permitted Ratzinger to retire, since the only thing stopping him was his fear that Bergoglio would be his successor and undo his efforts. Like the diegetic instances of 'Dancing Queen' and the saxophone, this 'Auf Wiedersehen' is non-diegetically recapitulated later in the film when the song 'Ciao, Bella, Ciao' performed by The Swingle Singers is heard in the underscore.

Image 3: Ratzinger performing the Zarah Leander cabaret piece for Bergoglio (00:49:43)

The cabaret piece facilitates a greater sense of compassion between Ratzinger and Bergoglio. It gives them a new context to see eye-to-eye with one another; to understand each other as 'brothers.' Indeed, they are enjoying themselves so much that they sing along to the melody with 'la la las.' By fusing WAM and pop, the cabaret piece allows both men to identify with it and bond over it. I return to the cabaret piece in our final scene for analysis—the tango scene—after addressing the last two musical moments from this piano scene. Despite Hopkins' character leading us to believe otherwise, the so-called 'Zarah Leander cabaret piece' is another original. Unlike the lullaby, this cabaret piece did not have a pre-existence.

Meirelles requested jazz and Hopkins 'improvised all the modern stuff'[80]—which also includes the next example.

GRANADOS AND STOCKHAUSEN: 'Time flies when you are having fun'—so the adage goes. This is conveyed to us in two consecutive clips that show Ratzinger playing a couple of bars by each composer and announcing their names as he performs obscure twentieth-century-style snippets. Bergoglio is by his side enjoying the music, the wine, and his company. By abruptly jumping from the cabaret piece to these extracts (all the while laughter and merriment proceeds), the quick passing of time enjoyed is conveyed to perceivers. As with the previous two performances, these extracts are Hopkins' creations. In an interview with *Deadline*, Hopkins summarizes the impact of the piano scene:

> I go off and play the piano, and I think by doing those serious scenes first of all, and then playing the piano… It doesn't take a genius to figure that out, that playing the piano is a bit of entertainment. He's coming to listen to me, and they've both got a sense of humour about it. And he mentions "Eleanor Rigby", and I say, "I don't know." But it's so human, between two old men.[81]

THELONIOUS MONK: Lastly, the pair recline by the television. We hear the music before we see it: Thelonious Monk performing 'Epistrophy.' The weak television signal distorts Monk's playing, resulting in Ratzinger changing the channel. Bergoglio places his retirement papers on the table between them and encouragingly offers his pen to Ratzinger. In a moment of optimism, Bergoglio is excited to see Ratzinger's hand hover towards his papers. Instead, the pope reaches for the remote control to change from the distorted channel to his favourite show *Komissar Rex*. Bergoglio is deflated and a shadow is cast over their move towards brotherhood. The role of 'Epistrophy' is not entirely clear. I initially read it as a continuation of Ratzinger's playing, since our acousmatic introduction to it is accompanied by the pontiff's laughter and we can see his disappointment when the poor signal attenuates his enjoyment of the piece. However, these tuning issues could analogically point elsewhere. When Ratzinger says that the television is not tuned in very well, he might be describing himself—in relation to Abbey Road, The Beatles, ABBA, or popular culture more generally. Perhaps Monk's jazz veers too far away from WAM into the popular sphere?

The Tango Scene

1:46:12–1:47:15

This is the final scene from Bergoglio's visit to Rome. We see the pair exchange goodbyes in a Vatican courtyard, where a car is waiting to bring Bergoglio to the airport. Ratzinger is accompanied by his entourage (assistant, security, and a Swiss guard). Since the piano scene, which occurred an hour previous to this, Ratzinger announced that he is to retire and that this was the reason why he would not sign Bergoglio's papers. At first, Bergoglio's retirement

[80] Pete Hammond, "*The Two Popes* Reunites Jonathan Pryce With Anthony Hopkins After 27 Years, Even If Pryce Can't Recall Their Last Collaboration," *Deadline*, November 27, 2019, https://deadline.com/2019/11/the-two-popes-anthony-hopkins-jonathan-pryce-netflix-interview-news-1202794985/.

[81] Hammond, "*The Two Popes* Reunites Jonathan Pryce With Anthony Hopkins After 27 Years, Even If Pryce Can't Recall Their Last Collaboration."

request came as good news: Ratzinger's conservatism would not be expropriated by the progressive cardinal. However, Ratzinger's primary motivation to retire was that he could no longer hear the voice of God. He confesses to Bergoglio:

> I can no longer sit on the Chair of Saint Peter. ... I cannot feel the presence of God. I do not hear his voice, do you understand me?
>
> I believe in God! I pray to God: Silence! [shouted]
>
> I cannot play this role any more. ...
>
> But now I can hear His voice, these past two days. I've heard His voice again. ... And the voice is the last one I expected to hear Him speak with. It was your voice. I think perhaps I could not hear Him, not because He was withdrawing from me, but because He is saying "Go, my faithful servant."[82]

Figure 3: 'The Tango Scene.' Anthony McCarten, *The Two Popes*, 2019, 106–107. Dialogue edited to reflect what is delivered by the actors.

Over the duration of their conversations, Ratzinger came to the conclusion that Bergoglio cannot retire because he should succeed him. Through learning to understand their respective ideologies, Ratzinger sees that his austere approach needs to be replaced with Bergoglio's courage to be vulnerable: 'You lead, not by power, not by intellect, but by how you live.'[83] Ratzinger continues his confession, admitting that 'As a child, I failed You first by not having the courage to taste of life itself. Instead, I hid away in books and then study. I know now that this left me empty and void of the world for which the Church is meant to help.'[84] They absolved each other's sins. Bergoglio leaves Rome understanding Ratzinger, and Ratzinger can retire safe in the knowledge that he can live to 'see [his] correction.'[85]

These formative conversations all took place without any musical accompaniment; non-diegetic or otherwise. However, as this tango scene evidences, instances of diegetic music trace their transition towards sincerely understanding each other. This understanding is achieved through listening—towards which music plays a forcible part. Music asserts itself and invites attention from those within earshot without the need for squabbling.

At their final meeting as Cardinal Bergoglio and Pope Benedict XVI, Ratzinger offers a parting parable to his new friend: 'Do you know the story of Saint Francis? When he was told by God to restore his Church, he thought He meant bricks and mortar [both chuckle]. Poor Saint Francis. Even he made mistakes and got things wrong.'[86] Bergoglio chooses this saint as his papal name and the scene pays tribute to Ratzinger's positive influence on his successor. Bergoglio offers his own tidbit: 'You know, Saint Francis, he loved to dance. He would have learned to tango. Hm?' With sustained protest, Ratzinger joins Bergoglio to

[82] 1:41:38–1:43:15.
[83] 1:38:03.
[84] 1:29:34.
[85] 1:06:28
[86] 1:45:50

dance. To the astonishment of the pope's entourage, the pontiff is dancing in the courtyard. The men tango to the tune of their own giggles as well as Bergoglio's steady 'one, two, three, one, two, three …'. This scene not only shows the extent of their transformation, but it signals back to the precise moment that their relationship pivoted into amicable territory: as they dance, the sound of the cabaret piece drifts into audibility. This is complemented with a flashback to that evening of 'brotherhood' at Castel Gandolfo. Interwoven with the dancing, this flashback directly acknowledges the cabaret piece as the catalyst of their burgeoning friendship. During the piano scene, the music was heard in the diegesis. This time its categorization is unclear. Who is recalling the piece? Is it heard in the minds of Bergoglio, Ratzinger, or even both of them in an unusual instance of telepathic kinship? Is it the 'filmind'[87] promulgating itself, asking us to connect the piano scene with this moment? To which narrative level can we attribute it to—diegetic, non-diegetic? As when Bergoglio's memory was triggered by the Smetana Lullaby or when 'Clair de lune' swayed between these levels, the classification of the music in this scene does not matter greatly—particularly since Stilwell reminds us that moments that traverse the fantastical gap are imbued with meaning. Here, the emotional meaning is clear: the men are happy having reached an understanding of and respect for each other's differences.

Image 4: Ratzinger and Bergoglio tango as they prepare to say goodbye (01:46:51)

After tangoing, Ratzinger gives Bergoglio The Beatles' *Abbey Road* CD as a parting gift. This gesture sees Ratzinger admitting to his pop ineptitude in a humble manner and also proves that he was paying attention to (and learning from) their conversations at Castel Gandolfo. Like the cabaret piece, the *Abbey Road* album references the conversations from the piano scene. This referential repetition strengthens and unifies music's narrative contribution to the overall film.

[87] The 'filmind' was adapted by Winters from Daniel Frampton's *Filmosophy* to conceptualize a kind of filmic autonomy in which there is no distinction between diegetic and non-diegetic music or sound. See: Winters, "The Non-Diegetic Fallacy," especially 232–236. See also: Daniel Frampton, *Filmosophy* (London: Wallflower Press, 2006).

Furthermore, just as the diegetic instances of the saxophone, 'Dancing Queen,' and Ratzinger's 'Auf Weidersehen' are mirrored in the underscore, the conversations about The Beatles are recapitulated in the non-diegetic soundtrack. Transporting us from this scene to Bergoglio's coronation is an arrangement of the song 'Blackbird' by The Beatles (although it is from *The White Album*, not from *Abbey Road*). An acapella version of the song, vocalized to 'doo doo doo,' is heard as Bergoglio leaves the Vatican. Acapella music and plainchant have been associated with Ratzinger in the underscore. Similarly in this scene, it expresses Ratzinger's emotions as he bids farewell to Bergoglio. Only one line of the song is articulated with words, which unveils the role of 'Blackbird' here: 'You were only waiting for this moment to arise.' Though saying goodbye to Bergoglio was bittersweet, Ratzinger can now retire safe in the knowledge that good will come of it. He truly was waiting for this moment to arise. In synchrony with the cadence following this line, we are transported to 2013 when Ratzinger announces his retirement. Bergoglio watches this on television from Argentina. Here, 'Blackbird' is heard as a piano arrangement before transitioning to an orchestral version as the conclave meet to elect a new pontiff. Like the arrangement of 'Dancing Queen' heard during the conclave procession at the beginning of the film, 'Blackbird' stops when the doors to the Sistine Chapel close and the secret ballot takes place.

The changing presentations of the song traverses flavours of plainchant, jazz, and Romanticism, to bring together attributes of both men in moving forward amicably and for the good of the Church. This brings the film near its end. Bergoglio is elected and promptly goes on a world tour to be with the people and to promote compassion and responsibility—touching on timely issues such as climate change, the refugee crisis, and homophobia. He is a man of action and a progressive one at that. Finally, the film's coda—shown alongside the credits—sees the men at Castel Gandolfo watching the 2014 World Cup final between the native teams, Argentina and Germany.

Part Three: Conclusion

Throughout *The Two Popes*, music relieves the profundity of Ratzinger and Bergoglio's discourse without diminishing the seriousness of these exchanges. Not only does the use of pop and WAM help to cinematize the adaptation, but it transforms the niche theological aspects into something universal: two people reconciling their differences by listening to one another.

Familiar works like 'Clair de lune' and 'Dancing Queen'—alongside the filmic conventions of pop and WAM that these works enact—are unambiguously employed to effortlessly characterize Ratzinger and Bergoglio. Moreover, the deliberate use of such well-known pieces helps to steer interpretations and encourage a dominant reading. This is accomplished by allowing perceivers to draw upon rich pre- and post-existing encounters; to synthesize intertextual information associated with the genres from both the *real* and *reel* worlds. Significantly, this narrows the encoding/decoding disparity between filmmakers and audiences. To this extent, *The Two Popes* relies on carefully selected music to deliver a dominant reading of the narrative, thus inviting audiences further into the game of make-believe.

The non-diegetic underscore takes substantial cues from the diegesis and duly rewards attentive listening—and offers subliminal unification to passive listeners. This creates a

coherent unity that hears, for example: diegetic conversations about The Beatles reprised in the non-diegetic underscore; 'Dancing Queen' restated in the processional montage after the ABBA scene; and the pivotal Zarah Leander cabaret piece re-emerge during the tango scene. Thus, the diegesis and the non-diegetic underscore interact and work together to jointly characterize Ratzinger and Bergoglio.

The oppositional presentation of pop and WAM invites us to consider broader distinctions between the genres while also humanizing these characters—to view Bergoglio as a man-of-the-people and to empathize with Ratzinger's solitude. Thinking in terms of these musics' typical concert practices (the more rigid concert-hall etiquette of WAM versus singing and dancing with strangers at a pop concert), we can clearly observe the differing portraits that the filmmakers are conveying. Taking the musical moments in their totality, we see how WAM is used to contrast Ratzinger's austerity, conservativism, and solitary nature with Bergoglio's more amicable vulnerability, progressive outlook, and sociability—as represented by pop music. In this regard, the role of these genres is rather typical and garnishes characterizations in line with established cinematic tropes and *real*-life stereotypes. Yet for all of pop and WAM's ability to distinguish these characters, the fusion of these two styles sees them come to understand one another. This is evidenced in the final two examples via the Zarah Leander cabaret piece that catalyses the entire progression of the narrative: Ratzinger can retire from the Chair of Saint Peter and Bergoglio can lead the Church in a new direction as Pope Francis.

The film exemplifies the impressive level to which pop and WAM can deliver narrative insight. However, the same efficiency with which these genres provide narrative information may also contribute to a reluctancy for filmmakers to depart from convenient, long-established, and sometimes pernicious tropes. Consequently, many outdated and problematic representations are preserved—especially lack of diversity. This issue is particularly compounded in relation to uses of WAM, given its centuries-old, largely white, western, and male (literary) history. That being said, *The Two Popes* does more than simply rehash established stereotypes. Notably, it breaks ties with value judgements: neither pop nor WAM are measured aesthetically or ethically against each other. The genres are presented as neither superior nor inferior to one another. Amid mainstream contemporary film, this kind of axiological approach is rather unusual and refreshing. Halfyard notes that while rare in Hollywood film, this approach does occur more regularly in European film traditions where a 'confrontational juxtaposition of high culture and popular culture is largely absent.'[88] Importantly, the styles are viewed in parallel to one another; not as better or worse, but simply different. Ratzinger and Bergoglio are different. Through all their arguing, they never disrespect or admonish each other. Their philosophies, dogma, traits, and interests are mutually respected, even if not mutually liked. As I hope to have illustrated, this quality is entirely embodied and buttressed by the music.

[88] Halfyard, "Screen Playing," 78. This bears relevance when considering the platform on which *The Two Popes* resides: Netflix. This streaming platform facilitates mass consumption. While it offers something for everybody, the business model relies on providing productions that appeal to a wide demographic; blurring distinctions between Hollywood, European, and world cinematic traditions. Indeed, director Fernando Meirelles enjoys being an outlier, having established his directorial style in his native Brazil. See: The Hollywood Reporter, "Directors Roundtable: Todd Phillips, Martin Scorsese, Greta Gerwig, Noah Baumbach | Close Up," YouTube Video, 1:05:03, January 6, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4iLtjMwkOlg.

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CONFERENCE REVIEW: Joint Plenary Conference of the Society of Musicology in Ireland and the Irish Chapter of the International Council for Traditional Music

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Abstract
Although forced online by the Covid-19 pandemic, the inaugural Joint Plenary Conference of the Society for Musicology in Ireland and the Irish Chapter of the International Council for Traditional Music, which took place in May 2021, was a bountiful and diverse affair. In addition to rejuvenating the relationship between musicology and ethnomusicology, the rich and wonderfully varied program offered plenty of intellectual nourishment.

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CONFERENCE REVIEW

Joint Plenary Conference of the Society of Musicology in Ireland and the Irish Chapter of the International Council for Traditional Music

Fiona Baldwin

Organising a successful academic conference requires a Herculean effort at the best of times, but the task becomes even more fraught during a global pandemic, when it is beset by capricious public health guidance, convoluted travel restrictions, mercurial broadband connectivity, and the chronic unpredictability of technology. Thankfully, the organising committee of the inaugural Joint Plenary Conference of the Society of Musicology in Ireland (SMI) and the Irish Chapter of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM Ireland) triumphed over these adversities to unite international colleagues in a spirit of camaraderie, collaboration, and resolve, and rejuvenated the relationship between musicology and ethnomusicology.

Hosted by the Trinity College Dublin Department of Music over the last weekend in May 2021, the three-day conference embodied interdisciplinary ideals and exposed participants to a wide range of papers, panel discussions and perspectives, as well as vibrant, artistic performances by renowned Irish singers and musicians—Mia Cooper (violin), Niall Kinsella and Aoife O'Sullivan (piano), Rachel Croash (soprano), Raphaela Mangan (mezzosoprano), Gavin Ring (tenor), the Trinity Chapel Chamber Choir, and The Trinitones. More than 470 delegates from fifty-six institutions across four continents participated in this year's plenary conference, which featured in excess of one hundred papers from graduate, early-career, and established researchers in the fields of historical musicology, ethnomusicology, music theory and analysis, and performance-based research. The warmth of the three opening addresses by Dr Evangelia Rigaki (Trinity College Dublin), Professor Lorraine Byrne Bodley MRIA (SMI President) and Dr Adrian Scahill (ICTM Ireland Chair) set the tone for what proved to be a most collegial and scholarly event; one that certainly surpassed this reviewer's expectations.

The Plenary Keynote Lecture, *Ireland and the Musical Work,* was given by Professor Harry White (University College Dublin)—inaugural President of the Society for Musicology in Ireland between 2003 and 2006—and chaired by Professor Patrick Zuk (Durham University), who also responded to the keynote's arguments. White's erudition and reputation as a cultural historian is widely recognised, so it was unsurprising that his keynote should serve as a clarion call for historiographers to recognise the 'conceptual prowess' of the musical work as a 'fulcrum of Irish cultural history'. Until such time as the musical work is reclaimed and exemplified as an 'indispensable agent of Irish cultural discourse', the presence of music in Irish cultural history is likely to remain a 'hit-and-miss affair', he reasoned. To underpin this assertion, White offered compelling evidence, including a selection of 'Irish' musical works from a one-hundred-year period—from the premier of Handel's *Messiah* (1742) up to the first performances of Balfe's *Bohemian Girl* (1843)—that, though 'long familiar in an Irish musicological context', would be certainly absent from the 'current purview of Irish cultural history', except where they inhabited 'the shadowlands of Joyce's fiction'.

The IRC-SMI Harrison Medal for 2021 was awarded to Professor Michael Beckerman (Carroll and Milton Petrie Professor of Music, Collegiate Professor of Music, New York University), who also delivered the IRC-Harrison Lecture on the Saturday night. The highly engaging talk, *"I Have Loved the Lands of Ireland," and Other Adventures in the Timeless Past(oral)*, was delivered with Beckerman's inimitable panache. Using an eclectic mix of subdominant-infused musical examples—from Bohuslav Martinů's *Opening of the Wells* to Seóirse Bodley's Symphony No. 2 to the song *My Girl* by The Temptations—he explored how music links patterns of loss, longing and authenticity in a complex tangle of nostalgia, and the way in which melodic moments can 'syntactically, symbolically and suggestively' situate us, in part, in a kind of 'plagal pastoral'.

Over and above the plethora of diverse papers on offer across the three days, other notable highlights from the conference included a plenary round table, *Hearing Struggle: Musical Responses to Times of Crisis in the Czech Lands*, which surveyed how the musical-cultural phenomena of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries offer insights into both musical history and cultural developments more generally. Inspired by Professor Michael Beckerman's analysis of the different ways in which we hear struggle in music (*Czech Music and Infectious Disease*, May 2020) and united by the common thread of cultural identity, the panel's contributions—while often thematically and methodologically distinct—were stimulating and thought-provoking. Two additional roundtable discussions separately addressed the ways in which traditional music reflects community life in Bengal, and the creative process involved in Christopher Coles *The Nine Lives Suite*, which honours the nine African-Americans who were shot and killed by a white supremacist at the Emanual African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina in 2015 and seeks to inspire future artistic endeavours and societal change. Unfortunately, the presentation of ICTM Ireland's inaugural Oirdhearchas Award to, and the associated keynote lecture by, Professor Thérèse Smith (University College Dublin) had to be postponed to the 17th Annual ICTM Ireland Conference at Dundalk Institute of Technology, on 25–26 February 2022. In his welcome address, Dr Adrian Scahill (Maynooth University) nevertheless took the opportunity to underscore the instrumental role played by Professor Smith in the foundation of ICTM Ireland, as well highlighting the 'vision, energy, and industry' that she brought to the organisation.

There was no trace of the combative atmosphere that can, on occasion, beset academic gatherings. The ambiance was constructive and munificent, with every session ending with helpful suggestions and comments—aided in no small way by the thirty-two separate session chairs whose sympathetic handling of the discussions meant that everyone came away with a renewed sense of camaraderie, enthusiasm, and belonging. The sessions were well spread-out, with due consideration given by the organisers to the essential coffee breaks and social activities. Sadly, repairing to the pub for collegial chatter and networking over a well-deserved tipple was not on the cards this year. Instead, the virtual milieu known as the 'breakout room' allowed interested parties to engage in academic—and non-academic—discourse, while imbibing their libation of choice in the comfort of their own homes.

Dr Simon Trezise's (Trinity College Dublin) insightful welcome in the conference booklet observed that the 'constraints dictated by circumstances have created a democratic freedom of access that must be enjoyed, even though we will all miss those valuable coffee breaks and meals in which so much is learned and shared', and enjoyed it was. With 108

paper and panel presentations given over the duration of the event, it is safe to say that not only is interdisciplinary musicological and ethnomusicological research alive and well, but it is also thriving despite the pandemic and its associated archive and library closures.