

**Sounding Girl(y), Girl(y) Sounds:
Music and Girlhood in Contemporary French Cinema**

Submitted by Gemma Louise Edney to the University of Exeter
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Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between music and girlhood in contemporary French cinema, arguing that music provides a means of navigating the experiences and sensations of girlhood, while also retaining a certain opacity and privacy for the girl subject. Where current postfeminist media studies present a predominantly Anglo-centric approach to the girl figure, this thesis opens up the study of cinematic girlhood representation into a Francophone context. Music, with its ability to transcend linguistic restrictions and slip between the verbal and the non-verbal, is particularly compelling for this analysis, and has typically been ignored, both in studies of girlhood representation, and in French film studies more generally. This thesis therefore identifies and tackles two main gaps in current scholarship. On the one hand, it addresses the need to move beyond the current Anglo-centric approach to the girl figure, demonstrating the need for linguistic and locational diversity within the field. On the other hand, it addresses the lack of scholarly interventions that deal with film music in a specifically French context, extending and enriching the existing field of film music study beyond Hollywood and arguing that music is highly significant to French cinema.

Exploring a range of French girlhood films spanning the decade between 2005 and 2015, the thesis develops detailed case studies to highlight specific modes of meaning and identification. These studies bring together work in both film studies and musicology, presenting an interdisciplinary approach to film music that is rarely seen in scholarship. Asking why these two disciplines so rarely speak to each other, the thesis demonstrates the benefits of combining detailed musicological analysis with film theory and cultural studies, in order to fully examine the different layers of meaning that manifest in film music. By exposing these layers of meaning, this thesis maintains that it is important to listen to, as well as watch, the girl figure. Arguing that music enables a means of girlhood expression that escapes the confines of the body and transcends the verbal, this thesis moves beyond current studies of girlhood representation which focus determinedly on the visible, highlighting music's vital role in making the girl experience accessible and putting forward a theory of girlhood audibility.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Acknowledgements	3
Table of Contents	4
List of Figures	6
Introduction	8
Girlhood and Contemporary Culture.....	13
Youth and Girlhood in French Cinema	18
Feminine Expression in Film	21
Music, Character, and Identification	25
Music in French Cinema.....	30
Music and (Female) Youth	32
Why girl(y)?	34
Methodology.....	35
Chapter 1: Language Barriers? Song Language, Identity, and Meaning ..	50
Introduction.....	50
Language and Musical Meaning in <i>Respire</i> (Laurent, 2014).....	60
Pop Music, Language and Youth in <i>LOL</i> (Azuelos, 2009).....	70
Conclusion.....	84
Chapter 2: Artists, Recognition and Identity	87
Introduction.....	87
J. Dash, Noir Désir, and Courtney Love: Masculine Distance and Feminine Closeness	98
Rihanna and Nina Simone: Specific Feminine Meaning	109
Conclusion.....	123
Chapter 3: Gender/Genre: Girls, Musical Style, and Emotion	128
Introduction.....	128
Repetition and Remembrance: Folk Music in <i>Tout est pardonné</i> and <i>Un Amour de jeunesse</i>	139

Le “French Touch:” Electronica, Frenchness, and Modern Authenticity	150
Techno, Youth and Gender in the films of Céline Sciamma.....	154
Conclusion.....	168
Chapter 4: Composing Girlhood.....	172
Introduction.....	172
What does “Girl” Sound Like? Contrasting “Feminine” and “Youthful” Scoring in <i>Le Hérisson</i>	179
Musical Liminality: Youthful Sexuality in <i>Jeune et jolie</i>	187
<i>Belle Épine</i> : Gender Differences in Contemporary Scoring	193
Aural Character Development in <i>Bande de filles</i>	202
Conclusion.....	207
Conclusion.....	211
French Cinema: A Cinema of Music and Femininity?	212
The Constraints of Visibility in Girl Studies.....	215
Music and Emotion: Between the General and the Specific.....	217
Film Music: Interdisciplinary Methods.....	221
Girlhood Audibility.....	223
Appendix	224
Works Cited	226

List of Figures

Fig. 0.1 <i>La Religieuse</i> . Suzanne sings at the convent.	8
Fig. 0.2. <i>Lou!</i> Lou uses music to communicate with Tristan over the phone.....	10
Fig. 0.3 <i>Lou!</i> The oppressive silence caused by Lou's grandmother is broken.	11
Fig. 0.4 The DVD cover to <i>15 ans et demi</i>	12
Fig. 0.5 The "This Girl Can" campaign	13
Fig. 1.1 <i>Respire</i> . Sarah is dominant in the image.	65
Fig. 1.2 The rhythm of the lyrics in "Me and You."	65
Fig. 1.3 <i>Respire</i> . Charlie looks up at Sarah.....	66
Fig. 1.4 <i>Respire</i> . Sarah and Charlie dance together.	66
Fig. 1.5 <i>Respire</i> . Charlie is left alone on the dancefloor.....	67
Fig. 1.6 <i>Respire</i> . Charlie is overwhelmed by the music and her emotions.....	69
Fig. 1.7 <i>Respire</i> . Sarah whispers threateningly in Charlie's ear.....	69
Fig. 1.8 <i>LOL</i> . Lola ignores her mother on the way to school.....	77
Fig. 1.9 <i>LOL</i> . Lola's music is audible from the back seat.	77
Fig. 1.10 <i>LOL</i> . Lola and her mother sing together.....	78
Fig. 1.11 <i>LOL</i> . Lola admits her virginity to Maël.	82
Fig. 1.12 <i>LOL</i> . Anne's experience mirrors Lola's.....	83
Fig. 2.1 Taylor Swift performs at the 2007 ACMA All-Star Jam.	93
Fig. 2.2 Taylor Swift performs during the "1989 World Tour."	94
Fig. 2.3 <i>Bande de filles</i> . The girls dance on the metro.	100
Fig. 2.4 <i>Bande de filles</i> . The camera focuses on the girls' bodies.	101
Fig. 2.5 <i>Suzanne</i> . Charlie falls asleep in Suzanne's lap.	102
Fig. 2.6 <i>Suzanne</i> . Suzanne's clothes and makeup contrast with the wall.	103
Fig. 2.7 <i>Suzanne</i> . Suzanne is centred while Maria drives.....	104
Fig. 2.8 <i>Suzanne</i> . Suzanne remains the focus of the shot.....	104
Fig. 2.9 <i>Suzanne</i> . The sole shot of Suzanne while pregnant.	108
Fig. 2.10 <i>Bande de filles</i> . Lady looks down as the music begins.	112
Fig. 2.11 The image of Rihanna published by <i>TMZ</i>	113
Fig. 2.12 <i>Bande de filles</i> . Lady meets the camera's gaze.....	114
Fig. 2.13 <i>Bande de filles</i> . The girls dance together.	115
Fig. 2.14 <i>Bande de filles</i> . Marième watches the other girls.....	116
Fig. 2.15 <i>Bande de filles</i> . The camera positions the spectator into the circle.	117
Fig. 2.16 The advertisement for Rihanna's perfume.	119
Fig. 2.17 <i>Suzanne</i> . The final close-up.....	121

Fig. 3.1 <i>Tout est pardonné</i> . The opening sequence.....	141
Fig. 3.2 <i>Tout est pardonné</i> . Victor and Pamela play together.....	143
Fig. 3.3 <i>Tout est pardonné</i> . Pamela looks out of the window.....	144
Fig. 3.4 <i>Tout est pardonné</i> . The views from the train.....	145
Fig. 3.5 <i>Naissance des pieuvres</i> . The opening credits.....	158
Fig. 3.6 <i>Naissance des pieuvres</i> . The girls' changing room.....	159
Fig. 3.7 <i>Naissance des pieuvres</i> . Marie and Floriane go to Axe Majeur.....	160
Fig. 3.8 <i>Naissance des pieuvres</i> . Anne dances alone.....	162
Fig. 3.9 <i>Naissance des pieuvres</i> . Anne hides behind a curtain.....	163
Fig. 3.10 <i>Naissance des pieuvres</i> . Anne lies passively under François.....	164
Fig. 4.1 A diagram of typical Classical sonata form.....	174
Fig. 4.2 A diagram showing the "strong" and "weak" beats in 4/4.....	175
Fig. 4.3 A diagram showing the "strong" and "weak" beats in 3/4.....	180
Fig. 4.4 A transcription of the opening bars of "Mademoiselle Paloma.".....	180
Fig. 4.5 A transcription of the closing bars of "Mademoiselle Paloma.".....	181
Fig. 4.6 Extract from "Marche et chœur des gamins" from <i>Carmen</i>	184
Fig. 4.7 Extract from Peter's theme from <i>Peter and the Wolf</i>	184
Fig. 4.8 Extract from Grandfather's theme from <i>Peter and the Wolf</i>	184
Fig. 4.9 A transcription of the opening passage of "Madame Michel.".....	186
Fig. 4.10 A transcription of the opening passage of "Mademoiselle Paloma.".....	186
Fig. 4.11 <i>Belle Épine</i> . The Rungis motor track.....	195
Fig. 4.12 <i>Belle Épine</i> . Prudence pushes through the crowds.....	196
Fig. 4.13 <i>Belle Épine</i> . Prudence walks through the woods.....	197
Fig. 4.14 <i>Belle Épine</i> . The camera emphasises Prudence's exclusion.....	198
Fig. 4.15 <i>Belle Épine</i> . Prudence watches the bikers.....	198
Fig. 4.16 A transcription of "Xy.".....	199
Fig. 4.17 <i>Bande de filles</i> . Marième wears baggy clothing.....	205
Fig. 5.1 <i>Cléo de 5 à 7</i> . Cléo sings emotionally towards the camera.....	212
Fig. 5.2 <i>Diva</i> . Cynthia sings the aria from <i>La Wally</i>	213

Introduction

In Guillaume Nicloux's 2013 film, *La Religieuse / The Nun*, a young girl named Suzanne (Pauline Etienne) is forced to join a convent after her parents cannot afford to support her. Gradually, her freedoms are restricted; she is subjected to torturous neglect; and her voice is all but removed. During this time, the abbesses in charge of the convent, noticing Suzanne's musical ability, allow her to play the harpsichord and sing in their choirs and recitals, thereby permitting her only one true avenue of expression. While Suzanne does not necessarily take pleasure in the music she is obliged to create, it is the one method of self-expression she is allowed, and it even offers her the opportunity for small acts of rebellion. In the second convent in which she is resident, Suzanne is asked by the Mother Superior to perform a song for her Sisters. Suzanne, with a deadpan expression, sings an upbeat song about finding a husband and consummating the marriage on their wedding night, leaving the majority of her audience shocked or stifling laughter, and much to the disdain of the authorities (fig. 0.1). This act of resistance may be small, but it nevertheless allows us a glimmer of Suzanne's true character: she is able, within the restrictions placed upon her, to express herself more freely, and to rebel against the system in which she finds herself.



Fig. 0.1 *La Religieuse*. Suzanne sings at the convent.

Nicloux's film, then, raises some interesting questions about the relationship between music, girlhood identity, and communication. Suzanne is able to use music as a method of communication that overcomes her lack of vocal expression: her participation in musical activities ensures that her voice is heard, even if it is within a mediated and controlled musical form. Through music, which itself comes from *within* the structures confining her, she is liberated, to a certain extent, from her constraints, and is able to come into her own identity. This reliance on music for expression and communication is not an isolated case; *La Religieuse* is but one of a variety of French girlhood narratives that use music in some kind of communicative way. Julien Neel's *Lou!* (2014), for example, while very different from *La Religieuse* with its colourfully chaotic characters and comic book-style *mise-en-scène*,¹ also features a protagonist that very rarely speaks to others. Instead, when Lou (Lola Lasseron) calls the boy across the street, whom she has been watching longingly for a long time, "pour parler, ou... j'sais pas," she is lost for words until she plays a short motif on her portable keyboard which becomes a collaborative musical experience between the two teens (fig. 0.2). Lou is therefore able to express herself despite her shyness and inability to communicate her feelings verbally. Indeed, the whole film is saturated with music and noise: from the music to which Lou listens through her headphones; to the non-diegetic music that underscores Lou and her mother's every emotion; to the end credit music over which Lou and her mother sing. There are, in fact, very few scenes that do not contain any music, which makes it all the more noticeable when they do occur. One such moment takes place when Lou's strict, uptight grandmother (her difference from Lou and her mother represented visually with her grey clothes and tightly-curved hair, contrasting dramatically with the colourful, disordered environment of Lou's apartment) comes to visit. Desperate to impress her and cause as little conflict as possible, Lou and her mother are both literally and figuratively silenced by her presence; not even music is permitted at this time. Eventually, however, this silence is too much, and Lou's anger and frustration burst out of her in an explosion of noise as her voiceover tells us "les mots, ils prennent forme dans ma tête [mais] pour qu'ils sortent, il me suffit d'hurler" (fig. 0.3). There is no need for music, here, as Lou has finally found her "voice," remarking as she leaves the house, "la délinquante vous laisse... Désolée, mais

¹ Indeed, the film is based on the comic book series of the same name.



Fig. 0.2. *Lou!* Lou uses music to communicate with Tristan over the phone.

moi aussi j'ai une crise de l'adolescence à faire, et j vais aller faire ça chez une copine, si ça vous ne dérange pas. Prévenez-moi quand vous aurez grandi!" For a brief moment, Lou's desire for her own mother (and grandmother) to "grow up" overcomes her inability to speak, allowing her this moment of vocal freedom. This moment paves the way for more vocal expression as a whole for Lou: after this sequence, she talks much more to the other characters and expresses her feelings more clearly in the voiceover. As a consequence, there is far less music from this point on the soundtrack, and none that is specifically listened to or created by Lou: now that she has found her voice, she has no need for external intervention.



Fig. 0.3 *Lou!* The oppressive silence caused by Lou's grandmother is broken.

In *Lou!*, then, music functions as a means of expression when words are not available (or not permitted). As in *La Religieuse*, the young protagonist uses music as a substitution for vocal expression: she is able to express herself more clearly through music than with words. In these examples, music represents an indirect form of expression, whereby neither protagonist explicitly vocalises their feelings; rather, it is indirectly communicated through musical sounds. For these girls, music offers a means of escaping confinement: for Suzanne, it is the physical and ideological confines of the convent; and for Lou, it is her own shyness and containment within the oppressive apartment with her mother. There is, therefore, an interesting relationship between music and communication, something that, while perhaps not as explicit, is explored in other films of the same era, such as *15 ans et demi / Daddy Cool* (Desagnat and Sorriaux, 2008), in which daughter Églantine (Juliette Lambolay) and father Philippe's (Daniel Auteuil) ideological differences are represented in the film both through Églantine's taste in (diegetic) music, and by the non-diegetic music associated with each character; and *Tout ce qui brille / All That Glitters* (Nakache, 2009), in which Lila (Leïla Bekhti) and Ely (Géraldine Nakache), the two young protagonists, dance and sing their way through the narrative. In *15 ans et demi*, the music associated with Églantine is comprised of modern pop and rock songs, which serves as a dramatic contrast to the classical music associated with scientist Philippe. This musical separation is highlighted by the cover image from the DVD release of the film, which shows Philippe standing in dark clothes in front of a series of pictures of Églantine, who wears a James Dean-style red jacket and stands in a variety of dance/rock poses (fig. 0.4). During the film, Églantine is characterised, in much the same way as other teen films, by her tastes in music, and she forms her identity around the music she listens to. In *Tout ce qui brille*,



Fig. 0.4 The DVD cover to *15 ans et demi*

not only do Lila and Ely sing and dance as a means of affirming their friendship with each other, but the music also serves, as in *15 ans et demi*, as a marker of identity for the spectator. The recurring song in the film, “Fit but You Know It” by The Streets, is played three times: during the opening credit montage when the girls attempt to enter an exclusive night club; in a high-end shop where they share the purchase of some expensive shoes; and over the end credits which mirror the opening scene. The song serves as an affirmation of the girls’ identities: they may be “fit” and “know it,” but it is not enough to elevate them from their working-class lives to the life of the celebrities they wish to embody. In this film, as in *15 ans et demi*, the music provides a means of understanding the characters, even if they themselves do not hear the same track.

In all of these examples, despite their differences of genre, music provides a means of expression that is closely linked to the girl protagonists’ own sense of identity, allowing the spectator a look inside their experiences as young girls. This thesis examines this relationship between music and girlhood expression in contemporary French cinema, asking *how* music is able to achieve this, and how it is possible for music to communicate the feelings and sensations of girlhood adolescence, particularly when the girl characters in question do not necessarily express themselves verbally. As the examples above show, I do not focus on one particular genre in this thesis, nor is there a particular focus on “popular” or

“arthouse” productions. Indeed, it is my aim, as I discuss later in this introduction, to demonstrate that the use of music in girlhood film narratives is widespread, and not restricted to a particular “type” of film; rather, music provides an alternative means of expression and communication regardless of genre or prestige.

These films all form part of a recent wave of French films that feature girlhood coming-of-age narratives: since the turn of the century, there have been a number of both popular and arthouse films released that feature stories of girlhood adolescence. As Tim Palmer notes, the French cinema industry has seen, in recent years, a “tide of debut features,” many of them “female-centred” (2), a statement backed up by Emma Wilson who argues that contemporary French filmmakers are increasingly “placing the experiences of girls in representation” (“Precarious Lives” 275). In this thesis, I examine some of these representations, asking how music interacts with the girls’ expression and demonstrating music’s ability to create avenues of meaning and identification that link spectators with the girl characters on screen.

Girlhood and Contemporary Culture

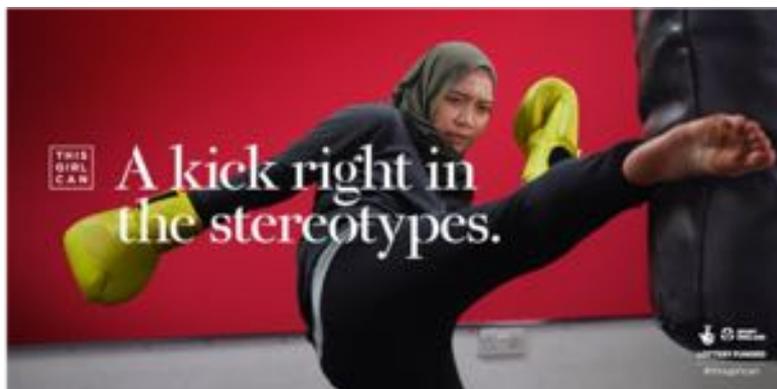


Fig. 0.5 The “This Girl Can” campaign that calls itself “a celebration of active women who are doing their thing no matter how well they do it.”

In recent years, it seems, girls are everywhere. They pose on magazine covers, star in TV shows and films, amass millions of followers on Instagram and YouTube, and are the main concern of a number of media campaigns aimed at teaching us that girls can do anything boys can do (and sometimes do it better) (fig. 0.5). Contemporary media surrounds us with girl figures: indeed, although girls have fascinated writers, filmmakers, policymakers, and the public for decades, if recent scholarly interventions are to be believed, girls are more visible now than ever before. As Sarah Projansky writes, in the last two decades or so,

girls “have appeared often and everywhere,” caused by both the increased visibility of celebrity girl figures and a media fascination with the “everyday” girl (2). In a similar vein, Anita Harris writes that girls are “the new heroes of popular culture,” arguing that a new level of choice and agency afforded to girls in recent years has created a media culture of girlhood representation: girls are simultaneously made visible, and targeted as a new-found, autonomous consumer group (xvii). However, as Harris goes on to note, “while some privileged young women are indeed reaping the benefits of new opportunities, those without economic or social capital are slipping through the ever-widening holes in what remains of our social safety nets” (xvii). Not only, therefore, are girls championed as models of a modern, liberal, capitalist society, they are also a cause for concern. As Projansky writes, girls are either celebrated or vilified as “can-do” or “at-risk” girls, and the transition between these two categories is a particularly large risk (4). This is demonstrated by the media fascination with what Projansky calls “crash-and-burn” girls, typified by the media coverage of celebrities such as Lindsay Lohan and Britney Spears. Therefore, contemporary media show a simultaneous “love and contempt for girls” (Projansky 4), which increases their visibility even more. Although, as I have mentioned above, the historical accuracy of calling this fascination with the girl figure “new” can definitely be questioned, there is no denying that there has, in recent years, been a peak in interest in girls and young women, and the way they are represented. This coincides with a renewed cultural fascination with the girl; her agency as a modern female figure; her visibility in the media; her triumphs as well as her potential mistakes or misdemeanours. This increased interest in the agency of modern femininity has been attributed to a particularly postfeminist sensibility in contemporary media culture. Here a specifically “girly” aesthetic is privileged: this aesthetic is defined by Suzanne Ferriss and Mallory Young as “a return to femininity [...] a focus on female pleasure and pleasures, and the value of consumer culture and girlie goods” (4). This postfeminist sensibility can, as Mary Harrod argues, be observed in other Western cultures, and not just in the United States. Harrod discusses “chick flicks” as evidence and products of a postfeminist culture, noting how in recent years, French cinema has embraced both the rom-com and the “female friendship chick flick” (37). These films, according to Harrod, echo the American chick-flick genre, contributing “to a discourse about the nature and value of feminism and women’s status today,” and arguing that the films are

both “framed within localized concerns and politics” while also “speak[ing] to global ideas of equality and agency within [...] postfeminist cultures” (37).

More generally, the last decade has proved an important period for women and girls in France. In 2004, the French government voted to ban the wearing of conspicuous religious symbols in schools. While this ban includes any religious symbol, including large Christian crosses, Jewish *kippahs*, and Sikh turbans, the law was largely considered by the wider public to be addressed specifically at the wearing of Islamic headscarves or *hijabs* by Muslim girls. Despite protests by large numbers of Muslim women and girls, the law was passed with overwhelming majority, meaning that from September 2005, girls were no longer permitted to wear their scarves in public schools. Since then, there have been a number of cases of girls being excluded from school or dismissed from their employment for refusing to remove their *hijabs*, and, more recently, even occasions where Muslim girls have been sent home from school for wearing long skirts (Chadenat, *Le Figaro*). This coincides with increasing fear over the targeting of young girls by terrorist extremists, following reports that 55% of French adolescents targeted by IS propaganda are girls (“55% des adolescents,” *Ouest-France*). While these particular issues address the specific experiences of Muslim girls, they nevertheless reveal a wider focus on the way girls look and behave, as well as the risks associated with this behaviour (it is telling, perhaps, that with the issue of adolescents targeted by terrorist propaganda, the focus in the French news remains firmly on why and how *girls* were attracted, rather than adolescents as a whole). Indeed, the attempted control of girls’ appearance by schools has recently attracted much media attention, both in the US and in France where, most recently, a school in Valence came under fire for judging a female pupil’s clothes to be “indecent” (“Valence: tenues,” *France Inter*). There is a requirement, therefore, for girls (and their bodies) to remain secular, while also adhering to strict regulations that stipulate girls—and only girls—must be “decent” (Boddaert, *Libération*). There is also growing concern in France regarding violence amongst girls, which has, in the last decade, attracted increasing media attention. An article in *L’Express* in 2017 reported that in 2010, two hundred girl gangs (“bandes de filles”) were recorded in the Île-de-France region alone, and that girls now make up 17% of all minors arrested by police, a figure that continues to grow (Poblete, *L’Express*). While the number of girls arrested is still far lower than the number of boys, this so-called “nouvelle délinquance” is the

subject of increasing attention and concern in the French media, demonstrated by the release in 2015 of a documentary, directed by Jasmin Roy, entitled *#Bitch*, which attempts to “démontrer la violence au féminin” (“*#Bitch*,” *Radio Canada*).

Coinciding with this increasing concern over girls, their appearance, and their behaviour in France, is, as is the case worldwide, an interest in the figure of the girl and ways to somehow unveil her “mysterious” sensibilities. In 2013, on International Women’s Day, *France Inter* hosted a “journée des filles,” where girls aged 13-15 took over the station for the whole day, interviewing their choice of guest, choosing the music, and discussing topics related to their interests. In the station’s web announcement of the initiative, they ask the following questions:

Quels sont leurs goûts? Quelles musiques écoutent-elles?
 Quels sont leurs modèles? De quoi rêvent-elles? Comment
 communiquent-elles? Comment s’habillent-elles? Qu’est-
 ce que l’amitié pour elles? Rêvent-elles encore d’un prince
 charmant? De 7h à 17h, elles sont, pour une journée, les
 rédactrices en chef de France Inter, choisissent leurs
 invités, font leur playlist...et plus si affinités! (“La journée
 des filles,” *France Inter*)

The “journée des filles,” then, was designed, not only to give these girls a voice, allowing them to share their opinions and views in a public forum, but to somehow de-mystify the ambiguity surrounding the girl figure and her subjectivity. There is, as demonstrated by these questions, as well as the increased interest in and visibility of girl figures more generally, something about girlhood that society and the media find fascinating, yet also inaccessible: girlhood voices and experiences must be revealed to us, in order for us to gain access to them. The placing of this “journée des filles” in a radio setting suggests that there is a link between this mysterious girlhood experience and audibility; the girls were not filmed or represented visually, only heard. This thesis theorises girlhood as audible, as well as visible, taking the position that the audible can somehow reveal that which is not seen, and argues that girlhood subjectivity can be made accessible for the film spectator through music.

Alongside this peak in media visibility of the girl figure, we see an increase in debates both academic and cultural surrounding her identity and behaviour within society, as well as the emergence and development of “girlhood studies” as a field in its own right, cemented of course by the creation of the *Girlhood Studies* journal in 2008. Since the 1990s, a number of important and high-profile works, including Angela McRobbie’s *Feminism and Youth Culture: From Jackie*

to Just Seventeen; Susan Douglas's *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media*; Catherine Driscoll's *Girls: Feminine Adolescence in Popular Culture and Cultural Theory*; Anita Harris's *All About the Girl: Culture, Power, and Identity*; and Mary Celeste Kearney's *Mediated Girlhoods: New Explorations of Girls' Media Culture*, have addressed the issues of girls' relationships with, and representation in, mainstream media culture. These works demonstrate the importance of media in girls' lives and in the creation of girl culture; they show how media can both resist and reinforce gender stereotypes and how media representation simultaneously constructs and becomes part of girlhood culture and identity. Within this ever-growing field of girlhood (and specifically girlhood media) studies, there are a number of works that explore the specificities of individual media forms and their relationship to girl culture. Among these are studies that focus on filmic representations of girlhood: how film portrays girls on screen; how girls interact with film; how it is possible to perform girlhood. Of particular note are Frances Gateward and Murray Pomerance's *Sugar, Spice and Everything Nice: Cinemas of Girlhood*, and Sarah Hentges' *Pictures of Girlhood: Modern Female Adolescence on Film*. Within these works on cinematic representations of girlhood, there is, as Fiona Handyside and Kate Taylor-Jones note in their more recent collection, *International Cinema and the Girl*, a predominant focus on US film (4). Gateward and Pomerance's *Sugar, Spice and Everything Nice*, for example, offers a broad overview of US cinema's offerings, tracing the fascination with the figure of the girl from cinema's earliest productions to the present day; and Hentges' work discusses the particularly girl-focused sub-genre of US teen coming-of-age films she calls "girls' films" (8). Indeed, even Sebastien Dupont and Hugues Paris's *L'adolescente et le cinéma*, while it acknowledges other national cinemas, focuses predominantly on Hollywood representations. Whether because the "teen film" (the dominant cinematic site for representations of adolescents) itself is regarded as a specifically American export, or because American portrayals are the most prolific, studies continue to focus on Hollywoodian girlhood above all else.

Widening this focus on US film production, Heather Warren-Crow explores the malleable image of girlhood more generally. Using Japanese animated film as a case study, Warren-Crow shows that girlhood is a "practice" that continually evolves along with digital images that depict it: both girls' images, and the performance of girlhood or girliness are malleable (like plastic) (*Girlhood* 41).

Most recently, and certainly importantly for the broadening of girl cinema studies, Handyside and Taylor-Jones' collection aims to "address how globalizing narratives are made sense of beyond a mainstream American social context [...] to challenge scholarship's tendency to look only at Anglo-American cultural production in its assessment of contemporary girlhood on screen" (4-5). Their collection comprises articles examining filmic representations of girlhood from a number of (predominantly Western) cultures, examining both the "local specificity" of the girl figure, and the "transnational discourses" that surround her (5). In French cinema studies specifically, some scholars have begun to examine the recent increase in girlhood narratives in French cinema.² This thesis joins these works in exploring the representation of girlhood in a specific national environment, extrapolating existing work on film girls to examine how girlhood is treated in a non-American context.

Youth and Girlhood in French Cinema

French cinema has always, to some extent, dealt with issues of youth; as Keith Reader notes, "the problems of young people, and in particular adolescents, have long been a central concern of French cinema" (259). Even before the New Wave, he writes, filmmakers were concerned with adolescence as a topic; indeed, the New Wave filmmakers themselves were "more interested in the social, sexual and emotional problems of young adults" than with adolescence (260). However, the New Wave's coincidence with the emergence of "teen" culture, both in the US and in Europe, means that it often provides the starting point for discussions of youth film in France (Reader 261). Since that time, and particularly since 1968, films that concern youth and adolescence have become all the more commonplace in France. As Reader notes, in the 1980s, youth cinema became, along with the heritage film, a "dominant strand" of French cinema, with post-modern works such as Beineix's *Diva* (1981) and *37.2 le matin*

² See Sophie Belot, "Céline Sciamma's *La Naissance des pieuvres*: Seduction and be-coming" (2007) and *Female Friendships in Contemporary Popular Films by French Women Directors* (2007); "Fiona Handyside, "Emotion, Girlhood and Music in *La Naissance des pieuvres* and *Un amour de jeunesse*" (2016), and "Girlhood, Postfeminism and Contemporary Female Art-House Authorship: The 'Nameless Trilogies' of Sofia Coppola and Mia Hansen-Løve" (2016); and Emma Wilson, "Precarious Lives: On girls in Mia Hansen-Løve and others" (2012), "Contemporary French Women Filmmakers" (2005) and "Scenes of Hurt and Rapture: Céline Sciamma's *Girlhood*" (2017).

Betty Blue (1986), Besson's *Subway* (1985), and Carax's *Boy Meets Girl* (1984), among others, using "youthful marginality" as a key part of their aesthetic (259-60). In the 1990s, this post-modern aesthetic was replaced by a desire for realism, taking youthful marginalisation into the *banlieue*, as in Kassowitz's *La Haine / Hate* (1995), or the city streets as with *La Vie rêvée des anges / The Dreamlife of Angels* (Zonca, 1998). Following this, youth continues to be a focus for films of the 21st century, though perhaps with less of a hyperrealist aesthetic. These films include both arthouse and popular films, as in Hollywood where, as noted by Olivier Davenas in his book *Teen!*, youth films are separated into two categories: the "high-school movie" and "independent" adolescent films (6). This is a view supported by Catherine Driscoll who divides her categorisation of adolescent films into "teen film," which she defines as more "conventional," focusing on "the institutional life of adolescents" at school or in the home; and "youth film," characterised as "delinquent" and "packed with rebellious subcultural cachet" (*Teen Film* 8). With this categorisation comes the gendering of certain genres: the conventional "teen film" is, for Driscoll, much more readily associated with girls, much like the "chick flicks" examined by Harrod in her study; whereas the delinquent "youth film" is more readily linked to boys (*Girls* 210-11). Adolescence, then, at least for Hollywood, is located somewhere between the rebellious and the conformist: it is therefore impossible to fully examine youth representations without considering both categories; as Driscoll writes, separating youth film from teen film "obscures the importance of their shared discourse on adolescence" (*Teen Film* 8). Similar categorisations can be found in the French film industry, with recent releases appealing to a large audience, as with Pinoteau's *La Boum / The Party* (1980) and Azuelos's *LOL* (2008), and others that appeal to a smaller, more arthouse audience (7). Davenas goes on to discuss how, for French cinema in particular, films of recent decades have tended to move away from detailed examination of the relationship between adolescents and adults, towards narratives where adults are "relégués hors-champ" (7): in these films, adults are all but absent, leaving the adolescents in their own filmic universe. Davenas attributes this move to a desire to represent the adolescent experience "le plus fidèlement possible" (7). The removal of adults from the adolescent narrative demonstrates an acknowledgement of the inaccessibility of youthful subjectivity: it is only in a world without adults that the experience of adolescents can be faithfully represented. How, then, can youthful experience be

represented in film, in a way that makes it accessible for its audience? This question is central to this thesis, in which I ask how music can provide an opportunity to make youthful female subjectivity accessible, whilst retaining a certain opacity that allows the girl to remain agentic. It is precisely cinema's engagement with sound, as well as image, that permits this move beyond objectification, particularly in the modern era when such emphasis is placed on the visual construction of femininity through selfies posted to social media sites, which are of course entirely located in the visible and not the audible.³ We could speculate, therefore, that in the modern era, cinema becomes more feminist, as although it still privileges the visible image, it also permits audible expression.

While French cinema, however, has been interested in the youthful for decades, there has nevertheless been an emphasis on predominantly male characters, with the figure of the girl relegated to the side-lines. This is emphasised no more than in the New Wave, considered by many, as I discuss above, to be the beginning of French cinema's obsession with youth, in which the feminine subject is startlingly absent. As Geneviève Sellier writes, "of the 150 filmmakers who made their first full-length fictional film between 1957 and 1962, there isn't a single woman [...] New Wave cinema is in the first person masculine singular" (6-7). Contemporary French cinema, however, provides an interesting site of discussion of filmic girl figures, not least because there has been, as Fiona Handyside writes, a recent "flurry" of girlhood coming-of-age films within the French film industry, in line with the global peak in interest in girl figures discussed above ("Emotion" 121). This coincides with an increasing number of young, women filmmakers within the industry: as Carrie Tarr notes, following attempts by the French establishment to improve the levels of gender equality within cultural industries, and particularly the film industry, an increasing number of female filmmakers are emerging from the nation's film schools, making "women's cinema in France [...] a factor to be reckoned with" (190). Indeed, a *Guardian* article from 2011 lauds the arrival of "France's female new wave," arguing that "[t]here's a feeling out there that France may be on the verge of another new wave: not of the politically radical 1950s kind, but one in which young, driven, women film-makers will be at the fore" (Poirier, *The Guardian*). While there is

³ Indeed, the smartphones commonly used for taking selfies are notorious for not capturing audio as well as they capture images. This is the same for video recording, when often cameras offering the best image capture do so with a loss of audio quality, therefore requiring an external microphone for best-quality videos.

nothing that unusual about French women film directors, given the important contributions throughout the industry's history of directors such as Alice Guy, Agnès Varda, and Claire Denis, among others, there is no denying the recent proliferation of the work of women filmmakers on a national and global scale: a recent CNC study demonstrates that in 2015, 24.3% of French films were directed or co-directed by women, up from 20.7% in 2006. In that ten-year period, the number of French films made by women increased by 68%, compared with a 36% increase in the number of films directed by men ("La place des femmes" 17). Many of these filmmakers, including Mia Hansen-Løve, Rebecca Zlotowski, Katell Quillévéré, and Céline Sciamma are linked by a desire to represent girlhood experience and its manifestations; and to demonstrate the feelings and sensations experienced by girls as they grow up. Indeed, these films are, I would argue, particularly feeling-oriented: they bring us, as spectators, into intimate contact with girls and the worlds they inhabit, making accessible their desires, experiences, and emotions, as well as representing their lives. As Palmer writes, these films "immerse us in an unfulfilling and cryptic subculture" (33): we do not simply observe these films' worlds, we are fully immersed within them during the viewing experience.

The increase in girlhood coming-of-age narratives presented in recent French film is not limited to the work of women directors (though they do account for a significant number of the films discussed in this project), nor are they limited to arthouse productions: there are numerous popular films, often in the style of their American teen film counterparts, that focus on girls as their principal characters. This thesis does not discriminate against films based on their critical or popular "value." Regardless of their intended audience and critical acclaim, these films have something to say about girlhood; they offer an insight into the world of the characters they seek to portray; and they contribute to the growing visibility of, and interest in, girl figures. It is the aim of this thesis to explore the varying representations of girl experience, to show that music interacts with the sensations of girlhood, and does something to help make the inaccessible girl subjectivity accessible for the spectator, while not objectifying the girl character.

Feminine Expression in Film

Within the field of feminist film theory, there is a tendency, due in large part to the continued impact and relevance of Laura Mulvey's work in "Visual Pleasure

and Narrative Cinema” on the gendered gaze, to focus on the visual objectification of women on screen, and on the gendered representation and mediation of female bodies in cinema. However, in the years since Mulvey’s study, some have begun to explore aural, as well as visual, representation of female film characters. Most commonly, these studies focus on how vocal expression becomes gendered, and film’s (in)ability to fully express feminine voices. In *The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema*, Kaja Silverman argues that in classical cinema, the female voice is always associated with physical presence: it must always come from the (visible) female body. The male voice, she maintains, is permitted in cinema to be disembodied: a “voice on high” such as that found in voice-overs or documentaries, a role that the female voice is generally not permitted (48). As such, the male voice is allowed to exist outside of the film-space, in that it can be external to the diegesis. The female voice, conversely, is confined within the diegesis—and indeed to the body from which it originates—and has no opportunity to escape these confines. Silverman underpins this argument of containment with a more general discussion of female expression in psychoanalysis, writing that, as with her bodily capacity, a woman’s voice is always presented in terms of “lack.” Silverman maintains that this lack is the projection of *male* losses, rather than the feminine impotency of earlier psychoanalytical studies: the female voice (as with female subjectivity in general), which must come from within a female body, is always presented as that which is inaccessible from within a male subjectivity (39). A woman’s voice is therefore obliged not only to absorb this lack, but to “display” it, in order to “protect the male subject” from knowledge of his own losses (38-39). In film, this is manifested in the lack of freedom afforded to women’s voices, and the insistent containment of their voice within the diegesis, evidenced by the severe lack of female voice-overs in the history of Hollywood (49). Indeed, there remains a vast gap in the number of female and male voice-overs in audiovisual media, as noted by Mark Pedelty and Morgan Kuecker in their 2014 study of television advertisements, in which they found that “men perform 80 percent of ad voiceovers [...] the omniscient narrator, the disembodied voice of reason and authority, is much more likely to be male” (251). However, in advertisements where the speaker’s body is also on display, this male dominance is greatly reduced. As such “the chances of a woman’s voice being heard are greatly increased if her body is also on display” (251). The female voice is therefore

contained, through the act of synchronisation, within the diegesis, with limited option to transgress this boundary. Silverman goes on to argue that, as a result of this confinement, film does not allow women to “speak” anything other than their own oppression. Much like Hélène Cixous’s call, in “The Laugh of the Medusa,” for woman to “write her self” and thereby disrupt the male discourse in which she is obliged to function, Silverman addresses the need to discover the “enormous conceptual and discursive range” expressed by the female voice “once it is freed from its claustral confinement within the female body” (186). The question that is left open by Silverman is how to do this: how is it possible for women to achieve their expressive potential; how can one find the “true” female voice?

This is a question asked by Amy Lawrence who, drawing on Silverman’s theoretical standpoint, seeks to discover if a woman can ever be said to “speak” in film, given that her voice “is constructed for a male eye and ear” (11). Through the examination of a range of filmic case studies, Lawrence demonstrates how the female voice’s sonic submission to the male voice is reinforced by the history of sound recording, noting how the “basic ability to record the human voice was predicated on the ability to record the male voice” (29), leading to the systemic exclusion of women’s voices from film soundscapes and the institutionalised views on the so-called “deficiencies” of the female voice for recording purposes. This only contributes further to the containment of the female voice, leading Lawrence to ask if woman can “ever be said to ‘speak’ in classical cinema” and, “if she can, given all the technical and ideological limitations [...] what are her chances of being heard?” (33): how is it possible, given the systemic restriction of the female voice, for women to truly express themselves in film?

This thesis asks similar questions, but with added specificity through a focus on not just female expression, but the expression and identity of girls in particular. As such, this thesis offers a consideration of age that has not previously been a focus of feminist scholarship, which, as Gaylyn Studlar argues, has concerned itself with “the middle-ground of an adult femininity left amorphously defined at best” (10). While there has been, to a certain extent, a “turn to the girl” in other contemporary media and film studies—highlighted by the number of works, as I discuss above, devoted to the representation of girls in contemporary culture—there has been little attention afforded to questions of age in film sound studies. This thesis therefore asks for a similar “turn to the girl” in

feminist film sound scholarship, and builds towards a theory of girlhood audibility. Asking how films can give their girls a voice, I argue that music offers a potential alternative to the technological and ideological silencing of the female voice in film. Music offers means of escaping the diegesis, and simultaneously making the inaccessible subjectivity of the adolescent girl figure accessible. As I have described, the attraction and increased representation of the girl subject offer an opportunity for increased visibility and, simultaneously, audibility. However, this opportunity remains limited. Angela McRobbie discusses this limitation, arguing that, in order to “count as a girl” in contemporary media and culture, one must partake in a certain “ritualistic denunciation” of (second-wave) feminism, which is seen as outdated and restrictive for modern, postfeminist girls and women (*Aftermath* 16). She goes on to discuss modern advertising techniques, noting that while advertisements continue to make use of the female body and “invite” the male gaze of the consumer in order to sell products, their positioning as self-conscious acts of agency deny any feminist critique (*Aftermath* 17). If a model who removes her clothes as part of an advertisement “seems to be doing it out of choice, and for her own enjoyment,” any disapproval is “dismissed as belonging to the past, to a time when feminists *used to* object to such imagery” (*Aftermath* 17, my emphasis). Young women, then, through participation in so-called liberating postfeminist culture, are not permitted to condemn, for example, the objectification of women’s bodies. As such, despite their increased representation in contemporary culture, girls are still “called upon to be silent, to withhold critique in order to count as a modern, sophisticated girl. [This] is a condition of her freedom” (McRobbie, *Aftermath* 18). In speaking out, then, in becoming *too* audible, girls are dismissed as irrelevant, outdated, or simply not “feminine” enough. If, as suggested by Silverman and Lawrence, the female voice is “silenced” through a need to protect the (adult) male subject from his own deficiency in being unable to access a female subjectivity, then the girl voice, being not only “feminine,” but also “youthful,” is only more inaccessible, and must therefore be further silenced. Girl expression, then, is resolutely located in the body—in that which is visible. In this thesis, I argue that music, which is located *outside* of the body, permits the feelings, sensations, and experiences of the girl to be communicated to spectators in a way that cannot be achieved through vocal expression alone. Thus, this thesis re-establishes a means of girlhood expression

in relation to both postfeminist culture and the French republican obsession with the appearance of the girl body as an index of her secularism.

Music, Character, and Identification

That film music relates in some way to the characters depicted on the screen is self-evident: from the very first writings on the importance of music in film, it has been noted how music offers an opportunity to provide information about the characters' personalities, psychological state, or emotions without needing to vocalise these details. In his 1949 article in the *New York Times*, composer Aaron Copland provides a list of functions of film music, including the "underlining [of] psychological refinements—the unspoken thoughts of a character or the unseen implications of a situation" ("Tip to Moviegoers"). What I am most interested in, for the purposes of this project, is *how* we identify with characters through music, a process that is more complex than might first be thought.

Music—in most of its forms—has always been related in some way to emotion. As Patrik Juslin and John Sloboda write in the introduction to their collection, *Music and Emotion*, humans have been attempting to understand the hows and whys of emotional expression through music for many years, noting that "[s]ome sort of emotional experience is probably the main reason behind most people's engagement with music" (3). Listeners are thus able to engage with music due to its emotional capabilities. They go on to lament the relative lack of academic study dedicated to the relationship between music and emotion, despite the vital impact emotional response has on the way listeners respond to and engage with music. They suggest that reasons for this include the dominance of cognitive science in psychological studies of music, which focuses more on "information-processing" than on emotional response; the perceived "difficulty" in studying musical emotion, given the lack of theories present in the field; and the generally "narrow" approach to studying music that allows more for "intellectual" study than emotional response (4-5). However, the way in which we emotionally engage with music is vital to understanding the way meaning is constructed from music, especially, I would argue, in a film context, when emotion plays such a large role in how spectators respond to a musical score. Psychologist Annabel Cohen writes that film music's main purpose is to elicit emotional response, arguing that "music is one of the strongest sources of emotion in film" (249): music

is able to signal to the spectator what and when to feel. Indeed, she goes so far as to argue that the emotional power of music is felt all the more readily in film, as in “music-alone” contexts, “objects” of emotion are not as evident as in films:

Whereas both moods and emotions may be regarded as dispositions toward appraising emotional meaning structures and a readiness to respond in a certain manner, moods do not have objects; emotions do. For example, experiencing the emotion of relief requires an object of that emotion, such as a safe arrival after a treacherous journey [...] in a multimedia context music readily finds an object. (250)

The emotional responses elicited by a piece of film music, then, “attach themselves automatically to the visual focus of attention” on screen, thereby helping to define the intended object of emotion (250): when music plays in the cinema, we (usually) automatically associate that music with the visual image it accompanies, and any emotional response is therefore transmitted onto that image. This process of hear-respond-view-transmit is vital for the concerns of this thesis, which looks specifically at how our responses to music help us to understand and engage with adolescent girl characters on screen.

Claudia Gorbman, in her now canonical work *Unheard Melodies*, tackles film music’s emotional value in a less empirical way, arguing that, in order to “mean,” film music does not need to “denote” anything within the diegetic space, as with classical *leitmotifs* which use specific themes to denote certain characters or object. Instead, the music can act “connotatively” in order to “emphasis[e] moods or feelings” (30-32). As such, it is not necessary to have detailed knowledge of the structure of a musical score in order to understand it as a spectator. Rather, Gorbman writes, a “musical score’s rhythmic, textural, and harmonic qualities [...] emphasize latent or manifest narrative content” (32). The emphasis in Gorbman’s work on “moods” and “feelings” demonstrate music’s natural association with the emotional content of a film, and can therefore give us vital information regarding the feelings and emotions of a character. In this way, music is able to move beyond the visual in expressing that which is not easily seen. This is supported by Kathryn Kalinak in her now often-cited work, *Settling the Score*. She, like Juslin and Sloboda, acknowledges the longstanding link between music and emotion:

[B]ecause the passage of sound was unencumbered by any intervening mechanisms, the ear was represented [by the Greeks] as having direct and unmediated access to the

soul where emotional response originated. Hearing, more than any other sense, activated emotion [...] Music, which was free of what Aristotle termed “the meaning” attached to speech, and heightened by gifts from the Muses—harmony and rhythm—was thought to be the purest form of sound, and thus the most potent elicitor of emotional response. (22)

Applying these emotional capabilities of music to film specifically, Kalinak writes that music “fleshe[s] out” a film’s components that are “not visually discernible in the image [i.e.] its implicit content” (*Settling* 86): music offers spectators a means of understanding content that is not explicitly visible. This is why, she goes on to explain, in the silent era, the scenes that “most typically elicited the accompaniment of music were those that contained emotion” (*Settling* 87). Music assists expression in film, and provides a way of externalising the emotion offered by the visual image. As such, music “draws out the emotional content of the scene, [sometimes] hidden from the characters but not from the spectators” (*Settling* 88): music is able to reveal things to the audience that would otherwise be left unexpressed.

How do we engage with music in this way? While it seems obvious that music has emotional links, how does music evoke these emotional responses, and how do we, as listeners and spectators, process those responses? Juslin and Sloboda write that when a person engages with music, a variety of mental processes take place. These include “representational” processes, which involve the awareness of certain musical properties such as harmony, tonality, melody, or musical form; and “evaluative” processes, which are much more emotionally-determined: evaluative processes involve the awareness of the elicitation of certain emotions, or of subjective opinions of the piece of music (4). It is through these evaluative processes, then, that the majority of listeners engage with music: more people are likely to be able to identify whether they like a piece of music, for example, or if a piece of music sounds “sad” or “happy,” than identify whether the music is in a major or minor key. However, these two types of processes are not always distinct, as they frequently combine and overlap during the listening process. This is particularly evident when certain types of music carry culturally-embedded connotations: in these cases, an evaluative component may seem, or even become, representational, or certain representational components may trigger evaluative engagement. To explain this “continuum” between evaluative and representational processes, Juslin and

Sloboda use the example of organ music, writing that “listeners within a particular culture may have no option but to hear organ music as ‘churchy’—with all the emotional connotations that brings—thus appearing to be an ‘objective’ characteristic of the music” (4). In this example, the representational recognition of the sounds as “organ music” leads to the evaluative connotation of churches. However, because this evaluative process is so entrenched in certain cultures, it therefore functions almost as an automatic, representational process: it is a “given,” meaning that the line between subjective and objective response to the music is blurred.

This cultural entrenchment of meaning is explored in a film context by Gorbman, who writes that, often, film music communicates “via cultural codes” to elicit emotion (32). Kalinak goes into more detail, exploring how film music functions through association; like Gorbman, she argues that you do not have to be aware of music’s technicalities in order to understand it, instead writing that music functions in affective ways through the continual circulation of musical conventions:

One of the best ways to understand the power of music is to study the conventions by which musical affect circulates through a culture. A musical convention harnesses musical association, [becoming] ingrained and universal in a culture [and] function[ing] as a type of collective experience, activating particular and predictable responses. (*Settling* 12)

Certain conventions, then, evoke particular emotional responses for spectators. These conventions are established by means of repetition, thereby becoming ingrained in the cultural psyche. Often, as Kalinak notes, composers, “working under the pressure of time,” draw on these conventions to “establish geographic place and historical time” but also to “summon up specific emotional responses predictably” (12). The twang of a banjo, for example, to signify the American Wild West; the harpsichord to evoke a Tudor court; or soaring strings to show love and romance, are well-established and identifiable conventions that are readily accepted by spectators. Film music’s power, then, comes—at least in part—from its ability to tap into, or indeed work against, existing associations and conventions that help to communicate meaning. Kalinak draws on this concept of convention in her earlier article, “The Fallen Woman and the Virtuous Wife,” in which she discusses the use of musical stereotypes to characterise female sexuality in classical Hollywood film:

An examination of scoring practices in Hollywood films reveals an intricate musical language used to characterize time and place, to flesh out thematic implications, and to portray character. In particular, there developed a body of musical conventions used to depict female sexuality on the screen. Certain types of instrumentation, melody, harmony, and rhythm came to denote certain types of women. These musical stereotypes help to determine the audience's response to and evaluation of female characters. (76)

Musical conventions can therefore function to affect and regulate spectator responses, not only to film environments, but also to characters. This particular gendering of certain musical figures raised by Kalinak in her article is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, which deals specifically with the gendered "language" of music and how these figures continue to impact contemporary film scores. However, the importance of conventions and the way listeners respond to music based on previous listening experiences is vital to this thesis as a whole.

Anahid Kassabian expands on Kalinak's work and applies some of the same principals to popular music, arguing that, just as classical scoring can tap into conventions to evoke specific responses, pre-existing music also means through association. She writes that "[p]opular music soundtracks [...] evok[e] memories of emotions and subject positions, inviting perceivers to place themselves on their unconscious terrains" (88): just as classical film music uses repetition to establish certain conventions, the repetition of certain popular music songs or genres helps to communicate meaning to listeners. This thesis takes as its starting point this idea that music can create meaning in film through association, stereotype, and memory. Each chapter examines in a different way how these associations are formed, and how they then play out in a filmic context. It is through the establishing of musical stereotypes, the evocation of memories, and (re)cognition of certain musical codes, I argue, that music creates meaning and fosters identification between spectators and characters. This signification is, by nature of how music works, often based in emotion, meaning that the information we receive from music is usually emotional. As a result, music can reveal information about a character's emotions or feelings, and helps to position us in line with the characters on screen. This thesis seeks to examine how music is able to do this, using specific examples to demonstrate where this positioning can be identified.

Music in French Cinema

As in Hollywood film, music has played a vital role in the cinema of France for decades. Perhaps most well-known, Jacques Demy took inspiration from the much-celebrated American musicals of classical Hollywood, experimenting with the interaction between plot and musical structure to create a “new kind” of specifically *French* musical (Hayward 277). Indeed, evidence of experimentation with music and sound is found in the works of many New Wave filmmakers. As Betsy Ann Bogart writes, while “most analysis of narrative in the New Wave has focused on the visual aspects of [the] films” (28), directors of the New Wave use music to help them “attain the goal of complete authorhood” (2). In order to set themselves apart from an industry that was increasingly conforming to what François Truffaut famously called the pre-war “tradition de qualité,” the filmmakers of the New Wave experimented with film form, style, and techniques, including the audio, “privileg[ing] music and sounds over dialogue” to contrast traditional filmmaking (Bogart 30). The New Wave filmmakers, then, sought to use music differently, in order to set them apart. This desire to somehow use music “differently” has, it seems, continued into the present “new wave” of filmmakers in France; for example, at interview shortly after the release of her third film, *Un amour de jeunesse / Goodbye First Love* (2011), Mia Hansen-Løve explains how music is “important” to her work:

I often have a really strong reaction where I reject the music in films and I think that’s had an influence in how I respond to music. What I especially dislike is when music is used to amplify, to give moral support, to whatever is the action or emotion in the film, in a way that is artificial [...] every time I pick music I try not to use it in a manipulative way [...] It’s not something that’s injected in the film to make you feel something. Of course music evokes feelings, but to me, I try to do it so it’s justified. (Hubert, *Interview Magazine*)

For Hansen-Løve, then, what one might consider “traditional” uses of music, to “give moral support” to the action or to “evoke feelings,” is in fact “artificial” or “manipulative.” As she explains during an earlier conversation with Elena Oumano, “I’m allergic in general to film music. Conventional film music underscores emotions [but] I like the idea of music that opens doors to the film instead of merely explaining things” (Oumano 28). Hansen-Løve therefore seeks to employ her music in ways that are somehow different from what she considers to be the standard use of music in cinema. This sense of purpose through music, the agency of the filmmaker—and not just the composer or music supervisor—is

something that is also important for Céline Sciamma, who has worked “main dans la main” with her composer, ParaOne, for all of her feature films, and always brings her own ideas to the composer before he begins work (Besse, *Telerama*). These new filmmakers, then, have continued the tradition of their predecessors in attempting to using music differently, in a way that contrasts traditional film music.

It is interesting, too, to note that France (and particularly Paris) has long been a draw for Hollywood musicals. From 1950s productions such as *An American in Paris* (Minnelli, 1951), *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Hawks, 1953) and *Gigi* (Minnelli, 1958) to the more recent *Moulin Rouge!* (Luhmann, 2001) and *La La Land* (Chazelle, 2016), France provides the backdrop for love and dreams in many a musical film.⁴ It seems that there is, at least for Hollywood, a link between France and musical expression: France, in some way, inspires musicality. Indeed, music—and particularly singing—is a culturally important part of French identity. The *chanson française*, the lyric-driven, theatrical, and poetic style made famous by artists such as Jacques Brel or Barbara, is a cultural artefact of which France is fiercely proud, evidenced by the founding in 1990 of the *Centre national du patrimoine de la chanson, des variétés et des musiques actuelles*, or *Hall de la chanson*, which aims to “sauver de l’oubli ou de l’obsolescence les oeuvres de chanson” (“Présentation du hall,” *Le Hall de la chanson*). This national pride in—and subsequent privileging of—the *chanson française* as a cultural art form has led, inevitably, to its representation in French cinema, particularly with a focus on the representation of the *chanteuses réalistes*, who came to prominence in the post-war period.⁵ The sub-genre of *chanson française* sung by these performers, the *chanson réaliste*, was born in the cabarets and café-concerts of Paris in the 19th Century, and emphasised theatricality and emotion through lyrics. Usually performed by one solo performer, the *chanson réaliste* was overwhelmingly dominated by women, including Fréhel, Yvonne George, and Édith Piaf (although there were also some very successful *chanteurs réalistes* in the same period). These artists tried, through their lyrical performance, to “celebrate life, death, love and the street:” through the *chanson française*, as noted in a 2015 BBC

⁴ Indeed, *La La Land* draws heavily not only on the image of Paris as a setting of discovery and aspiration, but is also indebted to Demy’s *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg / The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (1964).

⁵ See Kelley Conway, *Chanteuse in the City: The Realist Singer in French Film*; Barbara Lebrun, “René, Ginette, Louise et autres: nostalgie et authenticité dans la chanson néo-réaliste;” and Martin Barnier, “La voix qui présente.”

documentary on the history of the French song, the performer attempts to communicate the “truth of life” (*Je t’aime*, BBC Four). This emphasis on truth-telling through song is appropriated in turn by French filmmakers, from films based on the lives of famous *chanteuses réalistes* such as *La Vie en rose* (Dahan, 2007), to films that use *chanson réaliste*-style sequences such as Agnès Varda’s *Cléo de 5 à 7 / Cleo from 5 to 7* (1962) or Jean-Jacques Beineix’s *Diva* (1981). In French musical and cinematic culture, then, singing and musicality are inextricably bound up with women’s expression: they are the means by which women are able to communicate the “truth” of reality. These performances, however, are still representative of the way feminine expression is embodied in French culture; by singing, the woman’s ability to communicate emanates from her body. In this thesis, I am interested primarily in the way that, as I have discussed above, music can offer a means of expression that is located outside of the body, freeing the female subject from her bodily (and diegetic) constraints. What happens when the visible performance—or indeed the lyrics—of a piece of music are removed? In what other ways does music permit avenues of communication, expression and identification? This thesis answers these questions, examining how even non-performed music can mean in ways that allow girlhood feelings and sensations to become accessible.

Music and (Female) Youth

In this thesis, I am concerned not only with how music elicits emotional response in order to communicate, but specifically in how this music assists *girl* expression. The relationship between youth identity and music has been relatively well documented by sociologists and psychologists, who examine how music listening practices help both to construct and to display identity, offering young people a means for navigating the world and defining their roles within it.⁶ Some scholars have tackled the topic with a specific focus on girls, their consumption of music, and how this consumption affects their identity formation. Sarah Louise Baker, for example, argues that girls, who are permitted less freedom outside of the private home space, use their bedrooms as a space for

⁶ See Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, “Adolescents’ Uses of Media for Self-Socialization;” Ronald S Burke and Robert E. Grinder, “Personality-Oriented Themes and Listening Patterns in Teen-Age Music and Their Relation to Certain Academic and Peer Variables;” Patricia Shehan Campbell et al, “Adolescents’ Expressed Meanings of Music in and out of School;” and Sian Lincoln, “Feeling the Noise: Teenagers, Bedrooms, and Music.”

musical activities that provide them “with a means of negotiating, representing and constituting their place in the world” (77). In film, however, the relationship between girlhood and music is, in comparison to explorations of visual representation, somewhat under-explored, with a few notable scholars who have begun to examine music’s specific importance to girls on film. Sarah Hentges, in her more general exploration of (American) cinematic girlhood, discusses the power of music and dance in establishing girl identities, writing that “music and dance are used not only as symbols of rebellion or of sexual or social development [...] but also as a means toward mainstream acceptance” (78): music offers girls the opportunity to “fit in” and establish themselves within their peer group. Samantha Colling also discusses the importance of singing, dancing, or musical performance in girl teen film, arguing that musical numbers are increasingly important for girls in a world where “performance and visibility have become increasingly prominent in cultural products” (260). As well as musical numbers, where the girls perform as part of the narrative, girl teen film (like teen film more generally) makes use of music video aesthetics to make the everyday seem spectacular, and, importantly, to draw on what girls “already” have in common to communicate with their primary audience (300). These films, then, seek to express that which is “known” to be popular amongst teenage girls.

While the majority of films I discuss in this thesis do not contain any musical performance—with the exception of *La Religieuse* as discussed above, and Sciamma’s *Bande de filles / Girlhood* (2014), which incorporates a quasi-performance of Rihanna’s “Diamonds”—these studies do begin to demonstrate the importance of music to cinematic girlhood experience. Fiona Handyside, in her chapter “Emotion, Girlhood, and Music,” moves much closer to examining *how* music is able to help us understand and characterise girls on film, specifically examining how the music in two of the films I discuss in this thesis helps to “give form and expression to girls’ emotions,” articulating “feelings, intensities, and desires that can’t be named by the girls themselves,” explicitly referencing the inaccessible, unspeakable elements of girlhood characterisation (121-22). In this thesis, I build on this existing work by examining not only the effects of the music within the films, but also exploring *how* these effects are achieved, and the ways in which music is able to evoke these meanings.

Why girl(y)?

In her article discussing the affects of girlhood, Monica Swindle uses the word “girl,” not only as a noun for a person of a certain age or gender, but also adjectively. She uses the term “girl” to refer to a distinct affect—that is, what it is to feel as and like a girl—as well as the bodies and subjectivities defined as girls, and as a way of describing these bodies and feelings. Girls, therefore, are not just age-defined subjects, but “a collective of feeling, experiencing material bodies” (Feeling Girl). This girl affect, circulated by “objects of girlhood,” moves among bodies that may or may not be defined as girls themselves, and permits those bodies to feel “as girl” (“Feeling Girl”). For Swindle, then, it is possible for subjects who do not identify as a girl specifically to nevertheless experience or feel “girl.” In using the term “girl” to describe this multitude of feelings, experiences, and objects that constitute girl culture and girlhood, Swindle presents something of a rejection of the term “girly,” which would most often be used to describe the “objects of girlhood” that help to circulate the girl affect. Indeed, the term “girly” is often deployed pejoratively, used to describe those objects, feelings or cultural forms that are associated with girls and therefore, crucially, are not suitable for boys, women, and especially men. Swindle therefore offers an alternative term, removing the depreciative nature of the term “girly” in favour of “girl.”

However, in the context of this thesis, which looks at sounds and music, a “girl sound” and a “girly sound” can be taken to mean different things. “Girl sounds,” for example, would be better deployed to describe the sounds made by girls; “girly sounds,” on the other hand, are sounds that seem, to a given listener, “girly:” a girly sound is therefore much more related to pre-conceived ideas of what constitutes girlhood or girl culture. In this thesis, then, in which I discuss the importance of pre-existing ideas, stereotypes and expectations to the articulation of the affects of girlhood, “girly” sounds are vital. Above, I discussed Juslin and Sloboda’s differentiation between objective and subjective meanings gained through listening to music, and how the line between the two types of meaning can become blurred. “Churchy” music, for example, different from but nevertheless related to “church music,” has the ability to transport us to an imaginary church location, encouraging the listener to feel as *if* they are in that place. The music surrounds the listener with signification—which is sometimes borne out of pre-existing stereotypes or tropes—and therefore helps to articulate

certain experiences and feelings. So-called “girly” music can thus function in the same way. In hearing music that is identified through a series of social and cultural definitions as “girly,” the listener is surrounded by girly signification and is thus encouraged to feel *like* and as a girl. “Girly” therefore leads directly to, or in some cases becomes, “girl.” Thus, this thesis offers something of a reclamation of the term “girly,” demonstrating that by appealing to pre-existing ideas of “girliness,” sounds can contribute to an articulation of “girlness.” The word “girl(y)” is therefore used throughout this thesis to describe the traversing of this boundary between girly and girl.

Methodology

As I have shown above, much of the way music functions in film relies on memories, stereotypes, or associations, some of which are so culturally entrenched that they are almost automatic, unconscious connotations. The main arguments in this thesis, then, led by the specificity of the filmic girlhood experience, stem from this ability to communicate through pre-existing, extra-musical associations, which can give form to voice, feelings, and stereotypes within the film text. These associations can be both specific, such as the contextual associations triggered through the use of particular artists or songs; and more general, such as the associations activated by generic conventions, or by longstanding composition traditions. The cultural codification of certain musical figures is one key way that music means in a film context: it is through their existing experiences with music that spectators engage with and access music’s potential meanings. This thesis examines the various ways that these associations manifest themselves in film music, and how they are able to combine with different musical features to express the feelings and sensations of girlhood. I am also interested in the way these associations form, and how stereotypes stick to certain musical features, which are subsequently able to circulate affectively. As such, while this project relies heavily on the work of film music scholars such as Gorbman and Kalinak, it is also useful to consider musicological methods, in order to understand why music means in these ways. This is something that is not always considered by film music studies; indeed, there remains a large disconnect between the two disciplines into which film music study naturally falls. It seems that one of the main difficulties in approaching the study of film music is its “inherent interdisciplinarity” (Smith, “Bridging the Gap”

1). Unlike other areas of film theory, film music finds itself situated within both film studies and musicology which, as disciplines, have traditionally very different approaches. This means, therefore, that those attempting its study are continuously caught in the middle of what seems to be a disciplinary battle. As James Buhler et al write in their textbook for film music study, *Music and Cinema*, “the study of film music is likely to always remain marginal because its irreducible interdisciplinarity alienates it from the one discipline or the other” (2). It is this belief that film music study is located in some kind of interdisciplinary “no-man’s-land” that renders it more inaccessible than other disciplines, and means that scholars attempting the work seem compelled, especially within film studies, to announce their approach from one side or the other. Pauline Reay, for example, states that her book, *Music in Film: Soundtracks and Synergy*, is “written from a film studies perspective,” justifying the fact that the book focuses on music with her almost coincidental “personal interest” in the subject (4), rather than acknowledging the vital importance of music study within the discipline of film.

With this apparent separation in approach comes a more problematic attitude from individuals themselves, where film scholars seem to find musicology lacking in depth for the study of music in film, and musicologists see film studies as insufficiently technical to fully analyse film music, thereby widening the gap and discouraging dialogue between the two disciplines. William Rosar accurately summarises this problem in “Film Studies in Musicology” with reference to his personal experiences of musicological work:

I have noticed a certain tendency on the part of well-meaning musicologists to naively assume that film scholars know music in the same way they do [...] musicologists unfortunately sometimes proceeded with less than adequate knowledge of film music history, its special techniques, and its relationship to practices in the history of the theater. Regrettably there has been a tendency for musicologists to regard film as a sort of hobby horse, rather than a highly specialized area requiring considerable preparation to write about intelligently and competently, much like any other special area in musicology. (120)

It is interesting to note how each discipline seems to ignore the other, especially in general approach. This is highlighted in David Beard and Kenneth Golag’s introductory text, *Musicology: The Key Concepts*, in which “film music” does not receive an entry, despite numerous mentions of it in other entries such as “popular music.” However, “diegetic/nondiegetic” has an entry of its own,

describing Gorbman's (who is, ironically, a film scholar) distinction between on- and off-screen music. Other than this exception though, there seems to be little to no dialogue between the two disciplines, despite the attempts of individuals to whom Rosar refers as "first generation film musicologists," namely Gorbman and Kalinak, to bridge the gap (Rosar 101). This thesis, with its focus on music's role within its specific film context, originates very firmly in film studies, but is nevertheless indebted to musicology and certain musicological methods, particularly in Chapters 3 and 4, which examine composition techniques and musicological makeup in much more depth. Indeed, my own interest in film music and its functions very much stems from my own musicological training (though I would not go so far as to call myself a musicologist). One must ask how it can be possible to effectively study film music without taking into account both film and music studies: in order to fully examine the varied roles and functions music has in film, it is surely essential to consider both disciplines and their benefits. Rosar writes that rather than simply accepting its "inherent interdisciplinarity," we should move towards a "musicological film studies" approach that sees film music study as a discipline in its own right (120). This approach would, for Rosar, take into account methods from both disciplines, and apply them at the same time. He notes how, just as some musicologists do not consider the specific histories of music in film, some film theorists fail to take into account musicological methodologies when conducting their studies, despite their usefulness when discussing music. This thesis therefore draws on both film and musicological methods, in order to provide the most useful form of analysis.

Traditionally, the term "musicology" was used to signify the study of the history of Western art music, as opposed to "ethnomusicology," meaning the study of music within its specific context, and "music theory," designating the structural and formal analysis of music and music scores.⁷ This focus on technical and historical knowledge perhaps goes some way to explaining the perceived distance between film studies and musicological approaches to film music. As Joseph Kerman writes in his book, *Contemplating Musicology*, while "everybody understands what musicology is, at least in a general way," the study of music theory "is much less widely understood, even by musicians, and to non-musicians

⁷ It is interesting to note here that although termed "music theory," this form of analysis bears no resemblance to, for example, "Literary Theory," and does not refer to the application of cultural or social theory to music.

it is usually a closed book [...] music theory is invariably technical in nature, sometimes forbiddingly so" (12). Musicological analysis invariably draws on music theory and very technical, close analysis of music scores and notation (just as how film studies will often use technical, formal analysis of a film), which creates a barrier for those from other disciplines, unless they have the advantage of having had specific musicological training, or having learnt music theory. Indeed, some film music studies, even those by film theorists, rely heavily on written scores as examples which, for a reader with little or no knowledge of music theory, can present significant barriers to understanding. It is for this reason that, while I draw on musicological approaches in this thesis, any musical notation will be accompanied by explanation or annotation to best describe the score.

While musicology's beginnings lie firmly in the history of music, musicologists have, more recently, begun to broaden the scope of the discipline. Beginning in the mid-1980s, what has been called "New Musicology" started to bring together a number of approaches, taking into account more than just music history. Beard and Golag describe "New Musicology" as a "loose amalgam of individuals [who] bring to their own particular fields of expertise a number of shared concerns" (122). Above all, these "shared concerns" manifest themselves through "a will to engage with disciplines outside musicology, in particular those in the humanities and social sciences," leading to "a desire to alter the framework of musicological discussion" (122). As such, there are now a range of approaches within the field of musicology that bring in a variety of critical and cultural theories. Indeed, in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, there is a section within the entry for "musicology" entitled "New Trends," which discusses the move towards bringing in other disciplines to musical study (491). It is perhaps worth noting, here, that the term "analysis," within a musicological sense, still designates a predominantly formal or structural study, concerned with "a search for internal coherence within a music work" and focusing "on an examination of a work's internal structure" (Beard and Golag 11-12). Musical analysis, therefore, can be described as "an interaction between the music itself, music theory, aesthetics and history" (Beard and Golag 13). Nevertheless, the acknowledgement and interaction of musicology with an increasing variety of other theories and concepts provides a very useful backdrop for this thesis, and undoubtedly other studies. What follows is a brief discussion of the new

musicological approaches that are most pertinent to this thesis, and the ways in which they inform my analysis.

Aesthetics

In musicology, as in film studies, the study of aesthetics is predominantly concerned with the “nature” of music as art, and what music “means.” In their entry for “aesthetics,” Beard and Golag argue that an aesthetics of music, much like an aesthetics of literature or art, is concerned primarily with “perception,” thus relating it heavily to interpretation or hermeneutics (5). However, in addition to this interpretational approach, Beard and Golag also draw heavily on Kant’s work, leading to the conclusion that music is unable to “articulate precise meaning” (7). Therefore, an aesthetics of music produces a contradiction, whereby an interest in what music “means” can never be fulfilled. In film music, however, this contradiction is lessened. As Catherine Provenzano writes, the “meaning” of music composed for film is “not quite so mysterious” as in other music (81): where in other composition, the “mysteries” of musical meaning are often hidden—or believed to be hidden—behind the unknown intentions of the composer, in film music this mystery is revealed by the image. However, as Provenzano notes, while it may be “simpler to decode what the film composer is trying to express” (81), it doesn’t mean that film music lacks subtlety of meaning. In this thesis, I explore the ways in which musical meanings are communicated, and how audience perceptions (guided by their pre-conceptions) of music affect our understanding of the music in a film environment.

Semiotics

Related to aesthetics and musical interpretation, a semiotic approach to music is concerned with how the “language” of music might function in communication, and examines the relationship between music and the construction of meaning. There have been numerous attempts to forge a musical “language” based on melodic, harmonic or rhythmic structures, or by applying linguistic analysis onto musical structures, most of which have largely been dismissed. However, a semiotic approach that states that music can somehow signify or “mean” is a useful tool for overcoming the contradictions presented by a theory of aesthetics, and particularly when applying musicological study to other disciplines. As film music creates meaning predominantly through codified socio-

cultural associations, and not through formal structures, it is easy to dismiss the possibility of a strictly semiotic musical “language.” However, I would argue that the formal structures of music nevertheless play a vital role in the creation of these associations, and therefore go some way to providing the vocabulary for a codified musical language. It is this question of how music “means” that is vital to this thesis, which asks how music is able to communicate the sensations of girlhood that are left unexpressed, and in particular for Chapters 3 and 4, which examine how certain musical techniques can become codified in order to express meaning.

Phenomenology

Related to both aesthetics (perception) and semiotics (meaning), musicological phenomenology is one of the older branches of “new” musicology. A phenomenological approach to music focuses on the way we experience music and musical sound—indeed, it is much like a general ethnomusicological approach—and how these experiences alter our perception of musical meaning. In this way, phenomenological approaches to music interact with our emotional responses to music: as Alfred Pike writes, “phenomenological concern is primarily with perception as the experience of an object” and assumes that “the listener somehow identifies emotionally with the music, and behaves, or imagines himself behaving as if he had exchanged places with the music” (248). Alfred Schutz, in his “Fragments on the Phenomenology of Music,” argues that, to the listener, physical and technical properties of music do not matter: we generally do not picture a written score when we listen to music; we do not pay close attention to every harmonic interval or cadence; and we are not aware of the sound waves hitting our eardrums (26-27). He writes that in order to fully analyse music, one must not only consider the musicological features of a piece, but also take into account “the fact that, while listening, the listener uses previous experiences of the kind of music he is listening to” (45). The listener’s prior knowledge plays an important role in how the music affects a listener during the listening process, something which is, in turn, important for fully understanding music and how it works. Phenomenological music research is therefore very useful as an approach that considers the listener’s experience of listening, which has traditionally been ignored by musicological research. Phenomenology also underpins a large proportion of film music studies, though this may not be

explicitly acknowledged in the texts. Both Gorbman and Kalinak, for example, draw heavily on music's ability to appeal to the spectator's prior knowledge and experience, and both discuss the meaning of music through emotional and affective connection. Similarly, this project's focus on the experience of music in the cinema and the ways in which this affects meaning is heavily reliant on a phenomenological approach, and combines this emphasis on experience with other methods in order to explore the range of music's meaning potential in film.

Feminist Musicology

The origins of a feminist approach to musicology can be traced to the 1970s, when (predominantly female) scholars began to acknowledge the lack of representation of women in published musical histories. Notable writers such as Marcia Citron and Susan McClary began to concern themselves with the study of women in music (e.g. women composers and performers), in order to highlight their contribution to what had been seen as an almost entirely male domain, and question the long-held view that women were "somehow less biologically suited to composing than men" (Beard and Golag 64). Following on from these studies of women in music, scholars also started to look at the formal workings of music, drawing on semiotics and aesthetics to expose music as an inherently gendered system of communication. As Alastair Williams summarises, gender theorists in music argue that "classical forms [...] are by no means neutral or value-free: they embody gendered values" (52). These theorists draw on traditional and classical language used to describe music, particularly the concept of "feminine" or "masculine" cadences, in order to try and find a gendered "language" in music. When combined with phenomenological or affective studies of music, these feminist approaches can provide a particularly interesting take on musical communication, and are indeed vital for the concerns of this project. This thesis combines these feminist musicological methods with the study of film music and other methods that focus on the issue of meaning within music, in order to ask how music can "mean" or express the feelings of girlhood.

Overall, while this thesis cannot be described as a phenomenological study, as its methods originate predominantly from cultural studies, rather than philosophy or psychology, the analysis is primarily concerned with how spectators experience film music, and how that music is able to affect us and our subjective position in the context of a film. Music is thus able to communicate the

specific emotions and feelings of characters that would otherwise be left unexpressed. In this way, the project draws heavily on phenomenological research concerning listener responses to music and how these responses shape music's potential meaning. It should of course be noted that any experiential responses used in the analysis presented throughout the thesis are largely personal to the author: while it is impossible to know how music will affect every listener, it is possible to theorise the effects of certain musical features in film through combination personal response with existing musical and filmic analysis. This thesis is particularly concerned with how extra-musical features contribute to the listening experience and impart meaning onto a musical piece or song, and also how listeners' memories of music contributes to the meaning imparted by that music in film contexts. For this focus, both musicological and film studies approaches are useful, and as such I draw on research from both disciplines to inform the analysis. Through this combination of musicological and film studies methods, this thesis could be said to employ a "feminist musicological film studies" approach, examining the relationship between music and gender within a specific film context.

While the discussion above provides only a very brief overview of some musicological approaches, knowledge of how these approaches have developed over time reveals interesting similarities between the fields of musicology and film studies, both in their approaches and their development. By their nature as creative productions, both film and music overlap in their concerns with genre, authorship, audience, and industry. Film studies as a discipline incorporates a wide range of theories and approaches; however, it is important to note how many studies, particularly more general film discussion, will organise their argument chronologically (film historiography), or situate the analysis within a certain historical context (film historicism), much like traditional musicological studies. Similarly, formal analysis still rightly plays a major role in the study of film. Indeed, it is worth noting that university film courses will often take historiographical and formal approaches, structuring the course chronologically or teaching the skill of formal and structural sequence analysis. However, as with the advent of "New Musicology," the discipline of film studies also draws on a range of different approaches and theories. While these approaches to film studies have been more commonly aligned with literary criticism or cultural theory, there are more than a few similarities to be drawn between approaches to film and the

approaches to musicology that I have already discussed. Attempts to find a semiotics of film, or a film “language,” are particularly more closely aligned with theories of musicology than with those of literature or other disciplines, due to the fact that both cinema and music commonly use a combination of verbal and non-verbal media to “communicate” with their listeners/spectators. Similarly, more recent preoccupations in film studies with spectator studies and examinations of how film affects its audience draw on phenomenological approaches very similar to those in musicology. This is due to the similar contexts in which film and music are experienced: most commonly, one listens to music or watches a film after it has been produced, and the experience is largely individual (though it should be mentioned that the experience of a film in a theatre or listening to music in a concert hall will be different from the experience of a DVD or CD recording watched/listened to at home). Film and music, then, share a problem of meaning (and the understanding of this meaning), and both function through meanings that are not entirely verbal. Instead, music and film present us with almost an excess of meaning: both offer myriad potential avenues for meaning-making and understanding, which may be experienced or understood at different times depending on context or level of knowledge. This “excess” of meaning provides the space in which girlhood expression can be released from its containment within the body: because girlhood expression itself is required to be “excessive” in order to balance agentic freedom with heteronormative expectations of femininity; and because the experiences of girlhood are themselves numerous and varied, local and global.

These similarities between the trajectories of studies of music and film, as well as the approaches to studying them, make the two disciplines all the more compatible for a combined study when concerning music in a film context: there is no need, as seems to have been the norm until this point, to separate so distinctly the two disciplines. It should be noted that some works have attempted this combination before, and the most successful remain Gorbman and Kalinak, who are cited by both musicologists and film theorists alike in discussions of film music. However, as I have mentioned above, these works still show little cross-discipline coherence. Their reliance on musical scores, for example, accompanied by little explanation or description of the image context limits understanding for readers with no music theory knowledge. Therefore, when this thesis does make use of score transcriptions, they are accompanied by

explanatory captions in order to demonstrate their significance. The use of film terminology has a similar effect for those from non-film studies backgrounds. As Rosar notes, Gorbman's use of the words "diegetic" and "non-diegetic," with their origins in narratology, in fact signify far more clearly to those from a film background than to those from a musicology background, where the phrases "source music" and "underscore" are more common (108-10). This combination of technical and terminological discrepancies perhaps goes some way to explaining the apparent separation, in theories of film music, between film studies and musicology. It also demonstrates the importance of clear terminology, to avoid confusion or conflicting arguments. What follows, therefore, is a list of terms that will be used in this thesis to describe specific kinds of film music. These terms are laid out and defined as follows:

- Source music:** Music played within the film, from a source that is visible or assumed to be visible (e.g. music from a CD player, radio, or through headphones).
- Incidental music:** Music from within the film-space, but from a non-visible source (e.g. music in a lift, café, or restaurant). This music differs from source music in that it is not assumed to be a purposeful choice from the film protagonists.
- Pre-existing music:** Music that was not originally composed for the film.
- Underscoring:** Original composition that is played underneath a visual scene or dialogue (i.e. it is not assumed to be emanating from a visible source)
- Credit music:** Music heard during the opening or closing credits.

Through using these terms, it is my aim to provide a more nuanced discussion of the different music types within a film, rather than categorise all music into, for example, "diegetic" and "non-diegetic." Within these two categories there are a number of different ways that music can be used both within and outside of the film-space—indeed sometimes slipping between the two—and it is important to acknowledge these different categorisations when discussing the effect of the music in the film context.

This thesis examines a range of girlhood films, all released in France between 2005 and 2015. These dates represent a period in which the “turn to the girl” in French cinema is particularly evident, leading up to the release of *Bande de filles* at the end of the period. *Bande de filles*, released as the research for this project began, represents a particularly significant moment in contemporary French girlhood cinema. The capstone to Céline Sciamma’s (somewhat accidental) trilogy of girlhood films, *Bande de filles* attracted widespread attention for its portrayal of young femininity that is located, like media narratives of girlhood more generally, in both the specific and the global. *Bande de filles* features an account of black Parisian girlhood, while also aiming at universality: it draws on global popular culture while also remaining, as I discuss later in this thesis, firmly located in the local. That the film gained popularity and acclaim outside of its featured locality is telling: *Bande de filles* succeeds in making the lives and experiences of its young girl protagonists accessible to a wider audience, even if they are not themselves black, French, or even girls. It is this ability that is so key to this thesis—and why the film itself is featured so prominently throughout it—and therefore the film provides a fitting end-point for the corpus range. A period of a decade leading up to this point provides sufficient breadth of choice, allowing for a survey of a number of films while remaining focused enough to provide specific and detailed case studies for each chapter.

Each chapter features between two and four principal case studies, providing a detailed discussion of films that are particularly relevant to the concerns of that chapter. The only pre-requisite when choosing films for inclusion was that the film should concern a “girl” protagonist. While this largely means that the films concern teenage girls, this was not a limiting factor, and as such, “girls” below the age of 13 or above the age of 19 were not excluded. As a consequence, the films discussed are immensely varied, including a variety of “popular” teen films and also more independent, “arthouse” films. Similarly, the amount of music in the films varies dramatically, ranging from 6 minutes in *Tomboy* (Sciamma, 2010) to over an hour in Neel’s *Lou!* (see Appendix). Nevertheless, what these films have in common is that the music does something to aid girlhood expression; the music offers a means of understanding and identification for the spectators, or as a means of communication for the girls themselves. A large number of the films studied in this project feature music, usually pre-existing, as an important part of their characters’ everyday lives, therefore increasing the

potential for interaction between the music and the characters' identity development. The characters in these films either perform the music themselves, or actively engage in music listening practices as a way of affirming their own identity.

While, as is consistent with films concerning young protagonists, the majority of the films I discuss feature a soundtrack comprised predominantly of pre-existing songs and music, there are also films that feature original composition. Some of these films feature what one would consider a "traditional" film score, using orchestral instruments and adhering largely to Romantic composition conventions; and some have "contemporary"-style scoring, which draw on popular styles and idioms. These films are particularly interesting for a discussion of the way in which music can "mean" in a film, providing a "bridge" between films with popular or pre-existing soundtracks and those with more traditional scoring techniques. In including this range of films—and soundtracks—I hope to provide scope for the analysis of emerging trends and a comprehensive contextual overview, while also allowing for close analysis and detailed case studies.

This thesis comprises four chapters, each highlighting the different ways music can mean. In Chapters 1 and 2, I examine pre-existing music, asking how popular music signifies in film and how it can relate to characters' (and spectators') experiences, thereby providing a means of identification and communication. That popular music is used in films featuring youthful protagonists is perhaps self-evident, and there have been numerous studies of the importance of popular music in youth film soundtracks. However, there are fewer studies that explore in detail how popular songs "mean" in film, and what it can do to increase identification between spectators and on-screen characters. Chapters 1 and 2 examine these issues, asking how pre-existing music "means" and what effects it can have on spectators. Chapter 1 examines popular music's associations with youth culture and places it in a specifically French context, exploring how English-language songs are more readily associated with young listeners than French-language songs. Due to these general associations of English-language popular music with youthfulness, the inclusion of these songs in a film helps to create an overall youthful film-space which facilitates identification between spectator and character. Using *LOL* (Azuelos, 2009) and *Respire / Breathe* (Laurent, 2014) as principal case studies, Chapter 1 examines

first of all the consequences of including foreign-language songs in a film, discussing the impact this has on a song's meaning, given that a song's primary method of meaning-making is through its lyrics, and using this to highlight the importance of considering the musical elements of a song. Secondly, the chapter explores the significance of using English-language songs in a French film, examining how they are used as a marker of youthful identity and as a means of navigating the protagonists' youthful identities. Through these two strands, Chapter 1 examines how English-language songs help to create a specifically youthful film-space, which then combines with other means of signification within the songs to communicate the particular sensations and emotions of the girls in the films.

Chapter 2 continues the exploration of pre-existing songs by considering the particular ways that artists can contribute to a song's meaning, examining how voice, style, or performance context assist in the creation of meaning within a film context. The chapter begins with a discussion of gendered voices, drawing on psychoanalytical film studies to suggest that the female voice offers a closeness that is denied by the pairing of a male voice with a female body. Examining Katell Quillévéré's *Suzanne* (2013) and Sciamma's *Bande de filles* (2014), the chapter demonstrates how male-voiced songs retain a distance that helps to contextualise the girls' experiences within a universal sense of adolescence, but do not address the specificities of girl experience permitted by female-voiced songs. The chapter then moves on to a discussion of the ways specific artists can bring meaning to a film sequence, examining *Suzanne's* inclusion of Courtney Love and Nina Simone, and the use of Rihanna's "Diamonds" in *Bande de filles*. Through the inclusion of certain artists (or types of artist), filmmakers are able to exploit certain pre-existing associations that are subsequently projected onto the film and therefore alter the meaning obtained from those songs by spectators.

Chapters 3 and 4 continue to explore how pre-existing associations, expectations, and memories attached to different types of music affect the way that spectators access the meaning of music in film, but shift the focus from pre-existing music onto music more generally, asking how music might be able to sound like girlhood in some way. Chapter 3 considers musical genre, examining how the way that genres are classified causes certain expectations and stereotypes to be created. These stereotypes are then, as with the pre-existing

associations discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, projected onto the film environment and can affect how spectators react to the film/music combination. The chapter examines two musical genres in particular: folk music, and electronica. First discussing the use of folk in Hansen-Løve's *Tout est pardonné / All is Forgiven* (2007) and *Un Amour de jeunesse* (2011), the chapter explores how the genre helps to position girlhood as nostalgic, thereby creating a film-space marked by longing and remembrance. Secondly, I examine the use of electronica in Sciamma's *Naissance des pieuvres / Water Lilies* (2007), exploring how the genre is not only associated generally, like the English-language songs discussed in Chapter 1, with youthful listeners, but how it has specifically gendered connotations whereby women are permitted greater freedom than in other musical genres.

Chapter 4 then turns to original composition, exploring the ways in which music can be gendered. Through the analysis of musical techniques, instrumentation, and existing stereotypes relating to different music, the chapter considers how music may sound girl(y), and how this may alter spectators' perceptions of the characters. First examining *Le Hérisson / The Hedgehog* (Achache, 2010) and *Jeune et jolie / Young and Beautiful* (Ozon, 2013), I explore how composition conventions lead to the creation of gendered musical stereotypes which continue to pervade modern composition, and ask how it is possible for the music to sound, not only "feminine," but also "youthful." The chapter then explores how these stereotypes evolve in more contemporary-style scoring, using Sciamma's *Bande de filles* and Rebecca Zlotowski's *Belle Épine / Dear Prudence* (2010) as principal case studies to demonstrate how the—perhaps subconscious—use of gendered musical stereotypes help to create a "girl" film-space, surrounding the spectator with "girl" signification that in turn provides new avenues of meaning and identification.

Through these four chapters, this thesis explores the effect music has on the filmic representation of girlhood; how it relates to the characters' experiences of being a girl; and how it offers a means of expressing the various sensations and feelings of female adolescence. Overall, this thesis provides an exploration of the sounds of girlhood, arguing that cinematic representations of female adolescence should be listened to, as well as watched, in order to fully explore the ways girls are represented on screen. The French context provides a particular specificity to this exploration, allowing for the examination of the girl

figure as simultaneously local and global, and demonstrating music's ability to both signify on a local, specific level, and to transcend these national or regional boundaries to signify in more generalisable ways. As such, while certain parts of this thesis rely heavily on the specificity of French context—such as the exploration of electronica in Chapter 3—others are much more easily extrapolated to other contexts. It is my hope that this thesis will provide the beginnings of a filmic musicology of girlhood, fully exploring the audibility of girls on screen.

Chapter 1:

Language Barriers? Song Language, Identity, and Meaning

Introduction

This chapter discusses how film scores make use of songs that exist before the creation of the film itself. Within the new storyworld of the film, such pre-existing songs offer potential to create complex layers of meaning. This is because by its very nature, pre-existing music carries the potential for recognition among viewers: the music brings its own history and context that may appeal to spectator memory, or evoke certain associations related to the song itself. This chapter is concerned with songs' ability to create extra knowledge that links the internal film storyworld and the external world of the spectators, thereby facilitating the viewer's navigation of the film world and the experiences of the film's characters. While this extra knowledge can be created, as I discuss throughout this thesis, by a number of different musical codes, in a pre-existing song, the potential for the transfer of referential meaning is greatly increased. As such, the knowledge created by the song is often reliant on this referentiality. Recognition and referentiality are therefore key to understanding how pre-existing songs 'mean' in a film environment. The referential codes of meaning created by the use of a pre-existing song in a film enables the song both to focus on the specific character or action taking place on the screen in any given moment, and to reach out to broader cultural emotions, reinforcing—or sometimes contradicting—the specific knowledge created by the film storyworld. As such, a song's referential meaning is able to function as an exchange between the internal and the external, providing an external expression of the film's internal sensations, feelings, or experiences, and permitting the spectator to understand these experiences.

For the purposes of this project, I define "pre-existing song" as any lyric-containing piece of music that was not originally composed specifically for the film in which it appears. As such, while pre-existing songs may be classical—such as, for example, the use of Verdi's *Requiem* in Céline Sciamma's *Naissance des pieuvres*—they are predominantly popular songs. Indeed, popular music itself is dominated by songs, which accounts for the fact that, in discussions of pre-existing film music, songs dominate the analysis. This chapter explores the relationship between pop music and youth culture, demonstrating how the use of

pop songs in film helps to create a film-space dominated by youthful feeling: in using pop music that is associated with adolescent culture and young listeners, the spectator is surrounded by youthful signification. In addition, I am interested in the specificity provided by the use of English-language songs in particular, and the impact this has (in a non-Anglophone film context) on this youthful meaning. Overall, this chapter demonstrates how, by using English-language songs, films are able to appeal to youthful associations in order to ease identification between the spectator and teen characters, thereby aiding the spectator in their navigation of the adolescent experiences on screen.

Songs (and pop music more generally) have long faced issues of legitimacy within academic circles. This is the case in both musicology where, as I have discussed in my introduction, there has been a tendency to focus predominantly on scoring, formal analysis, and history; and in film music studies, where early works such as those by Claudia Gorbman and Kathryn Kalinak focus almost exclusively on classical composition, by far the most common music found in Hollywood cinema. Indeed, the labelling of Jonathan Romney and Adrian Wootton's 1995 collection *Celluloid Jukebox* as the "first comprehensive look" at popular music in film exposes the severe lack of attention afforded to popular film music prior to that time (Scorsese 1). The collection comprises a number of essays devoted to popular music in film, focusing predominantly on what Romney and Wootton call "pop cinema" (7): films that feature pop music, in some way, as a main concern, such as music biopics, documentaries, and rap cinema. While, therefore, the collection represents an important step in the acknowledgment of the vital relationship between popular music and film, this focus on "pop film" means that analysis of specific songs, and particularly of pop songs located outside of the diegesis, remains largely ignored outside of this genre framework.

In his 1998 work, *The Sounds of Commerce*, Jeff Smith addresses the lack of popular film music studies, examining how pop music "was long thought to be unsuited to film scoring," due to the lack of flexibility within a pop song's structure: where classical scores are "timed and edited to fit the editing rhythms and movements within the frame," popular music forms "impose an extrinsic and rigid structure onto the visual material of the film" (10). Further, Smith notes how the character of popular music "is not inherent in its form" (10): formal analysis, such as that which dominates classical musicology, cannot reveal the effects of the music. Rather, the effects of pop music are largely reliant on the "feel" of the

sounds themselves. As this “feel” cannot be represented by traditional notation, pop music therefore rejects both traditional scoring practices, and traditional musicological analysis. For many critics during the 20th century, Smith argues, pop music’s functions were “limited to aspects of settings” such as denoting a particular time period or place: popular songs “did not appear able to suggest a character’s unspoken feelings, provide a sense of mounting dramatic tension, or round off a sequence with any sense of finality” (*Sounds of Commerce* 11). It is thus unsurprising that popular music has struggled to keep the same momentum as classical scores within film music studies. However, in recent years, the study of popular film music has grown dramatically, with scholars increasingly devoting whole volumes to songs and popular music in cinema.¹ Of particular note is Steve Lannin and Matthew Caley’s *Pop Fiction*, the first volume dedicated to the study of individual songs in specific films, which brings together authors from a diverse range of fields to conduct detailed analytical studies of non-musical films (despite numerous requests from would-be contributors to discuss *Moulin Rouge!* (Luhmann, 2001)). Smith goes on to justify the importance of popular film music in economic terms, focusing on the key role of cross-promotion and the release of “music inspired by” albums, before arguing that pop music is able to perform the same functions as traditional classical scoring, while simultaneously bringing an extra layer of expressiveness from a “system of extramusical allusions and associations” (*Sounds of Commerce* 155). This system of association is key to how songs are able to convey meaning in film, as noted by Phil Powrie and Robynn Stilwell in their collection *Changing Tunes*, which provides a range of musical and cultural approaches to the study of pre-existing film music. In their introduction to the collection, Stilwell and Powrie note, like Smith, the importance of pre-existing music as “recognisable” music, and how this potential for recognition can relate to a film’s visual and narrative aspects (xiv). It is this “recognisable” aspect of popular music that particularly concerns this chapter, which examines the ways that film songs can mean, both musically (i.e. through the musical sounds and techniques employed during the song) and associatively (i.e. through culturally-embedded traditions, stereotypes, and associations). Overall, this chapter seeks to build upon the foundations laid by existing studies

¹ See, for example, John Mundy, *Popular Music on Screen: From Hollywood Musical to Music Video*; Pamela Robertson Wojcik and Arthur Knight, *Soundtrack Available: Essays on Film and Popular Music*; Ian Conrich and Estella Tincknell, *Film’s Musical Moments*; and Arved Ashby, *Popular Music and the New Auteur: Visionary Filmmakers after MTV*.

of popular film music, combining broad analysis of pop soundtracks with detailed studies of individual songs, to examine the ways pre-existing music conveys meaning in film and how it can aid character expression.

As I have discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the song holds a position of particular relevance in French popular culture. As Ginette Vincendeau writes, the French *chanson* evokes “a nostalgic [...] notion of Frenchness, that embraces cobbled streets, the accordion, berets, and baguettes. It is also a cultural and historical representation, bound up with a precise iconography” (“*Mise-en-scène of suffering*” 107). In her discussion of the relationship between language and national cinema, Vincendeau notes how the French song can itself be used as a marker of this Frenchness, asserting its place in French cultural history and creating a French “aura” (“*Frenchness*” 343-44). It is not surprising, then, that the *chanson* has been adopted by French filmmakers as a means of musical expression in their films. As Phil Powrie writes, in the 1930s and 1940s, when *chansons réalistes* were at their most popular, the *chanson* was the dominant type of pre-existing music found in French cinema (“*Disintegration*” 98). While the *chanson* has since declined in popularity, with filmmakers opting for more popular forms of pre-existing music, it has nevertheless continued to appear in films throughout the 20th century. As Kelley Conway notes, the figure of the *chanteuse réaliste* (re)appears in French cinema for decades, noting Varda’s *Cléo de 5 à 7* (1962) as a prominent example (184). Powrie presents a similar argument, noting that, while the compilation score began to enter French film from the 1980s, these compilations, particularly in the films of the *cinéma du look*, were often based on a “postmodern mixture of classical and/or pop and/or *chanson*,” demonstrating a “mix of high and low cultural forms” (“*Disintegration*” 106-9). Songs, then, have long been imbued with ideas about French national identity, and as such have been privileged by French filmmakers as a means of musical expression. Conway notes how the figure of the *chanteuse réaliste* presents “a very particular construction of femininity,” in the way that she “embodies multiple qualities [...] she is defined by the singularity of her body and the intensity of her emotions” (175). In contrast to Conway, this chapter is interested in the value of songs when they are *not* performed; how songs located outside of the body—and, often, outside of the diegesis—are able to convey meaning; and how these songs can offer a means of communication for girlhood characters on screen. As I discussed in my introduction, by offering a means of

expression that is located outside of the body, music is able to free the female subject from her bodily constraints: her means of expression is not restricted to her body, and as such her experiences can be communicated without the need for vocal expression through dialogue. Music therefore permits a certain malleability in the expression of identity: the female subject is not confined to her visual identity, and the spectator is offered a more nuanced expression of her experience through the music. Music allows for an exchange of knowledge between the external and the internal; a doubling up of the diegetic and non-diegetic world that facilitates a freer relationship to identity. Where Vincendeau argues that, traditionally, the way song is used in film is tied to a certain iconography, I find that in these contemporary girlhood films, there is a much more fluid use of song, perhaps hinting at a more progressive approach to (gender) identity in the contemporary period. This chapter examines how songs are able to offer an alternative means of expression for on-screen girl characters, providing a means of identification with, and navigation of, their identities and experiences.

Powrie goes on to suggest that, in recent years, French cinema has begun to move towards “Anglo-American-dominated compilation score[s]” that demonstrate “a renewal of the trend toward Americanization” (“Disintegration” 115). It is this trend that is most evident in the films I discuss here—indeed, there is a marked lack of French-language songs in many of the films I examine. While an increased “Americanization” of soundtracks is to be expected from the youth film genre, given the popularity, particularly among young listeners, of Anglo-American music, in this chapter I am interested in the repercussions of using increased Anglophone music on soundtracks, and how this may affect the meaning conveyed by film songs. Issues of language have been largely ignored by studies of film music, and indeed, as Vincendeau notes, in film studies in general where language, despite its importance as a “marker of national identity,” is often left out of film discussions (“Frenchness” 341). Vincendeau notes that this problem is particularly pervasive in scholarly interventions written in English, and indeed this seems to be the same with discussions of film music, which are overwhelmingly dominated by English-language scholars. Reasons for this could perhaps include the global popularity of British and American music, which reduces the seeming significance of its inclusion in popular film beyond obvious cross-promotion techniques; or the tendency, at least in Anglo-American cinema,

for foreign music to be dismissed as a simple (and effective) signifier for particular places or settings. However, in the study of songs, where lyrics are so often considered vital for the communication of meaning, the language of those lyrics becomes increasingly important. If a song's lyrics are in a language different from that spoken by the majority of a film's intended spectators, how does this impact the meaning gained from that song? What effect do non-native lyrics have on a spectator's recognition of meaning? These are questions that have yet to be fully explored by scholars in both Anglophone and Francophone criticism, and which this chapter answers by examining how language may affect spectators' understanding of song meaning.

It is not unusual for Francophone films to use English-language songs: indeed, Anglophone songs appear in the majority of the films discussed in this thesis, and of the films that include at least one song, over 80% of them include one sung in English. However, very little has been written on either the possible reasons for this, or specifically what the effect of this language shift might be. One of the few researchers to have specifically considered song language in contemporary French cinema is Powrie, who, in his 2015 article, "Soundscapes of Loss," uses a sample of fifty films released between 2000 and 2010 to identify a number of emerging conventions and trends in the use of songs in French filmmaking. When French songs are included on a film soundtrack, he argues, they come "from two specific periods: the 1930s and 1960-1980" ("Soundscapes" 527). English-language songs, on the other hand, are "more contemporary" ("Soundscapes" 536). As a result, French-language songs become past-facing, serving "a nostalgic function [...] as markers of family and community, and as anxious appeal for reparation from loss" ("Soundscapes" 527); and English-language songs are "future-facing," indicating the "fracture of community of family without the appeal to the past and its ideals" ("Soundscapes" 541-42). Thus, a relationship emerges in the films Powrie discusses between song language, time, and evoked "pastness" or "presentness," whereby French songs are used to indicate nostalgic loss, longing, or a return to traditional values; and English songs are conversely used to signify acceptance of loss, and a more "future-facing," optimistic attitude ("Soundscapes" 533-39). This chapter considers this perceived link between modernity and English-language songs. Firstly, it examines the effect of extra-musical perceptions on a film song's meaning, and secondly, it asks what happens when the association between English-language

lyrics and “presentness” is disrupted, with Anglo-American songs in fact being rooted in the past.

The first section of this chapter examines the ways songs “mean,” arguing that, despite the tendency to privilege lyrics as the dominant mode of communication in songs, it is also important to consider musicological aspects. In her discussion of film music and identification, Anahid Kassabian writes that the three components of a film soundtrack—music, sound effects, and dialogue—exist in an “attention continuum:” the absence of any one of these components focuses the viewer’s attention onto one or both of the others (52). This chapter applies this approach not only to film, but also to the songs themselves, arguing that the removal of lyrical meaning draws attention to the accompanying music as a primary means of communication. I contend that this is a potential impact of the inclusion of foreign-language lyrics on a soundtrack: despite the prevalence and popularity of Anglo-American music in France, the use of non-native lyrics will have at least some impact on a spectator’s comprehension of lyrical meaning. This therefore reduces the meaning taken superficially from the song’s lyrics, and instead draws attention to the musical elements of the song. The first part of this chapter takes Mélanie Laurent’s *Respire / Breathe* (2014) as its principal case study, demonstrating how songs can mean in ways other than through their lyrics. This first section therefore provides a useful stepping stone for the rest of this thesis as a whole, by beginning to consider the different ways we interpret meaning from music in a film context. *Respire* provides a particularly interesting case study for this discussion, as the film’s protagonist is permitted very little vocal expression, which foregrounds music as a means by which her experiences can be articulated. The film’s emphasis on clubs, dances, and other distinctly musical situations also serves to highlight music’s importance in the social and cultural interactions of adolescents, drawing our attention to the prevalence of music in the characters’ daily lives and, therefore, in the construction of their identities. Through a combination of cultural and musicological analysis of the songs featured in *Respire*, the first part of this chapter demonstrates how the use of non-native lyrics has the potential to obscure a song’s superficial (lyrical) meaning. Thus, the spectator’s attention is drawn to other musical elements of the song, which opens up alternative levels of communication and providing a means of articulating the experiences of the girl protagonists in the film.

Where the first section of this chapter examines the way songs can mean musically, that is, through “representational” processes that relate more to the musicological properties of the music, the second section explores how meaning is conveyed through more “evaluative” processes, that is to say those that are more emotionally-determined (Juslin and Sloboda 4). As I discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the majority of listeners engage with music through non-technical means, such as emotions elicited by culturally-embedded conventions and associations. Taking Powrie’s argument that Anglo-American music is used in film to evoke modernity or “presentness,” I investigate the association between English-language music and youth, arguing that, thanks to the popularity of British and American music amongst a predominantly youthful audience, this music subsequently comes to represent, in some way, the adolescent experience. The use of this music in film therefore helps to create a bath of youthful signification; it aids in the creation of a youthful film-space that provides a means of articulating the experiences of young characters. As an extension to this, I ask what happens when the obvious link between Anglo-American music and modernity is disrupted: what is the effect when English-language songs are in fact rooted in the past? Does the temporality suggested by Powrie become re-written? The second part of this chapter seeks to answer these questions, using Lisa Azuelos’s 2009 film *LOL (Laughing Out Loud)* as its principal case study. The adolescent film in general particularly suits this enquiry, due to its foregrounding of the question of temporality through an emphasis on generational differences; because music, especially English-language music, is tied to French youth culture; and because popular music is key to the genre’s appeal. *LOL* is a useful case study for these concerns, not least because of its popularity: according to the Lumière admissions database, the film had over 3.6 million admissions in France in 2009. It is also particularly relevant for its foregrounding of parent/teenager relationships, and the difficulties in overcoming generational differences. The second section of this chapter examines how the music in *LOL* interacts with these generational differences through the elicitation of nostalgia by, crucially, English-language songs. Through the combination of nostalgia and modernity, manifested through the use of older, English-language songs, the film provides opportunities for its older characters—and indeed its spectators—to interact with the feelings and experiences of its young girl protagonist.

Overall, this chapter expands existing approaches to how film songs mean, and draws attention to the importance of considering language when analysing song meaning. Through the exploration of how music means in film, this chapter paves the way for subsequent chapters in this thesis, arguing that listeners interact with songs in many non-lyrical (and thus non-verbal) ways, and exploring how these means of communication influence our interaction with the on-screen characters. The songs in these films create youthful girl film-spaces, permitting spectators into the girls' worlds and allowing for an articulation of their experiences that is both non-vocal and non-embodied. By "girl film-space" or "girl space," here, I am referring to the combination of three "spaces" at play in the cinema. First, there is the space *within* the film storyworld, which the girl characters inhabit (i.e. the space within the frame); second, the physical space between the spectator and the film they are watching; and third, what Libby Saxton refers to as the *hors-champ*: the imaginary space that defines the perceived distance of this physical space. The music in these films helps to define the space within the film world as girl(y): it enables the girls on screen to claim the space as their own. The music is not, however, limited to this space, and its signification escapes the confines of the diegesis and pours out into the space between the film and the viewer. The spectator is therefore surrounded by the girl(y) signification that works to define the visible space as girl(y), and as such is invited in to that girl space. The music thus works to reduce the (imaginary) distance between the spectator's (potentially non-girl) subjectivity and the girls' space, inviting us into their domain and permitting contact between the spectator and the girls' experiences. It is this contact, this surrounding of the spectator with girl(y) signification, which encourages the spectator to feel, as I discussed in the introduction to this thesis, *like* and *as a girl*, thereby encouraging identification with the girl subjectivities on screen and providing a means of articulating the girl characters' experiences in a way that is accessible to the spectator.

In addition, as will be seen in the discussion of *LOL* later in this chapter, while non-diegetic songs provide a means of allowing the spectator into the interior film storyworld, if a song is located within that internal world, it can also provide a means of connecting other characters in the world itself. As such, other characters are able to share in the girls' experiences through music at the same time as the spectator. When we hear these songs, then, we are provided with numerous layers of meaning. Firstly, the verisimilitude of the girls listening to

music as a means of cultural engagement helps create, as I have mentioned, an aurally youthful film-space. In addition to this, the music signifies within the film-space itself, connecting the girls to places and other characters, and permitting them the opportunity for non-verbal self-expression. Further, the music signifies outside of the film narrative, permitting the spectator to engage with the aural space and drawing on extra-musical, associational meanings. These layers of meaning combine to permit the girl characters a means of non-embodied articulation of their experiences, thereby freeing their expression from bodily confines. In other filmic portrayals of girlhood, especially those from mainstream Hollywood, the girl identity is often highly verbal, performed, and embodied. As Peggy Tally notes, while successful girlhood narratives often involve some kind of empowerment for their female protagonists, the images on screen are “filled with [...] powerful, consumerist, and arguably anti-feminist messages, including high-consumption items such as cars, vacations, beautiful clothes, well-crafted, perfect bodies, etc,” and present a glossy, picture-perfect embodiment of girlhood that ignores the majority of challenges present in girls’ lives (317). Discussing Robert Luketic’s *Legally Blonde* (2001), in which the ultra-feminine sorority girl Elle Woods (Reese Witherspoon) enrolls at Harvard Law School in an attempt to prove herself and win back her college boyfriend, as an example, Tally argues that, while the film is “about girls gaining power” in some way, this empowerment is “in reality the freedom for [...] young women to use their feminine skills and purchasing power to attain their goals” (317-18). She goes on to note how, even when “feminine wile” is not used as a means to achieve a goal, there is still usually a “payoff” where the girl becomes conventionally beautiful at the end of the film” (318). In *The Princess Diaries* (Marshall, 2001), for example, protagonist Mia Thermopolis (Anne Hathaway) undergoes a visual “transformation” whereby she removes her glasses, straightens her hair, and puts on makeup, in order to “become the princess she was destined to be” (Tally 318). A similar narrative is found in *She’s All That* (Iscoe, 1999), in which unpopular art student Laney Boggs (Rachael Leigh Cook) is given a makeover which permits her access to the “popular” crowd and ultimately allows her to fulfil her romantic narrative. The pursuit of beauty, then, as Tally writes, is “the real visual substance of these films, no matter how progressive the ostensible message is supposed to be” (318). The girls in these films perform and embody a visually “perfect” ideal of girlhood, while also enacting a verbosity that gives the impression of empowerment and

independence. Music, then, offers the opportunity to remove this verbosity, while nevertheless providing an expression of girlhood experience that is not located in the patriarchal visual medium, and escapes the confines of the visible body: the songs in these films provide a means of expression that is not tied to the visible feminine body, and as such provide an approach to examining girlhood expression that differs from other filmic representations of girlhood in which the girl identity is often verbal, performed, or embodied.

Language and Musical Meaning in *Respire* (Laurent, 2014)

How do songs “mean”? This chapter concerns itself with this question, examining the different ways songs can convey meaning, and how they can mean in a film context. Popular music and its emotional effects have long been the topic of sociological, psychological, and, more recently, musicological discussions. However, for many, especially before the emergence of popular music studies as a branch of musicology in its own right, these studies begin and end with semantic analysis of a song’s lyric content. As Simon Frith notes, beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, the emerging field of popular music sociology was “dominated by analyses of song words:” as most sociologists were unable to “distinguish songs in musical terms” or conduct technical musicological analysis, they instead turned to lyrics as their main reference point for discussions of popular songs (“Why do songs have words?” 77). At the same time, before “New Musicology” became an established field, very little attention was afforded to popular music by musicologists. As Philip Tagg wrote in 1987, “until quite recently, musicology has managed to ignore most of the music produced and used in the post-Edison era” (“Musicology” 2). As such, the majority of discussions of popular music, in many disciplines, remain focused on lyrical meaning. Lyrics are, for most listeners, the most obvious means of communication in a song. Frith goes on to argue that, “in a culture in which few people make music but everyone makes conversation, access to songs is primarily through their words” (“Why do songs have words?” 93). Song lyrics provide an accessible entry-point into the song text, as they are considered to express the life and/or experiences of the songwriter(s), and therefore act as a means of communicating whatever message or story the song is designed to convey.

In film music studies, this focus on lyrics continues to permeate studies of popular film soundtracks. Given the hierarchy within film soundtracks, where dialogue is privileged over sound effects and music, it is easy to turn to lyrics as an obvious means of communication, or indeed as a direct replacement for dialogue. This conspicuousness of lyrics as signifiers has been used as a justification for the lack of attention afforded to popular music. Rick Altman writes that songs are neglected by film music scholars, partly because lyrics “overdetermine meaning:” popular music therefore relies much less heavily on the film image than its classical counterpart for its meaning (“Cinema and Popular Song” 23). Similarly, Smith discusses how lyrics “carry a certain potential for distraction” (*Sounds of Commerce* 166): their inclusion in a film risks detracting from the on-screen action or dialogue. Indeed, in her recent work, *Une musique pour l’image*, Cécile Carayol argues that, in contrast to classical film music where meaning must be inferred, songs “dévoilent ostensiblement leur message” (189): when meaning is revealed within the lyrics of a song, further analysis is rendered unnecessary.

In his article, “Analysing Popular Music: Theory, Method and Practice,” Tagg moves beyond this focus on lyrics as the primary carrier of meaning in a song, providing a “checklist” for the analysis of popular music that features a large range of musical elements including “aspects of time,” such as tempo, rhythm, and pulse; “melodic aspects;” “orchestrational aspects;” “aspects of tonality;” and “acoustical aspects” such as “extraneous sounds” (“Analysing” 48). Crucially, lyric content is not included in Tagg’s list: he instead draws attention to the numerous other ways that songs convey meaning. He calls for musicology to embrace the “serious” study of popular music, and reject “reactionary” claims that the study of popular music could “never have serious implications” (“Analysing” 37-39). Indeed, while the lyrics to a song are undeniably important—though, it could be argued, this importance varies with genre—they cannot be fully separated from their musical context. As William Forde Thompson and Frank A. Russo argue, melody and lyrics are “coordinated for overall emotional meaning:” sometimes, even the most well-written of lyrics are “not always meaningful outside of a musical context. Yet in the context of a song, they may take on unexpected significance” (51-52). This is a position also taken by Philip Drake who, in his discussion of popular film music’s elicitation of emotion, argues that “knowing lyrics as sounds is [...] quite different to knowing them as words” (173): to hear

lyrics on their own is not the same as hearing them with their music, and that music has the ability to change the perceived meaning of the lyrics. It is therefore important not to dismiss the musical power of popular songs, especially in film, where lyrics may be obscured by dialogue or, as I explore in this section, when meaning is reduced through issues of language.

While, as I have discussed above, issues of song language have largely been ignored in studies of film music, other disciplines have long explored the relationship between music and language, particularly in recent decades. As Steven Feld and Aaron A. Fox argue, the links between language and music represent a “broad area of research” covered by a number of disciplines including musicology, psychology, and anthropology (26). Feld and Fox go on to note how discussions of music and language can be separated into four categories: research into “music as language,” which explores semantic readings of music; “music in language,” examining the natural cadences and musicality of speech; “language about music,” discussing the discourse surrounding music and musicology; and, most useful for the concerns of this chapter, “language in music,” exploring the ways language is put to use in different musical contexts (26). This is something that is not, as Harris M. Berger notes, usually considered in everyday culture, especially in Anglophone societies. Given that “English still dominates [Anglo-American] mass media and many realms of social life,” issues of language in cultural forms are rarely considered from Anglo-American perspectives (x). Considerations of language and dialect, though, are important, especially in popular music when words are such a vital provider of meaning. As Berger writes, throughout the world, “questions of language choice are a crucial part of musical experience” (x): language choice has consequences for both performer and listener at an industrial, economic, representational and expressive level.

In her study of language choice in French popular songs, Cece Cutler discusses how French artists, under pressure to release English-language songs due to the greater potential for worldwide distribution and popularity (and the popularity of American and British pop music in the French market), will write songs using a technique called “chanter en yaourt.” In order to “overcome their limited verbal skills while satisfying the market demands to write songs in English,” artists will compose a song, then use a variety of English-sounding “approximations” to get a sense of how the song would sound in English, before

writing (or working with an English-speaking lyricist to write) lyrics that “fit the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic structures of the song” (329). The sounds used in place of lyrics, therefore, correspond to the “feel” of the song, and help to communicate that feel before English-language lyrics can be added. What is interesting for my purposes, here, though, is how these sounds are themselves nonsensical. While artists will use approximations that sound like English words and may contain linguistic features that correspond to the English language, the words themselves do not contribute to the meaning of the original draft of the song. For example, a demo song by French group Montecarl, transcribed by Cutler, reads “tahm is sweet / an’ a low ah / weev you sumah babe / ahm only ada go / ahm much in lucky / nobody’s low / ahm now chi wone” (332). While it may be assumed that the song has romantic connotations, with its use of words such as “babe,” “sweet” and “weev [with] you,” the words themselves do not make semantic sense, especially in isolation. The meaning of the song on the demo is therefore communicated largely through the music, rather than the lyrics. The fact that lyrics are added after the initial writing of the song, and often provided by a lyricist rather than the original songwriter, raises more questions regarding comprehension and the way these songs “mean” for listeners. If lyrics are sung in a foreign language by someone who does not understand that language, and heard by listeners for whom the language is also not native, what impact does this have on the overall meaning of the song? This chapter is concerned with this question, examining how language may affect the perception of meaning in a film song, and demonstrating the various ways songs can mean.

While the soundtrack to Mélanie Laurent’s *Respire* comprises a number of tracks, including originally-composed pieces by Marc Chouarain, and pre-existing songs, all of which are sung in English, the film nevertheless feels very quiet. This is perhaps due to the fact that, despite the film containing nearly 29 minutes of music—33% of the film’s total runtime—this music is heard in only fourteen distinct occurrences. The time between these occurrences is therefore much longer than, for example, *LOL*, in which there are 31 distinct musical occurrences (see Appendix). Laurent leaves dialogue at a minimum throughout the film, permitting her characters very little vocal expression and spreading the music relatively sparsely throughout the film’s duration. As a result, when we do hear music, it is immediately foregrounded as a means of communication: with the absence of other sounds, the spectator’s attention is focused on the music. The

songs in the film provide a means of entering the intoxicating, overwhelming world occupied by the adolescents on screen, allowing the spectator to understand the protagonists' experiences. The first song heard in the film—and indeed one of the first pieces of music on the soundtrack—occurs roughly fourteen minutes in, after a long period of relative quiet. The sequence leading up to the song shows us the rapid development of the protagonists' friendship, as the quieter, shier Charlie (Joséphine Japy) is liberated and brought out of her shell by the outgoing, rebellious Sarah (Lou de Laage). As we see snapshots of the girls in fits of laughter understood by no one but themselves, smoking illicitly in the school toilets, and listening to music together, Chouarain's score trembles over the top. The score comprises sustained string chords that lead smoothly into the backing track for "You and Me" by Disclosure ft. Eliza Doolittle that plays during the next scene. While the transition from original score to pre-existing song is smooth, with the pitch and rhythms similar in the two tracks, the sound quality of the music changes, alerting us to the fact that this song is now located in the diegesis, coming from the bedroom in which Sarah and Charlie get ready. With the absence of other sounds at this point, this change in musical quality draws attention to the music, foregrounding it in the scene. The song itself acts as a sonic representation of the intensity of the friendship between the two protagonists, providing the spectator with a means of accessing the girls' otherwise closed relationship. While the song is in English, the lyrics are not the main concern in this sequence; instead, the spectator's attention is drawn to the musical elements of the song. As the song begins with its pulsing string introduction, the film shows the two girls getting ready for a party. Sarah dominates the screen, standing over Charlie as she helps with her hair and make-up and facing the light, leaving Charlie in shadow (fig. 1.1). The pulsing music intensifies this power dynamic between the two girls, the string sounds aligning the spectator with Charlie and providing a representation for her increasing obsession. When the lyrics begin, sung in a high, solo voice by Eliza Doolittle, they are sparse and disjointed, with stuttering sentences heard in broken rhythms (fig. 1.2). Berger writes that in film, foreign-language songs "draw [...] attention away from the referential content of the lyrics and toward the other features" (xi). In this sequence, the fact that the lyrics to "You and Me" are in English, aided by their disjointedness, obscures the meaning of the words, subsequently drawing attention to the music itself. As we begin to see the dynamics at play in Charlie

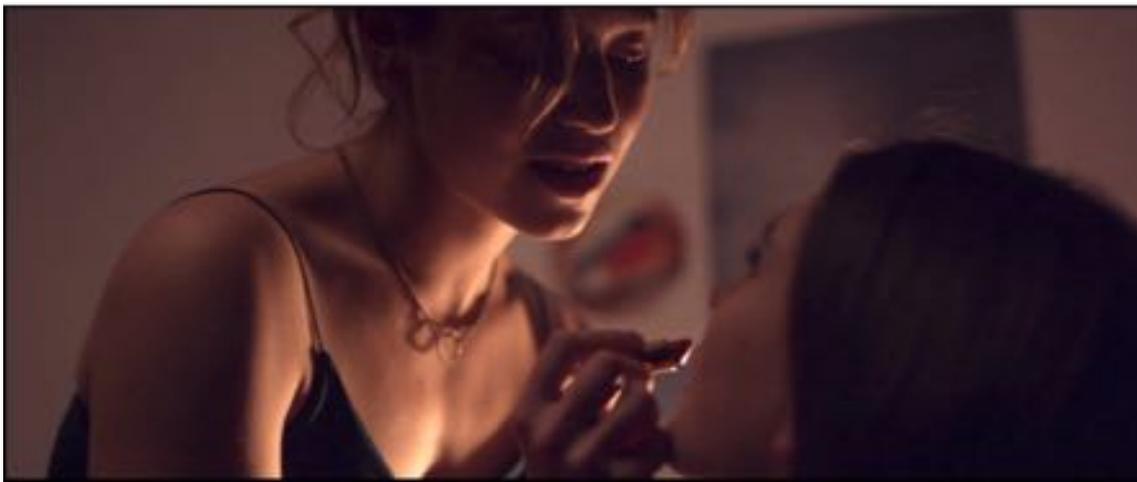


Fig. 1.1 *Respire*. Sarah is dominant in the image.



Fig. 1.2 The rhythm of the lyrics in "Me and You." The diagram shows the position of the lyrics in relation to the stressed (/) and unstressed (-) beats.

and Sarah's relationship, the music provides an underlying hint of the dysfunction to come. The irregular rhythm of the lyrics and continuous pulsing of the accompaniment creates an uneasiness that is projected onto the images of the two girls, emphasizing Sarah's dominance and Charlie's growing obsession. This is highlighted by the last shot of the scene when Charlie, her face largely in

shadow, looks up at Sarah with a combination of admiration and intense longing (fig. 1.3).



Fig. 1.3 *Respire*. Charlie looks up at Sarah.

During this prolonged close-up on Charlie, the song gets gradually louder, further highlighting her suffocation, and transitioning back out of the diegesis to continue accompanying the party scene that follows. The song (now free from lyrics completely) is the only sound heard in this sequence, and as such retains its foregrounded position in the spectator's experience. The sense of disjointedness continues, with the irregular rhythm of the strings interspersed with deep drum beats and high-pitched buzzing that add to the feelings of unease created by the fragmented vocal line. This unease is reinforced by the continued emphasis on the fragile dynamics of the girls' friendship throughout the scene, switching rapidly between shots of the girls dancing together, Sarah consistently in the dominant position, and images of Charlie looking on longingly when Sarah's attentions are turned elsewhere (fig. 1.4 & 1.5).



Fig. 1.4 *Respire*. Sarah and Charlie dance together.



Fig. 1.5 *Respire*. Charlie is left alone on the dancefloor.

This rapid changing of the visual image creates confusion and disorientation for the viewer, feelings that are reinforced by the discomfort caused by the music's changing pitches and irregular rhythms. Nevertheless, the music also offers a means of making sense of the confusion by providing a consistent presence in the film-space. The music therefore provides not only a reinforcement of the visual information, but a means of grounding the spectator in the film's world and providing access to the dynamics of Charlie and Sarah's rapidly declining friendship. It is the music, here, rather than the lyrics, that has these effects and creates meaning. Via the use of a song with English-language lyrics, attention is focused onto these other elements of the song, reducing the impact (or potential distraction) caused by the lyrics themselves.

A similar effect is achieved later in the film, during the New Year's Eve party attended by Charlie and her friends. The sequence includes a variety of pre-existing source music, ending with Gabriel-Kane Day-Lewis's ballad, "Beautiful Failure," which then transitions, somewhat abruptly, into Fun.'s well-known anthem "We Are Young." This abrupt transition, which highlights the contrast between the two songs, and begins "We Are Young" mid-verse, draws the attention of the spectator, signalling the importance of the action on screen. The interaction that follows between Charlie and Sarah represents a pivotal moment in their now-failing relationship. Initially, before the transition, we see a rare assertion of Charlie's power. In an attempt to both regain control of, and cling—somewhat masochistically—to, her now toxic and damaging relationship with Sarah, Charlie reveals that she knows the secret Sarah keeps hidden behind her show of confidence: that her mother is an abusive alcoholic and drug addict. As the music fades, Sarah looks visibly anxious, a marker of the changed power

dynamics between the two girls. However, this changes again moments later when, as the music transitions, the situation is reversed and Sarah regains control. After the second song begins, the music gradually increases in volume, transitioning from its location purely inside the diegesis to a position that seems to occupy a space both inside and outside of the filmed environment. Robynn Stilwell refers to this liminal space as the “fantastical gap,” writing that when music traverses the boundary between the diegetic and the non-diegetic, “it does always mean [...] like any liminal space, [it] is a space of power and transformation” (186). She notes how, traditionally, there exists an “alliance” that equates “empathy” with the non-diegetic underscore and “anempathy” with diegetic source music, reinforced by trends in traditional film scoring whereby underscores “tend towards subjectivity and source music to a kind of realistic ‘objectivity’” (190-91): because source music is located within the film diegesis, it is therefore considered more faithful to the narrative and therefore more “realistic.” However, as Stilwell goes on to write, this narrative boundary between the diegetic and the non-diegetic is an arbitrary concept that ignores the space—the “fantastical gap”—in between. This gap represents, for Stilwell, “a transformative space” that allows for “moments of revelation, of symbolism, and of emotional engagement” (200). When music enters this space, it is transformed, providing a specific geographical and psychological link between spectator and on-screen characters, and allowing more complex emotional engagement than music located purely inside or outside of the diegesis.

In *Respire*, as the music moves into this liminal space between the diegetic and non-diegetic, it provides a means of navigating Charlie’s emotional state. While visually, we are not aligned with either of the girls more than the other, witnessing their encounter predominantly from a side view, we are aligned sonically with Charlie as she experiences the reversal in power described above. As the volume of the song increases and it begins its transition, only Sarah is permitted to speak. Leaning in threateningly, she whispers her threat almost inaudibly in Charlie’s ear, “si t’en parles...je te tue” (fig. 1.6). As she walks away, the music continues to increase in volume, allowing no space on the soundtrack for dialogue: Charlie’s powers of speech are removed, and she is rendered silent. The music overpowers all the other sounds in the scene, surrounding the spectator—and Charlie—with a barrage of sound (fig. 1.7). The music thus provides both a direct reflection of Charlie’s anxiety attack, and a tangible



Fig. 1.7 *Respire*. Sarah whispers threateningly in Charlie's ear.



Fig. 1.6 *Respire*. Charlie is overwhelmed by the music and her emotions.

expression of her emotions for the spectator. The music's position neither inside nor outside the diegesis provides direct spatial access to Charlie in this scene: just as she is overwhelmed, so the music overwhelms the spectator, providing a means of communicating Charlie's experience even while she remains silent.

It is the music itself, rather than the lyrics, which provides particularly effective engagement with Charlie's emotional state here. Although the lyrics, emphasising youthful abandon and excess, are certainly pertinent to the party scene, they have very little impact on our experience as spectators. It is the music track, with its heavy beat, drone-like synth, and tinny vocals, that provides the sense of suffocation that is vital to our experience of the scene. The continuous heavy bass drum on the track, mimicking an increased heartbeat, provides a sense of Charlie's panic and, combined with the gradually increasing volume of the track, helps to immerse the spectator in the suffocating environment depicted on screen. Similarly, the drone-like synth, reminiscent of the buzzing sounds heard in "You and Me" earlier in the film, and indeed at the end of the film when

the only music heard is a continuous, high-pitched buzz tone that increases in pitch with Charlie's stress and panic, is disorienting and uncomfortable; it contributes to the overwhelming nature of the music track and therefore helps the spectator navigate Charlie's emotions. The language of the lyrics, here, helps to foreground the music in the viewing experience; had the song been in French, the lyrics would arguably have had much more impact on the spectator's emotional engagement. In using a foreign-language song, the film reduces the comprehension of the lyrics, thereby reducing the meaning inferred from the lyrics and decreasing the potential for distraction, as well as providing a reflection of Charlie's reduced vocal power. As Charlie is not permitted to express herself verbally in this scene, so the song does not convey meaning through lyrics. The music in this sequence provides a concrete representation of Charlie's emotions when she is herself not permitted to speak. That is not to say that the music provides a direct replacement for dialogue, nor that it somehow "represents" Charlie's voice. Rather, the songs move beyond the verbal, providing a means of articulating Charlie's feelings and sensations, and allowing for the affective expression of her emotions that does not require vocal communication.

As well as drawing attention away from the referential lyric-content, using foreign-language lyrics in a song can mean in other, more referential ways. As Berger argues, song words can "operate collectively as a highly sensual sign," providing an "aural evocation" of the culture (and associated images) related to the language (xii). In the next section of this chapter, I am interested in the potential meanings attached to English-language lyrics for French spectators, demonstrating how Anglo-American music is overwhelmingly associated with youth culture, which is then translated into the film-space when these songs are used on a soundtrack.

Pop Music, Language and Youth in *LOL* (Azuelos, 2009)

During the 1980s and early 1990s, France witnessed a substantial increase in radio stations aimed specifically at the youth market, playing predominantly popular tracks to appeal to adolescents and young adults who, up until that point, had received little representation on the airwaves (Hare 62). Geoff Hare notes how, due to this sudden increase in the market, stations competed for listeners by playing the most popular music, thus devoting more airtime to "already successful" British and American music, and reducing the time devoted

to “relatively unknown” French artists (62). Following influential news coverage on the “loss of French popular music” and the effect it would have on French culture, concerns over the diminishing airtime afforded to French artists, combined with existing anxieties over the threat of globalisation (and particularly *Américanisation*) to French national identity, led to the passing of the Broadcasting Reform Act in 1994 (Hare 51). Part of this act, the “Pelchat Amendment,” imposed on radio stations a 40 per cent quota for French-language songs during their programming, plus further quotas for the inclusion of newly released recordings or emerging talent (Hare 62). Anglo-American music, then, was discouraged on French radio, despite its popularity with the youth market. However, despite the concerns of the French cultural establishment over the need to preserve French national identity and the French language, Anglo-American music has continued to pervade French culture, on radio and in the charts. Indeed, of the twenty most popular tracks for the first half of 2015, eleven are not from Francophone artists, and a further four are by Francophone artists but sung in English (Goncalves, *Pure Charts*). The worldwide dissemination of British and American pop music, combined with ease of access provided by the internet and subsequent pressure on artists from record companies to sing in English in order to reach a wider audience, has meant that Anglophone music is now a near-permanent feature in French music culture, and it continues to be popular, particularly among young listeners. This goes some way to explaining the prevalence of English-language tracks in French popular film, particularly those aimed at or starring adolescents, where music often reflects contemporary listening practices. However, what I am particularly interested in here are the associations that may be evoked by English-language songs that are not accessible through French-language songs: what “aural evocations” are attached to English-language lyrics, and how do these associations affect the songs’ potential meaning in film?

Since the emergence of a distinct teen culture in the 1950s, popular music has played a vital part the expression and identification of that culture. Jeffrey Jensen Arnett writes that adolescents’ consumption of popular media, including music and television, offers “a new source of socialization:” in a period where the influence of family and other childhood sources of socialization are diminished, but sources of adult socialization such as marriage and employment are “not yet present,” media becomes increasingly important for self-socialisation (520).

Arnett goes on to write that adolescents consume popular media for a variety of reasons, including for entertainment purposes, to cope with adolescent-specific issues, and for “high sensation” stimulation (521). Most interestingly for my purposes here is the way adolescents engage with media for reasons of both identity formation and culture identification. Arnett notes that through their consumption of popular media, adolescents “cultivat[e] a conception of [their] values,” using media as a means of “construct[ing] an identity” (522). Simultaneously, media—and particularly music—is used as a means of identifying, and partaking in, youth culture. The consumption of media gives “a sense of being connected to a larger peer network” (524), meaning that adolescents are able to find peers who have similar interests, values, or hopes through their engagement with media, regardless of geographical location. In her discussion of Australian “country” girlhood experience, Catherine Driscoll positions rural and urban girlhood in terms of distance, noting how engaging in popular culture, and particularly in music culture, enables a sense of closeness for girls who are geographically positioned on the margins. Discussing her own experience of watching the music TV show *Countdown* during the mid-1970s, Driscoll writes how, despite living in a rural (and therefore culturally isolated) area, the music show was able to offer a sense of wider youth culture:

The homogeneity of the music video clip explicitly reproduced the same musical image for viewers everywhere, and *Countdown* imagined for me a wide musical audience of young people. [...] *Countdown* was a routine part of my home and school life, and one of the ways in which I assessed my taste and identity relative to girls around me.” (“*Becoming a Country Girl*” 142)

While, as Driscoll notes earlier in her essay, access to entertainment media can serve to highlight the distance between rural girls and the urban localities where the cultural forms originate, it can also provide a means of accessing otherwise unavailable cultural expression. Media consumption permits girls and young people to share in group experiences, even if they are separated geographically. Driscoll goes on to discuss her experiences with music specifically, writing how Kate Bush’s album *The Kick Inside* provided both a representation of her rural distance, and also a means of closing that distance, emphasised when attempting to find the music on radio stations which “both close and represent the gap between city and country” due to how, in the 1970s, radio stations began to, sometimes intermittently, broadcast across larger distances (“*Becoming a*

Country Girl” 145). The ability to listen to internationally popular music, then, presents both an opportunity to engage in global youth culture. This reduces the distance between the rural and the urban, and liberates oneself from the perceived limits of personal experience. As Driscoll writes, “[listening to] Kate was a personal relocation, an internal distancing from what had previously seemed to be my possibilities” (“Becoming a Country Girl” 145). Music and other media, therefore, provide opportunities for shared group experiences and the creation of communities, which in turn helps to construct and define adolescent identities within a broader youth culture that transcends national borders.

Patricia Shehan Campbell et al also explore these issues with specific focus on music, arguing that music offers adolescents a means of “projecting their inner selves to the world” (221). Music provides adolescents with the opportunity to explore and access youth culture, then position themselves within that culture, and outwardly demonstrate this position along with their personal values and opinions. The adolescents taking part in the study conducted by Campbell et al identify a range of uses of music, including as a means of emotional expression, and of socialisation with peers or a way of integrating within a new group (228-30). Music is, they conclude, “a prominent force in the lives of adolescents” that is able to fulfil “emotional and social needs” (233). Music is an important part of youth culture, providing a means of engaging with cultural practices and constructing identity. Due to the vital role popular music plays in establishing and maintaining youth culture, it has particularly youthful connotations in wider culture and society. As Kay Dickinson writes, the representation and definition of “teen” culture and what it means to be a teenager would be “almost unrecognisable” without the signification brought by popular music. Pop music, therefore, appears almost “synonymous with youth, or at least youthfulness” (99). It is this synonymy of popular music and youth that is particularly useful for this section, which examines how this association of pop music with youthfulness translates into film as a means of expressing youthful concerns.

Given the ways teens use popular media as a means of constructing and defining their identity, the youth film occupies a unique position within adolescent culture, as it both represents youthfulness, while also providing a media form that may be used by adolescents as a means of navigating their own youthfulness. As Timothy Shary argues, teen film and television are “imbued with a unique cultural significance: they question our evolving identities from youth to adulthood

while simultaneously shaping and maintaining those identities” (*Generation Multiplex* 13). Adolescent film, then, must offer alternative ways of considering youth, allowing spectators to position themselves in relation to the values and views presented in the film, whilst simultaneously maintaining dominant modes of representation in order to provide accessible and recognisable characters. The music included in youth film therefore has a similar dual function: it provides the films with a means of internal identity construction (the representation of the characters’ identities on screen), and external identity communication (the outward expression of identity and value than can be appropriated by spectators). A character who listens to punk rock music, for example, may be characterised as rebellious; spectators who identify or align themselves with such a character may then use punk rock music as a means of navigating their own identity. Scott Henderson writes how, in youth film, music is “foregrounded as the primary marker of character” (146): adolescent films exploit the association of popular music and youth culture to communicate information about their protagonists. Youth films, therefore, recreate and exploit identification practices already present, thus enabling spectators to align themselves with those characters.

As well as using popular music to express specific concerns and aid alignment between characters and youth spectators, however, films can also use pre-existing songs to aid identification for non-adolescent spectators, or in fact the filmmakers themselves.² Given popular music’s associations with youthfulness and youth culture, it can stand as a signifier, especially in a youth film environment, for adolescence itself. It therefore helps to communicate the youth experience through the creation of a specifically adolescent space. In film, pop music serves to circulate the affective experience of adolescence, allowing the spectator a means of navigating this experience. In non-Anglophone cinema, this general evocation of youthfulness is affected by the inclusion of Anglo-American music on the soundtrack. The popularity of American and British songs amongst youth listeners around the world means that it becomes associated with adolescence more generally, thereby offering a means of navigating the adolescent experience depicted in the film. Just as popular music more generally

² Indeed, in 1994, ARTE released a series of telefilms entitled “Tous les garçons et les filles de leur âge,” in which filmmakers were invited to make a film with adolescence as its principal theme. What is interesting about this series is the requirement for each filmmaker to include at least one piece of popular music from the era they chose to represent, demonstrating the importance of pop music in the signalling of youth, both for spectators and for directors themselves.

is “synonymous with youth,” so Anglo-American popular music specifically is synonymous with youth in the global market. It is this association that concerns this section, which examines how the relationship between English-language music and French youth is manifested in film, and how English-language music retains its youthful connotations even as we age, thereby enabling us to return to and engage with a youthful space. In France specifically, the popularity of English-language music is by no means new: Anglo-American pop music has indeed been popular in France since the 1960s, changing with each generation of adolescents. This creates a certain genealogy of music-listening, whereby English-language pop music is, in general, associated with youth listeners, while also maintaining a certain generational specificity. In using older English-language songs, then, these meanings combine: not only does English-language music in general appeal to associations of adolescence, but it is possible to appeal to a certain nostalgic feeling of youthfulness. This introduces multiple temporalities into the narrative, bridging generational gaps, and making adolescent experiences more accessible for adult spectators.

In *Respire*, the use of contemporary music retains a modern, youthful grounding for the film. In the sequences discussed above, at the moments we are invited most intimately into Charlie’s space and experience, it is contemporary, pre-existing music that is used, rather than Chouarain’s original score. We are thus provided with realistic context that directly relates to the teens’ listening habits (and, indeed, what we would expect those listening habits to be). The songs are representative of music aimed at young listeners, and therefore provide an additional avenue of identification between the spectator and the on-screen characters. In using contemporary, English-language songs, *Respire* creates a generally youthful film-space: these songs are associated with young listeners, and these associations are projected onto the film. As Powrie argues, contemporary English-language songs come to represent a certain present-ness in French film, a youthfulness that is separated from family ideals (“Soundscapes of Loss” 542). In the sequences discussed above, then, the music helps to create a film-space governed by the adolescent characters: adults are absent from these moments, and they represent times when the spectator is asked to specifically interact with the emotions and experiences of the young characters on screen. This interaction is facilitated by the use of contemporary, English-language

songs, which eases the spectator into an affectively youthful space and opens up possibilities for accessing the youthful subjectivities depicted on screen.

In Lisa Azuelos's 2009 film, *LOL (Laughing Out Loud)*, a number of English-language pop songs are employed to this effect, helping to position this film as, above all else, a teen film. Indeed, an American high-school remake of the same name starring Miley Cyrus was released in 2012, further cementing the film in the teen genre. The compilation soundtrack, comprising predominantly English-language songs, is similarly stereotypical. It features largely up-beat, teeny-bop-style songs, and is heard almost continuously throughout the film—indeed, there are over twenty-eight minutes of music, comprising nearly 30% of the film's total runtime. Further, a soundtrack album featuring both pre-existing tracks and original songs by the film's composer Jean-Philippe Verdin, was released shortly after the film. As a whole, then, the film uses its soundtrack as a means of cross-promotion, to attract young audiences by appealing to their media habits; and as a means of creating, as in *Respire*, a contextual grounding for their youthful characters: the music assists in the film's creation and representation of an adolescent sensibility. However, what is more unusual about *LOL*'s soundtrack is its inclusion of, not only conventional, contemporary songs, but also older, more retrospective English-language songs. These songs, then, do not correspond to Powrie's arguments regarding the temporality of English- and French-language songs; they therefore have different effects when heard in the film context. By using older English-language songs, the film provides a particular way of navigating the sensations of adolescence felt by the protagonists, creating generational and temporal links between spectators and on-screen characters.

Near the beginning of the film, protagonist Lola (Christa Theret) and her mother Anne (Sophie Marceau) bicker as they rush, late, to the car before school. "C'est la même comédie," her mother complains, translated in the English subtitles as "same old song." Indeed, a few moments later, it is not a contemporary track, but an older song that we hear. Once they begin their journey, Lola's mother attempts conversation, complaining idly to herself—and indeed the spectator—about her daughter's lack of interest as Lola, unaware of her mother's discontent, dances along to her personal stereo (fig. 1.8). At first, the music is inaudible to the spectator, save for the low drumbeat heard over Lola's headphones. Then, as the camera moves behind the front seats of the car, the music becomes suddenly audible, revealing it to be the Rolling Stones' 1969



Fig. 1.8 *LOL*. Lola ignores her mother on the way to school.

classic, “You Can’t Always Get What You Want” (fig. 1.9). The spectator is therefore permitted into Lola’s private listening space, and Anne’s words are drowned out, no longer audible. While the camera offers a visual representation of our change of perspective, it is the music that provides the sense of Lola’s space: it creates an audible barrier between Lola (and the spectator permitted into her space) and her mother.



Fig. 1.9 *LOL*. Lola’s music is audible from the back seat.

When the camera swings back to the front of the car, facing the two characters, the music is once again rendered inaudible, and Anne’s voice is permitted to dominate the soundtrack. During these moments, when we hear Anne’s voice, we are excluded from Lola’s private space, created by the song, and are thus positioned outside of Lola’s experience, which is rendered inaccessible: we are confined, like Lola’s mother, to the outside. The music, therefore, creates two separate film-spaces: a youthful, adolescent space from where the music is audible, and an older, adult space where the music cannot be heard. The spectator is permitted to hear either Lola’s music, or her mother’s

voice, but never both: at this moment, it seems, there is no room for both musical (young) and vocal (adult) expression for the characters; one must always overshadow the other. Here, it is the music that eventually wins, while also providing a means for the characters' voices to be heard simultaneously, when Lola offers her mother one of her headphones and the pair sing along together, the music now audible from every camera angle (fig. 1.10).



Fig. 1.10 *LOL*. Lola and her mother sing together.

Not only do the lyrics here reflect how Lola—and indeed her mother—can't always get what she wants," the song also serves as an important generational link between the two characters. As the song is in English, it is readily associated with young listening practices: as I have discussed above, English-language music is overwhelmingly associated with younger listeners in France. English lyrics are therefore naturally associated with younger characters and help to create a youthful film-space like that created in *Respire*. However, the use of an older song adds a layer of nostalgic signification, allowing both Lola and her mother to participate in the listening activity, and to share the experience. The song therefore provides Lola's mother with a means of accessing Lola's particularly youthful experience; of making Lola's adolescent feelings accessible to her mother (and indeed the spectator). Too contemporary, and the music would

have the potential to alienate; indeed, modern music is used to this effect throughout the film with many of the other parent/teen relationships, where the teenagers' music habits inhibit communication with their parents and create a barrier between the two generations. Most notably, this occurs when the father of Lola's boyfriend, Maël (Jérémy Kapone), destroys his son's guitar after discovering that his school grades have slipped and he has been smoking marijuana. Music is thus positioned as the primary barrier between Maël, for whom the guitar is an extension and enabler of his own communicative ability, and his father, who seems not to understand the importance of music to his son. For Lola and her mother, however, the song to which they listen together in the car provides a bridge between them, and a means for them to share the same experiences. The song therefore helps to create familial links, allowing Anne a means of navigating Lola's adolescent experience.

"You Can't Always Get What You Want" functions in this way largely due to its nostalgic connotations: it is through the evocation of nostalgia that the song is able to create links between Lola and her mother. As a song that Lola's mother—or adult spectators—could have listened to in their own youth, it appeals to memories of this time and therefore allows a means of understanding Lola's adolescent experience. The use of an older song, then, provides a way of articulating, for the spectator as much as the on-screen adults, the sensations of adolescence: this song feels youthful in the way that music from our own adolescence or childhood retains its associations with youth when we listen later. The song invites Anne, and us as spectators, to nostalgically remember our own adolescence in order to align us with Lola as a character. As Lesley Speed writes, the teen film in general ultimately offers an "adult perspective" on the youth experience (24): it relies on the reliving and remembering of adolescent experience by adult filmmakers, actors, and spectators. Given that, in teen film (and especially American teen film) the actors who play the protagonists are often much older than their characters, and the filmmakers are almost always adults themselves, teen movies portray adolescence from an adult perspective. They present a nostalgic remembering of past youth, either through the setting of the film's narrative in the past, or through judgement of the present in comparison to what "used to be." Speed goes on to note how the coming-of-age or rite-of-passage movie offers a particularly nostalgic mode of filmmaking: where the protagonists undergo a transformation, the journey is often also a moral one. In

a society where concerns over adolescent behaviour continue to grow, these films express a “desire for moral and ideological security:” while the teen characters may rebel against authority, in the end there is usually a moralistic compromise or understanding reached between the two divided parties (25). Thus, adolescent attitudes are reigned in, to better resemble the attitudes of the past, and the adults’ narrow conservatism is widened to embrace a more modern or youthful sensibility. Teen films, therefore, allow a fond remembrance of the freedom of adolescence, while maintaining an overall conservative and moralistic code.

Music, especially film music, is also heavily linked to memory and nostalgia, as I have explored above. As Philip Drake writes, music is “often a means of activating memory:” the music that we hear when we watch a film, especially popular songs, has the ability to trigger personal and collective memories and therefore draw associations with past events (172). Associations, emotions, or feelings associated with certain genres, musical styles, or particular songs are therefore projected onto the film or scene the spectator is watching. As I described above, the association of English-language music with young listeners in France means that English-language songs in film are more readily attached to young characters and youthful attitudes. Drake refers to this phenomenon as “musical memory,” writing that film music “embodies memorial knowledge” (171-78): when pre-existing songs are used in film, the spectator is invited to remember, which therefore allows them to align more closely with characters, or feel connected to the film’s events in a more embodied way. In teen film, then, the spectator recalls their own adolescence, thus aligning them with the film’s teen characters and enabling access to the film’s adolescent space. Using an older song therefore provides a nostalgic reminder of youth, allowing spectators and adult characters to navigate the lives and experiences of the teens on screen. In *LOL*, as I have discussed, the use of “You Can’t Always Get What You Want” enables the adult characters, as well as the spectator, to navigate the experience of the younger protagonists. This articulation of youthfulness using song occurs throughout the film, even when there are few adults present on screen. Of particular note is the school trip sequence, when Lola and her friends visit London. The trip does not, at first, live up to the teens’ expectations: they are placed with an eclectic array of old-fashioned—and stereotypical—host families, who are obsessed with Princess Diana, do not have access to MSN Messenger,

and serve food that includes pasta sandwiches with cranberry jam. Thus the trip is presented as a somewhat ideologically “adult” experience, which aims to suppress the teens’ youthfulness. However, despite this, there are very few adult characters visible throughout the sequence. Nevertheless, the song that accompanies the majority of the action in this sequence is once again not contemporary, but another slightly older track. During the trip, the majority of the action is presented as a montage sequence, in which Lola and her friends visit various London landmarks, shop for guitars at classic music stores, and try on “retro” outfits, all accompanied by Supergrass’s 1995 teen anthem, “Alright.” While the song is not as old as “You Can’t Always Get What You Want,” it was released nearly fifteen years prior to the making of the film, and therefore provides a similar nostalgic connection. The style of the song, with its guitar accompaniment and tinny harmonies in the vocal line, is characteristic of the mid-1990s Britpop movement, which itself has very specific cultural and nostalgic resonance in its associations with “Britishness.” As Andy Bennett and Jon Stratton write, Britpop was regarded as a “return to form—a brand of characteristically British [...] music that rekindled the spirit of the 1960s” (1). Thus, where the English-language, youthful lyrics (“We are young, we are free”) help to reflect the youthfulness of the protagonists, the use of an older song in an older—and specifically dated—style provides a means of articulating the sensations of adolescence. We, as spectators, are invited into the youthful world of the film: just as “You Can’t Always Get What You Want” permits us to enter Lola’s private, adolescent listening space, here we are permitted into the teens’ world. The music provides a link between the spectator and the on-screen characters, which is reinforced by the aural continuity established between the sounds of the 1960s and the 1990s; and provides a means of accessing the protagonists’ adolescent experiences.

As well as older songs, the soundtrack to *LOL* comprises a number of covers, mainly by the film’s composer Jean-Philippe Verdin. In his discussion of the music in *Clueless* (Heckerling, 1995)—coincidentally another film that makes use of Supergrass’s “Alright”—Ben Aslinger writes that cover songs form part of what he calls “listening histories,” and invite the listener to take part in them: songs that are originally heard and enjoyed by parents or older siblings, for example, can be re-created and re-experienced by children and younger siblings through listening to the cover version (127-29). The cover song therefore permits



Fig. 1.11 *LOL*. Lola admits her virginity to Maël.

the listener to enter into, and connect with, the specific listening history of the song, by creating what George Plasketes has termed a “genealogy:” the original is always present in the listening experience, and so the cover version invites comparison and provides direct “access to the past” (13). Cover songs, then, provide the perfect vehicle for nostalgic, generational links such as those I have discussed above: older songs appeal to older listeners, and by creating a new version with potentially new sounds also appeals to younger generations. In this way, cover songs occupy a liminal space between new and old, just as adolescence is located between childhood and adulthood. As such, the cover song can be said to become representative of adolescence and its struggles: by taking an older song and making it new, a liminal, “adolescent” art form is created, which in turn helps to articulate youthful experiences in film. In *LOL*, the cover songs help, like “You Can’t Always Get What You Want,” to bridge generational divides and foster links between the spectator, the adolescent protagonists, and their parents. At another moment in the school trip, Lola sneaks into Maël’s host family’s house in order to spend the night. Once upstairs, she admits that “c’est la première fois,” accompanied by Verdin’s cover of The Korgis’ 1980 track, “Everybody’s Gotta Learn Sometime” (fig. 1.11). The scene changes, to show Lola’s mother at the end of an evening with policeman Lucas (Jocelyn Quivrin); the song continues as she makes her own confession that “c’est la première fois ... que je fais l’amour avec un autre homme que mon mari depuis mon divorce” (fig. 1.12). Thus, the two generations are linked through both the visual mirroring between the scenes, and the aural continuation of the music that connects them. The music provides a literal link between the two images for the spectator, while symbolically connecting the two characters and their experiences. That the song



Fig. 1.12 *LOL*. Anne's experience mirrors Lola's.

is a cover only serves to reinforce this link. At the time of the song's release, Anne would reasonably have been of a similar age to Lola: the song therefore provides, like "You Can't Always Get What You Want," an elicitation of nostalgia that allows Anne and the film's adult spectators to re-live her "first time." As a cover version that makes the older song new, the track is similarly well-placed, and equally associated with Lola, thereby providing a literal reflection of how the two characters are able to share the same experience despite their generational difference, and offering the spectator a means of navigating their experiences at the same time.

A similar effect is achieved by the end-credit song, "Lola" by The Kinks (1970), again covered by Verdin for the film. Powrie notes how, often, contemporary French films will use older French songs for the end credits, in order to "re-establish traditional values after a narrative that is anchored in contemporary attitudes" ("Soundscapes of Loss" 539). While it is not a French song we hear in this film, the age of the original does prevent it from simply continuing the "contemporary attitudes" of the film; it represents, like the other songs I have discussed here, a linking of both traditional and modern, adult and teen, values. Powrie also notes how songs used during end-credits often provide a "comment on the film as a whole" ("Soundscapes of Loss" 532). In *LOL*, Verdin's cover of "Lola" succeeds in offering almost an aural summary of the overall film experience: not only is the song named for the protagonist of the film, as a cover it also appeals to both younger and older spectators. If the film has an overall message, it is that the parents and children are not so different from one another, capable of sharing the same experiences, and navigating similar trials. The end-credits song reinforces this notion: as a cover, it represents a new way

of experiencing the same thing, thus providing a means of navigating experiences that would otherwise seem inaccessible.

The songs in *LOL*, then, provide a reference point for the adolescent experience. The association between English-language music and youth culture means that the very inclusion of English-language songs comes to represent youthful listening practices and, by extension, a more youthful mode of viewing. The songs therefore go some way to articulating—both for the on-screen characters and for the spectators—the experience and feelings of adolescence. Often appearing in scenes in which both parent and child are present, the songs provide a reference point for the spectator, and allow both characters and viewers to navigate the adolescent space on screen. Rather than suggesting generational conflict, then, these songs emphasise community, togetherness, and youthfulness, regardless of age. However, even when adults are not visible on screen, the songs continue to evoke nostalgia for spectators, thereby transforming the film-space, and offering an alternative means of articulating the experiences of adolescence that cannot be expressed through words or action, through the creation of a distinctly youthful space that is accessible for all characters and spectators. It is important to note, here, that the majority of songs I have discussed in this chapter are in fact sung by men; indeed, of all of the songs in *LOL*, only one, Pink Martini’s “Sympathique (je ne veux pas travailler),” features a female vocalist, with all the rest sung by male vocalists. What this achieves, as I discuss in more detail in the next chapter, is the creation of a more universal, “youthful” film-space, rather than a specific space occupied by girls in particular. In *LOL*, the music helps to position Lola as an adolescent, inviting the spectator—be they male or female—to enter into her youth experience. In doing so, Lola’s girlhood experience is made more accessible: her subjectivity is freed from its confines, and we are permitted a form of girlhood expression that is not confined to the female body.

Conclusion

While song language is rarely considered in discussions of popular music, and particularly in discussions of film music, it is an important part of a song text, and has the potential to impact the ways meaning is inferred from a song. Given that lyrics are widely considered to be the dominant channel of meaning in a song, it is perhaps surprising that language has been afforded so little attention in

studies of pre-existing music. This chapter has demonstrated the importance of considering song language, and shows how it can impact the meaning inferred by spectators in a film context. Songs can mean in a number of musical and extra-musical ways, some of which are highlighted particularly by a consideration of language: foreign-language lyrics have the ability to draw attention away from lyrical meaning, and onto other musical features of a song, thereby opening up other channels of communication within the song text.

The use of foreign-language lyrics reduces the “ostensible” nature of a song’s lyrical meaning, drawing attention away from the lyrics and onto other musical elements of the track. Subsequently, using foreign-language songs opens up additional means of communication with the film and song texts. In *Respire*, it is the music, not the lyrics, that has the most impact on our experience and allows us to access Charlie’s emotions: via its use of foreign-language songs, the film ensures the spectator is not “distracted” by the lyrics, and focuses attention onto the music itself. The music in the film helps to reflect Charlie’s experiences, and therefore makes her experience more accessible to the spectator. Further, the lack of meaning inferred from the lyrics is representative of the way that Charlie expresses herself more generally: just as she is not permitted the power of vocal expression, so the songs do not rely on lyrical meaning. As is the case with all of the films discussed in this thesis, it is through music, not dialogue, that Charlie’s girlhood experience is articulated for the spectator. As this chapter demonstrates, it is through the use of foreign-language songs that the film opens up these layers of communication, inviting the spectator to look beyond lyrical signification and consider musical meaning within the song text.

English-language music has specific resonance in a French film context, due to its associations with young listeners and, subsequently, youthfulness. Due to the popularity of Anglo-American songs among predominantly adolescent and youthful listeners in France, English-language music is strongly associated with youth culture. This chapter has shown how, by including English-language songs on their soundtracks, films can tap in to these associations, and create an affectively youthful film environment. In *Respire*, the use of English-language songs provides a realistic grounding for the adolescent experiences on screen. The natural association of the music with youth listening practices means that it is all the easier to associate the music with Charlie’s experiences, and serves to

create a youthful film-space that increases identification with the characters. This technique is also used in *LOL*, which uses English-language songs that feel youthful. These songs therefore make the adolescent subjectivities in these films more accessible for the spectator and, in *LOL* particularly, other, older characters. English-language songs therefore create a reference point for the adolescent experiences of the characters; they create a youthful film-space that subsequently brings us into contact with the characters' adolescence. In *LOL*, this use of English-language songs as a means of signifying youth is combined with the use of older songs, to bring the different subjectivities and experiences at play into even closer contact. In using older, English-language songs, the film retains a youthful film-space while making it more accessible for the older on-screen characters and the spectator. These songs still "feel" youthful, and therefore provide an entry point for identification with Lola and her friends. Once again, it is not the lyrics that are the most important in the film, but the "feel" of the music, and the musical elements itself, that help us to understand Lola's adolescent feelings and experiences.

Overall, then, English-language songs function in two primary, interconnected ways in these films: firstly, they reduce "distraction" and focus the spectator's attention onto the musical and extra-musical meanings of the song; and secondly, they function as an extra-musical signifier themselves, by helping to create a youthful film-space due to their association with youthful listening practices. This chapter has thus demonstrated how it is necessary to look beyond lyrical signification to fully understand the different ways songs can mean in a film context, and has drawn particular attention to the way film music relies on extra-musical associations and meanings. This is particularly important for the next chapter, which explores the filmic exploitation of pre-existing associations in more detail, with specific focus on artists and the ways they inflect meaning onto their songs and, subsequently, the film environment.

Chapter 2: Artists, Recognition and Identity

Introduction

This chapter is concerned, like the previous chapter, with how pre-existing songs signify within film storyworlds. It examines how, given a pre-existing song's inextricable attachment to its artist, recognition of these artists layers onto other meanings within the song text. In contrast to originally-composed film music, which retains a certain anonymity due to its production and—in general—lack of vocals, pre-existing film songs are distinctly attached to their performing artist. As Simon Frith notes, the way listeners engage with pop music is “rooted in the person, the *auteur*, the community or the subculture that lies behind it” (“Music and Identity” 121): the performance context of a piece of music is just as important as its musical or lyrical content. The referential potential that comes from recognisable artists provides an additional layer of signification that enhances musical meaning and contributes to the knowledge created by the song. I am interested in the specificities of meaning that are created through this recognition and referentiality, exploring how the associations attached to certain artists are inflected onto both the song itself and the film in which it is featured. This chapter also investigates the impact of gendered voices on our interaction with the girl characters on screen; in the tension that arises from using a non-embodied female voice; and in the distances either removed or maintained through the use of female- or male-voiced songs. In the films I discuss here, a separation is maintained between male voices and the on-screen girl characters that is removed when female voices are heard: female voices allow a closeness with these characters that is not achieved by the perceived distance created by the pairing of a male-identified voice and a female-identified body. This chapter examines these tensions, acknowledging the impact that deeply-embedded stereotypes have on our potential inference of meaning from a song text, even though they may be rooted in problematic or essentialist ideologies. Richard Dyer writes that, while the term “stereotype” is now “almost always a term of abuse,” stereotypes are in fact a useful tool for categorising and ordering the world around us (“Stereotypes” 206). He argues that, in visual media, stereotypes “make visible the invisible, so that there is no danger of it creeping up on us unawares” (211): stereotypes can be used as references, or to ensure certain responses from

spectators. In film music specifically, the role of stereotypes has been explored by Kathryn Kalinak, who argues that gendered musical stereotypes can help “to determine the audience’s response to and evaluation of female characters,” and to point the spectator “toward the ‘correct’ estimation of a woman’s character” (“Fallen Woman” 76).¹ Stereotypes, then, can function in a way that provides a referential base, which contributes meaning to the film environment. This meaning is communicated through repetition, appealing to existing spectator knowledge. As such, this chapter uses similar methodologies to those of the Chapter 1, which examined the way that memory and association can inflect meaning onto a song, and therefore on to the film environment, by exploring how pre-existing associations attached to certain artists or voices create layers of extra-musical signification. To do this, this chapter uses detailed close readings of particular film moments from two key films in order to demonstrate artists’ potential for meaning. This chapter also paves the way for Chapters 3 and 4, which explore the nature of musical stereotypes and gendered musical discourses in more detail.

Given the importance of stereotypes to the present and subsequent chapters, it is useful here to define how the term “stereotype” is used in the context of this thesis. As I have described above, stereotypes can be used as a means of categorising, ordering, and understanding the world around us. From the Greek *στερεός* (*stereos*), meaning “solid” or “firm,” and *τύπος* (*typos*), meaning “impression,” or “image,” the word “stereotype” was used, in the 18th- and 19th-century printing industry, to describe a type of printing plate formed from a mould or cast that allowed printers to create copies without the original document being present. The term, over time, then became a metaphor for the repetition of ideas or concepts, giving rise to the definitions we have today, of both “something continued or constantly repeated without change,” or “a preconceived idea” (OED). Indeed, these two definitions are closely related to one another: when something is continually repeated, it eventually becomes habitual, and therefore over time has the potential to become a seemingly “preconceived” idea. It is in this context that this thesis most often uses the term “stereotype,” when referring to an idea that has been repeated over time until it becomes expected. The word stereotype often has negative connotations, as

¹ I discuss the role of gendered musical stereotypes, and Kalinak’s work specifically, in more detail in Chapter 4.

stereotypes can be the basis for prejudice and lazy, oppressive representations of certain categories, often along lines of race, gender, or sexuality. This thesis deploys stereotype rather to draw attention to how ideas become attached to specific musical forms and arouse certain expectations in relation to certain music. Clearly, while there is potential for prejudice, my thesis is more interested in how music helps both to circulate ideas about gender and identity, and how music forms part of a repertoire of ideas spectators can have about a film character. Throughout the thesis, I also use the terms “code,” “expectation,” “norm,” or “pre-existing associations” to describe the effect that stereotypes can have, particularly with regard to music. These terms, while different, are all closely linked, and all refer to the way ideas and concepts, when continuously repeated, work their way into cultural knowledge. For example, Kalinak, in her work described above, examines the process by which musical motifs, instruments or composition styles develop, through repetition, into gendered musical stereotypes. This is a form of “code” whereby the use of specific instruments or themes signals a woman’s sexuality. The stereotype can therefore be used as a code to signify certain concepts and evoke specific responses or reactions. Similarly, “expectations” are related to stereotypes in that repeated expectations can develop into stereotypes, and conversely stereotypes can generate expectations. This link between stereotypes and expectations is key for the next three chapters, which examine in detail the effect that pre-existing expectations have on our understanding of musical meaning.

Within a film music context, stereotypes and the expectations arising from them function in many ways. The creation of a film music stereotype may occur when a particular musical feature, style, sound, or instrument, is repeatedly associated with a certain object, character or event. The repetition of this association creates a stereotype. This stereotype may then trigger expectations in the listener whereby when the musical sound is heard, the associated image is evoked as an automatic response. For example, the sound of violins, long used for love themes, may evoke images or expectations of romance when it is heard by a listener. The stereotype (violins = romance) thus evokes a specific response in the viewer/listener and may aid in the listener’s comprehension of a given moment. Musical stereotypes, then, provide a means of cueing certain responses from a spectator. Responses from an individual spectator can never be guaranteed, but rather musical stereotypes are used to create preferred

expectations for certain scenes. Of course, expectations arising from stereotypes may also be deliberately undermined: the pairing of seemingly romantic violins with, for example, a murder scene, would cause a very different response from that achieved by the stereotypical pairing of violins with a love scene. While this represents conscious and deliberate engagement with musical stereotypes, the appearance or use of stereotypical musical features may not always relate to conscious decision-making by the composer, music supervisor, or filmmaker. In Chapter 4, for example, I discuss how, due to the continually evolving cultural history in which film music takes part, the repetition of ideas can easily lead to the establishing of conventions, which in turn contribute to the creation of stereotypes or norms. These stereotypes, while they may have reductive or oversimplified origins (for example, the association of loud, brass instruments with masculinity), can nevertheless provide a means of navigation and easy communication between composer and listener. As Mireille Rosello writes, “a stereotype calls upon knowledge of certain recognizable social structures and identities” (15). While a stereotype can invite us to participate in the reductive nature of the concept, therefore, it can also simply represent “knowledge of certain roles” (15). The word “stereotype,” then, does not have to carry purely negative connotations; it can also be employed to mean a repeated idea that, as Dyer writes, helps us to impose order and classification on our environment, in order to understand the world around us. This is the context in which the word “stereotype” and its associated concepts are used in this thesis, to describe repeated ideas, structures, or concepts that contribute to the potential meanings of music in film.

In Chapter 1, I examined the ways that pre-existing music can mean, both musically, through the musical sounds and structures heard in the song; and referentially, through pre-existing associations attached to the music. The layers of meaning I discussed in Chapter 1 largely pertained to contexts of listening—related to the expected or assumed listeners of the music. In the first part of Chapter 1, for example, I explored how the use of foreign-language songs help to focus the attention of the film spectator—who is assumed to be a native-language speaker—onto the musical aspects of the song. In the second part of the chapter, the stereotypical association of young listeners with English-language music aids in the creation of a youthful film-space and enables a youthful mode of meaning that can transcend generational differences. Here, I

continue the discussion of referentiality, this time examining the meanings evoked by contexts of performance, exploring in more detail how the connotations that become attached to pre-existing music and its performers can enhance a song's meaning in a film environment. As Jeff Smith writes, the "expressiveness" of pre-existing film music comes much more from "the system of extramusical allusions and associations activated by the [compilation] score's referentiality" than from the musical elements of the tracks: the meaning derived from pre-existing music, and especially pop and rock music, is "dependent upon the meaning of pop music in the larger spheres of society and culture" (*Sounds of Commerce* 155). Pre-existing associations attached to certain styles, genres, artists, or even individual songs are therefore transferred onto the film in which the music appears, imposing existing meanings onto the characters and narrative. Recognition cannot, of course, be assumed from all spectators, nor is there a guarantee of eliciting the exact same response when recognition is achieved. Nevertheless, as demonstrated in Chapter 1, pre-existing associations attached to certain music can and do play a significant role in a soundtrack's potential for communication. Indeed, pre-existing music's additional potential for referentiality is, as Smith goes on to argue, one of the main reasons it is seen as a "distraction" for spectators: well-known music can carry "associational baggage" that risks distracting from or contradicting the film's narrative (*Sounds of Commerce* 164). These associations can work in tandem with the musical features of a song to communicate meaning to listeners and, in film, spectators; or indeed filmmakers can deliberately exploit contradictory referential meanings for their contrapuntal effect. It is, of course, not just pop music or songs that draw on extra-musical associations in order to mean in film: as I discuss in Chapter 4, composed scores also frequently exploit existing conventions or stereotypes in order to ensure specific emotional engagement or signal the required emotions to the spectator.

In Chapter 1, I discussed referential meanings that came both from specific songs themselves, such as "You Can't Always Get What You Want" in *LOL* and also from broader characteristics of the music in general, such as the "feeling" of youthfulness that is created through the use of English-language pop music. It appears, then, that there exist two types of referential meaning that are layered in pre-existing film music. The first type is what I will call "general" referential meaning—associations that are manifested through broad

characteristics of a piece of music, such as its instrumentation, general sound, or style, which help to evoke certain feelings. This type of referential meaning does not rely on specific recognition of individual pieces of music in order to succeed in evoking emotion or appealing to associational meaning. For example, the association of English-language music with younger listeners is a form of “general” referential meaning that does not rely on the recognition of particular songs. The second type of association, which I call “specific” referentiality, relies much more heavily on the recognition of a particular song (or, as I discuss later in this chapter, a particular version of a song), its context, or its history, in order to impose those referential meanings onto the film. The cover songs heard in *LOL*, for example, rely on recognition of not only the original song, but also of the fact that the version heard in the film is different. These referentialities can, of course, overlap and intersect: a song’s instrumentation, for example, may appeal to general associations while also remaining specific to that song. The use of Supergrass’s “Alright” in *LOL*, which I discussed in Chapter 1, is an example of this kind of overlapping of referential meanings: the song itself is an anthem of youthfulness and emphatically located in its specific time, but the instrumentation, lyrics, and general sound also contribute to its youthful connotations. As such, these general and specific meanings layer with one another to create the extra knowledge communicated by the song to the spectator. This chapter focuses predominantly on specific association, exploring how artists inflect meaning onto their songs, and therefore onto the films in which they are featured.

The associational potential of an artist is largely dependent on their recognisable star persona: the more recognisable an artist, the more likely the spectator is to make associations and infer extra-musical meaning. This star persona is created both by the specifics of an artist’s performance of certain songs, and also by their wider media presence. As Dyer writes, stars are created not just through their art, but through anything that is “publicly available” (*Heavenly Bodies 2*): a star’s image is created by media appearances, reviews, associated products or advertisements, or a number of other media contexts. In music, then, an artist’s star persona is created through the layering of performance and sound with their “image” or their publicly available media persona. Music stars are thus established by both image and sound: the two layer with each other, able to reinforce or contradict the other. Where the “image” of an artist is created by visible media appearances, such as interviews or music

videos, their “sound” is created by their voice type, vocal technique, and musical style: these aspects all form a layer of meaning that contributes to the overall meaning of the song inferred by the listener. Sometimes, an artist’s sound may be associated with a certain genre, evoking all the connotations attached to it: a low, husky tone, for example, commonly heard in jazz music, may evoke images of the prohibition-era jazz hall.² The image of an artist is sometimes directly linked to, and affected by, their sound, and both can change throughout an artist’s career. Take, for example, Taylor Swift who, up until the release of her 2014 album, *1989*, was a self-described “country” artist, with an accompanying wholesome, “good girl” image (fig. 2.1). With the release of *1989*, however, which represents a change from the country style that permeates her previous work, Swift also changed her image to embody a more rock or pop persona (fig. 2.2). As a *Billboard* article reviewing the album states, “being a pop star means *embodying* the art through your image, videos, and everything you stand for. So even without any overt country songs, *1989* is the definitive Taylor Swift album” (He, *Billboard*). Swift’s transformation from wholesome country girl to fully-fledged rock star, then, was as much about a change in image as a change in musical sound. These two aspects come together to create Swift’s overall artist persona; both are linked to and affected by the other, and as such, the “image” of the singer evoked by her music will change depending on the song that is heard. Thus, the meanings that are inferred from a song are dependent on the image of that song’s artist.

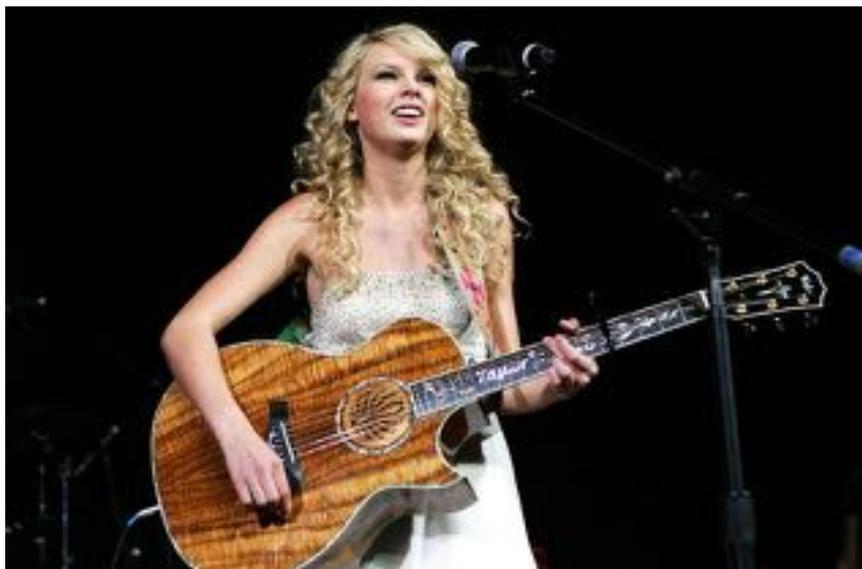


Fig. 2.1 Taylor Swift performs at the 2007 ACMA All-Star Jam. ©Ethan Miller/Getty Images. Gary Trust, "This Week in *Billboard* Chart History," *Billboard*, 18 Dec 2017.

² I discuss genre stereotypes and their effect on music meaning in more detail in Chapter 3.



Fig. 2.2 Taylor Swift performs during the "1989 World Tour." (c)Sascha Steinbach/Getty Images. Trevor Anderson, "Taylor Swift's '1989' One-Year Anniversary." *Billboard*, 17 Oct 2015.

In his examination of music and identity politics, Frith discusses this relationship between artist and inferred meaning, noting how an artist's own identity—and, crucially, that which they project outwardly—is a vital part of the meaning expressed through their music:

[T]he flow from social identity [...] to musical expression [is] straightforward enough in the abstract (who could possibly deny that African-American music is music made by African-Americans; that the difference between male and female experience will be embedded in male and female music; that Phil Collins is an imposition on the soundscape of the Australian outback?) ("Music and Identity" 109)

It is particularly interesting, here, that Frith notes the differences between "male and female music:" what are these differences, and how do gendered voices interact with gendered experiences? While this chapter is concerned primarily with the specific meanings created by artist recognition, there is a tension that arises when using male or female voices in conjunction with female adolescent stories. In the previous chapter, I discussed, with the exception of "You and Me" in *Respire*, songs that are all performed by male vocal artists. Indeed, in *LOL*, almost all of the songs, with the exception of the opening song "Je ne veux pas travailler" by American group Pink Martini and sung by China Forbes, are sung by male singers. As I noted in Chapter 1, the songs in *LOL* function to create, not a specifically "girl" space, but a "youthful" film-space that nevertheless aids in our understanding of Lola's girlhood experiences. In this way, the music in the film helps to make Lola's girlhood more universal: the male—and indeed very masculine—voices in the songs do not restrict the music's potential, and allow

Lola's adolescence to be experienced more widely, even if the spectators do not identify as "girls" themselves. The "maleness" of the artists featured in *LOL* therefore help to make Lola's experience accessible, freeing her subjectivity from the restrictions of the diegesis, and permitting a form of girlhood expression that is not confined to the female body. Male voices, therefore, aid in the communication of the girls' experience, while retaining a certain distance: the girls' experience is transformed and made accessible through a lens of generic youthfulness rather than through specific "girlness." This chapter is interested in this distance, asking how it affects the referential meaning achieved by using certain artists in film soundtracks, and examining the comparative "closeness" of the female voice. In using this term "closeness," of course, this chapter enters into a long history of feminist work which theorises the feminine in terms of its (lack of) distance. As Mary Ann Doane writes, there is a "constant recurrence of the motif of proximity in feminist theories [...] which purport to describe a feminine specificity" (22). As I argue in this chapter, it is the closeness permitted by the use of female voices that enables the spectator to come into contact with the specificities of the girls' experience. However, as Doane notes, this notion of "closeness" also presents difficulties in the representation of the female subjectivity. As I discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the feminine is defined in terms of lack; it is that which is inaccessible to a masculine subjectivity. Thus, the feminine and the representation of the feminine are one and the same, in that they are both Other; they are both defined as what they are not. Doane argues that in film, then, because the image is "theorized in terms of a certain *closeness*," there is no "distance or gap between the sign and the referent" (18): as woman and her image are the same, there is no distance between the two. Cinematic representations of femininity, then, are comprised of images *of* women, but not *for* women: due to the masculine subjectivity of the voyeuristic spectator, combined with the lack of distance between the woman and her image, she is not, and cannot be, a spectator; the woman is "too close to herself" and as such cannot see herself. As Doane writes, "for the female spectator there is a certain overpresence of the image—she *is* the image" (22). In order to be a spectator, there requires a certain distance, which the woman is denied.

Doane notes how, in theories of female spectatorship, there is a tendency to view the female spectator as "the site of an oscillation between a feminine position and a masculine position" (24): there is a "masculinization" of

spectatorship that requires the woman to “become” a man “in order to attain the necessary distance from the image” (25). Another way of achieving this distance, however, is the “masquerade” of femininity: if femininity is presented as a highly performative masquerade, it succeeds in creating a distance which enables the woman to see herself. As Doane writes, “the masquerade, in flaunting femininity, holds it at a distance” (25), and thereby resists the patriarchal dichotomies that position the woman as the object, and not the subject, of the gaze. The masquerade “doubles representation” in that we see a woman *enacting* femininity; this doubled representation therefore creates an “excess” of femininity (26). It is this excess that the woman is permitted to see, as there remains a distance between the female subject and the excessive representation of femininity.

The pairing of female-voiced songs with female bodies creates a similar doubling-up of feminine representation: we both see the feminine body, and hear a (different) female voice. Therefore, while the pairing of a female body and a female voice permits a certain closeness that enables the spectator to come into contact with the specificities of the girls’ experience, it also creates an excess that avoids over-reducing the distance, thereby allowing the girls’ experiences to remain accessible. Thus, the music permits both the masculine and the feminine spectator to access and identify with the girls’ feelings and sensations. Where male voices create a distance that transforms the girl experience into one of universal youth, female voices create an excess of girl signification that is able to transcend diegetic boundaries, linking the spectator to the internal storyworld. This chapter explores how male and female artists are deployed in the soundtracks of Katell Quillévéré’s 2013 film *Suzanne* and Céline Sciamma’s *Bande de filles / Girlhood* (2014), and examines the different effects these songs have on the expression of the girl characters’ experiences. These two films provide particularly interesting studies for this chapter, as they both, like the other films I have discussed so far, showcase the importance—and prevalence—of music in their characters’ everyday experiences, while also foregrounding music as a means of expressing emotion through dance, song, and listening practices. In *Bande de filles*, J Dash’s song “Wop” is employed as a means of situating the girls in contemporary hip-hop culture, and demonstrates the girls’ interaction with a global pop context. However, as I discuss later in the chapter, the song remains distanced from the spectator, allowing us to view, but not enter into, the girls’

world. Similarly, in *Suzanne*, the songs by male artists interact far less closely—and less intimately—than the songs by female artists. The male-voiced songs are, predominantly, used as source music, located within the diegesis of the film, whereas the songs by female artists are either entirely non-diegetic, or occupy a liminal space between the diegesis and the non-diegesis. In general, the songs sung by male artists in *Suzanne* are heard when the girls are dancing or singing, or, as with the songs in *LOL*, are used to create a realistic, youthful grounding for the narrative. Female vocalists, on the other hand, appear when the song has specific relevance for the characters and their experiences. Through a discussion of the songs heard in the film, I explore these differences and the impact they have on our understanding of the girl characters, arguing that gendered voices play a vital role in the overall affective function of the music. In these films, female voices encourage a closeness between the emotion expressed in the music and the on-screen representation of the female-identified body, rather than the distance implied in the pairing of a male-identified voice and a female-identified body.

It is in the specific referentiality of the female artists featured in these films that this closeness is most evident: the interaction between the artists' image and the representation of the characters is significant. This chapter is particularly interested in how, when artists become associated with certain characteristics or concepts, they can be projected onto their songs, and subsequently onto the film in which the song is featured. In *LOL*, for example, as I discussed in Chapter 1, the association of Supergrass with youth anthems and the Britpop movement is translated onto the film to create an affectively youthful film-space which opens up avenues of identification with the young characters: recognition of the band, here, as well as the song itself, contributes to the spectator's interaction with the music and any meaning inferred from it. In his work on popular film music, John Mundy discusses how pop stars, when depicted *on* screen, are able to project their musical persona onto a film: rock 'n' roll artists such as Elvis Presley, for example, not only helped filmmakers to appeal to the emerging youth market of the 1950s, but were also able to "inflect" a film's narrative with their own rock 'n' roll persona, transforming what may have been very "conventional" narratives into commercial successes that embraced an edgier, youth market (116). Although Mundy's discussion concerns pop stars when they are depicted on screen, this "inflection" of personality onto a film is not, I would argue, reliant on

visible recognition: aural recognition of an artist can also help project an artist's image onto a film environment. The more prolific an artist, then, the greater the chance of recognition from spectators. In *Bande de filles*, the inclusion of Rihanna's "Diamonds" both represents a purposeful engagement with black girlhood culture, and is foregrounded in the film as a pivotal moment in the identity formation of the characters. This chapter examines how the numerous meanings and associations attached to Rihanna as a global artist are projected onto the film-space and, subsequently, onto the girl characters occupying that space. "Diamonds" *creates*, as well as reflects, an expression of girlhood that sticks to both spectator and on-screen character, thereby providing an aural (and indeed visual) manifestation of the girls' sensations: the song brings us into much closer contact with the girls' world, and permits an intimacy that aids identification with the characters. In *Suzanne*, the inclusion of both Courtney Love and Nina Simone on the soundtrack encourages this aural closeness with the film's protagonist. Both artists provide layered meanings that attach specifically to Suzanne (Sara Forestier), providing an intimacy with her character and permitting her experiences to be communicated.

Through detailed studies of the artists featured in *Suzanne* and *Bande de filles*, this chapter demonstrates how artist, performance, and recognition have an impact on the subjective positioning of the spectator and the identification of, and with, girls on screen. Through an examination of the different forms of referential meaning and modes of recognition, this chapter expands on the work of Chapter 1 to demonstrate the range of meanings of pre-existing music in film, and argues that recognition of an artist, even when they are not visible, is key to the interpretation of pre-existing music.

J. Dash, Noir Désir, and Courtney Love: Masculine Distance and Feminine Closeness

Bande de filles represents a musical change of direction for Sciamma who, in her previous films, used very little pre-existing music. Indeed, the only pre-existing music that appears in either of her two earlier films is Verdi's "Dies Irae" in *Naissance des pieuvres* (2007). There are also very few songs with lyrics in her films, the sole example being ParaOne's originally-composed "Always" in *Tomboy* (2010). The use of, not only songs, but *international* pop songs like J. Dash's "Wop" and Rihanna's "Diamonds" in *Bande de filles*, then, contrasts

dramatically with Sciamma's previous work, and serves to bring the girls' local specificity (created by filming in recognisable locations such as La Défense) into contact with the global. As Isabelle McNeill writes in her discussion of the film's music, *Bande de filles* "makes an intervention not only into a local and national imaginary but, at the same time, into a global, digital consumer culture" (3). This "global, digital" culture is emphasised through the use of pop songs, particularly in the way the girls interact with music as part of their everyday lives. McNeill draws particular attention to "Wop," heard twice in the film, as an example of how the girls interact with this global culture, discussing how the girls' dancing to the song is reminiscent of the many social media imitations that were uploaded to YouTube and to Vine, a video-hosting site that allowed users to upload looping six-second videos (9). The reminiscence of the girls' dancing with both the track's music video, and with the subsequent cultural popularity of the song and its dance, then, provides an opportunity for the girls' local specificity to overlap with a wider, global youth culture. In both of the moments in which the song is heard, the film is situated very specifically in the local, firstly in the Paris metro, and secondly in La Défense. The juxtaposition of these recognisable local settings with the international success of "Wop" causes the local and the global to meet, allowing the girls to occupy a space that is at once locally specific and universally accessible.

The song is played at narratively important moments for the film's characters. In the first moment, Lady (Assa Sylla), leader of the titular *bande*, invites protagonist Marième (Karidja Touré) to dance with her on the metro. Lady leads the dance, instructing the shyer Marième and demonstrating certain moves while the other girls in their group watch and offer encouragement. This is the moment that Marième is permitted to enter into the other girls' world; it acts as her initiation into their "gang." McNeill notes how the framing of the sequence "capture[s] the cramped space of the busy train carriage," which subsequently draws the spectator into the girls' "circle" (8): the close proximity of the camera, and the emphasis on the girls' facial expressions and interactions with each other means that we, like Marième, are seduced by their close-knit relationships and attracted to the group dynamic (fig. 2.3). However, while the song provides the means by which the girls interact in this sequence, there is nevertheless a distance maintained between the characters and the music itself. McNeill



Fig. 2.3 *Bande de filles*. The girls dance on the metro.

describes this distance, writing that the girls “manifest a certain self-awareness and ironic distance from the dance that is clearly part of the fun,” referencing the way that they parody certain elements of the song and “mock” the dance moves (9). In this sequence, while we are positioned in close proximity to the girls, our focus is much less on their specific emotions than with their interactions as a group, which emphasises this distance that contrasts with, as I discuss later, other music that is used in the film. In Chapter 1, I discussed how pop music provides a realistic grounding for the concerns of young people, enabling the creation of a youthful space. This is the effect that is achieved in this sequence: as McNeill writes, the song is “plausibly integrated into the diegesis, easily believable as part of these girls’ musical knowledge” (7). The song provides a means of understanding the girls’ youthfulness, without interacting with their specific emotions or feelings.

This is also the case in the second sequence in which “Wop” is heard. At La Défense, Lady and Marième dance together to the song again, but this time they do so as equals, with an audience of other girls around them. The camera here is positioned once again very close to the girls; however, the shot is also, as McNeill argues, somewhat problematic (9). After the initial shot when the music begins and the girls start their dance, the camera focuses almost exclusively on the girls’ bodies (fig. 2.4). The focus, here, is not on the girls’ enjoyment, but on the way their bodies move: the performance is filmed to be looked at by others—and indeed the spectator—rather than for the girls’ own pleasure. We are therefore located outside of the girls’ world, permitted to gaze upon it, but not participate. McNeill notes the similarities between this moment and the song’s music video, which positions women—and particularly black women—as



Fig. 2.4 *Bande de filles*. The camera focuses on the girls' bodies.

sexualised objects of the gaze (9). This objectification undermines the song's potential for expression in this sequence: the music provides a means of satisfying the spectator's fascination with the girls' bodies, rather than helping to express their emotions. As such, a distance is maintained between the girls, the music, and the spectator. Therefore, while "Wop" enables the girls in *Bande de filles* to interact with the global, it does not permit us, as spectators, to enter the local. Although the music provides a plausible cultural intervention that aids in the creation of a generic youthful space, which is also characterised by the bright colours worn by the girls and the music video aesthetic of the sequence, it does not interact with the specific expression of these girls' experiences.

That the song is by a male artist is not insignificant here. As in *LOL*, where the explicit masculinity of the songs contribute to a general, "universal" youth (rather than interacting with Lola's specific *girl* experience), the use of "Wop" in *Bande de filles* denies us the intimacy with the characters' experiences of girlhood that is achieved later in the film, as I discuss in the second section of this chapter, by the inclusion of Rihanna's "Diamonds." A similar contrast can be seen in Quillévéré's *Suzanne*, in which songs sung by male vocalists are more distanced from the protagonists' emotions than those sung by women. In this film, female vocals feel much closer to the protagonists, and indeed have a much more emotional connection to the girls than the other songs. While songs by male artists, as with those in *LOL*, help us to identify with the protagonists as adolescents, they do not interact with the feminine specificity of their experience. Instead, as with "Wop" in *Bande de filles*, the male-voiced songs maintain a distance from the girls' subjectivity and, therefore, create distance between this subjectivity and that of the spectator. An example of this detachment occurs early



Fig. 2.5 *Suzanne*. Charlie falls asleep in Suzanne's lap.

in the film, when protagonist Suzanne (Sara Forestier) and her sister Maria (Adèle Haenel) go to a bar with Suzanne's young son Charlie and some male friends. As the sequence begins, we hear the aggressive rock sound of French band Noir Désir. The song plays in the background as the girls joke with their friends, helping, like the songs in *Respire* and *LOL*, to ground the film in a youthful space. After a few minutes, Maria and the girls' two male companions leave and dance by the bar, leaving Suzanne with her son, who falls asleep on her lap (fig. 2.5). The music gets gradually louder, drowning out the dialogue and other sound effects until it is the only audible sound; it therefore serves to emphasise the distance between Maria and Suzanne, and, by extension, the spectator. When the camera returns to Suzanne, it lingers for a long time on her unmoving face as she watches her sister. As the music reaches peak volume, Suzanne glances back down at her son, before returning her gaze to the dancefloor and, shortly afterwards, the camera shows us the sleeping boy as a reminder of the reasons she is unable to join her friends. In this lengthy shot, the music's aggressiveness contrasts dramatically with Suzanne's immobility, emphasising the youth that she has lost and the freedom, represented by her sister and friends, afforded to other adolescents. The music in this scene creates a youthful space in which Suzanne does not fit; it emphasises her lost adolescence through highlighting the contrast between Suzanne and her surroundings. This juxtaposition is further stressed visually by the bright pink of Suzanne's lipstick and clothes which contrasts with both the green of her eyes and the brown walls of the bar (fig. 2.6). The music creates a barrier, here, that maintains a distance between Suzanne and her friends, and subsequently the youthfulness from which she is excluded. The



Fig. 2.6 *Suzanne*. Suzanne's clothes and makeup contrast with the wall.

distance that is created between the music's affective youth and Suzanne's experience is extended to the spectator. Visually, we are aligned with Suzanne, and denied the opportunity, like she is, to experience the music on the dancefloor. Sonically, however, we are surrounded solely by the aggressive youthfulness of the song, which therefore increases the distance between us and Suzanne as a character. In this scene, then, the music provides, much like "Alright" in *LOL*, a means of establishing a youthful space—inhabited by Maria and her friends on the dancefloor—that positions the spectator within a *generally* adolescent narrative, but simultaneously works to emphasise Suzanne's exclusion from this space and therefore deny the expression of her *specific* experiences.

This musical distance is contrasted dramatically shortly after this scene, when the two girls go out in their friend Vince's (Karim Leklou) convertible. The song that accompanies their journey in the car is "Playing your Song" by American alternative rock band Hole, sung by lead vocalist Courtney Love. In this sequence, while the car belongs to Vince, the space is clearly claimed as the girls' own, with Maria taking the wheel while Suzanne is positioned in the centre of the frame in the back of the car (fig. 2.7). As they turn onto the main road, our focus is drawn to Suzanne, who stands up in the back of the car with Charlie, still in the centre of the shot and face upturned, lit by sunlight. Similarly, Maria occupies the front of the frame, while Vince is confined to the shadows, at the rear of the picture (fig. 2.8). Visually, then, the film begins to create a girl-dominated space, which is subsequently reinforced when we hear a female voice on the soundtrack. In this moment, the girls are not permitted vocal freedom: the

only voiced dialogue comes from Vince's warning to Maria to slow down when she is driving.



Fig. 2.7 *Suzanne*. Suzanne is centred while Maria drives.



Fig. 2.8 *Suzanne*. Suzanne remains the focus of the shot.

“Playing your Song” therefore provides a means of female vocalisation that is otherwise not permitted in the film. Indeed, the song overpowers the dialogue in this scene, working with the visual image to draw our attention away from Vince—and the traditionally masculine space of a fast car—and onto the girls instead. This music, then, unlike the song in the previous scene, narrows the distance between the spectator and the girls and encourages a closeness that permits us to enter their space. Where, for example, as I have discussed above, the use of “Wop” in *Bande de filles* denies the spectator the opportunity to access the girls’ specific locality, here the use of “Playing your Song” explicitly locates us in Suzanne and Maria’s space. The song is located outside of the film’s diegesis: while it may be assumed to come from the car radio, the track’s volume and the

way it continues into the next sequence locates it outside the internal film-space. As such, it provides a means of bringing the spectator into contact with Suzanne: it bridges the diegetic gap between the viewer and the on-screen space and attaches to Suzanne, the quietest but most visible body in the frame. As Suzanne smiles, eyes closed, the music seems to emanate from her, providing an aural expression of her specific experience in this moment. In the previous sequence, the music creates a prohibiting space that highlights Suzanne's exclusion from the youthful experience of her friends. Here, however, the music helps to create a distinctly "girl" space that allows for increased contact between the spectator and her girlhood experiences. The music itself, with its electric guitar and Love's angry, riot grrrl-style vocals, interacts directly with the youthful, rebellious characterisation of the two girls in the film. In the press pack for the film, Quillévére states that, when deciding on the soundtrack for the film, she "tenai[t] à ce que le film ait un son rock années 90-2000, qui raconte quelque chose de l'adolescence de Suzanne" (Vassé 15): the music she uses for the film therefore interacts directly with Suzanne's adolescent experience. In contrast to the previous scene, in this sequence we are offered an aural reminder of Suzanne's youthful, girlhood experience and a means of accessing that experience along with the character herself. The use of a female vocalist only serves to reinforce this link, creating a specifically girl mode of expression that permits the spectator to come into contact with the feelings and sensations of girlhood depicted on screen.

It is not just the use of a female voice that encourages identification with the characters, here; indeed, it would be short-sighted to ignore the specific use of Courtney Love as an artist. As I have mentioned above, Love's angry vocal style speaks of a particular feminine teen rebellion—epitomised by the riot grrrl movement—which contributes to the characterisation of Suzanne and her sister. There are also, however, a number of extra-musical associations attached to Love as an artist that contribute to the meaning evoked by the music in this sequence. As I discussed in both my introduction and first chapter, pre-existing film music has the ability to appeal to spectator memory, bringing meaning to the film through extra-musical associations attached to the music. When we hear a song or track that is recognisable, memories or associations we have for that piece have the potential to be projected onto the film, thereby affecting the meanings inferred from that music. As Philip Drake writes, the pre-existing song

“always retains an autonomous identity” in film, and recognition of the song by viewers will “influence interpretation of narrative events” (173). He notes that generally, discussions of pre-existing film songs either focus on, as I discussed in Chapter 1, the “reading of lyrics to reinforce, contradict, or ironically comment on the visual action,” or the reading of songs as “mood music” that “makes us feel particular emotions” (173). Drake also notes the problems with these approaches, writing that “reading lyrics as a form of commentary [...] ignores the performativity of the voice itself” (173). The specificities of performance are therefore vital to the communicative ability of a film song. Drake goes on to argue that songs “exceed” music’s potential for commenting on a particular character, by “bringing with them the memory of a performance with its own subject and object” (175): songs are attached, inextricably, to their performance context, which can relate to a particular person, place, environment, or emotion. Pre-existing songs, then, allow memories and associations to layer onto the film environment and affect the meaning evoked by the song. As I discussed above, the specific referentiality of particular artists can encourage identification with on-screen characters; the “excess” of meaning described by Drake is manifested as emotional or affective communication that brings us closer to the internal film world.

In the abovementioned sequence in *Suzanne*, Courtney Love brings a number of pre-existing associations that layer onto the musical meaning communicated by the song, and directly relate to Suzanne’s character. Susan Hopkins writes that Love’s public image “violate[s] many of the rules of corporate feminisms and ‘responsible’ [...] subjectivity” (319): Love’s public persona rejects notions of “corporate,” “responsible” feminism, which fits, through the perpetuation of “have it all” stereotypes, into a very narrow framework of acceptable “niceness.” Feminism is permitted, so long as women simultaneously retain their position of motherhood and virtue. This notion of “responsible” feminism is equally rejected by Quillévéré’s representation of Suzanne in the film. Through the pairing of Suzanne with Love’s music, she is associated, not with the clean, postfeminist sensibilities of the 21st century, but with the reactive, angry feminism of the early 1990s. Hopkins goes on to note how Love was presented, especially following the death of her husband Kurt Cobain, as a “trainwreck personality,” referring to Lynn Hirschberg’s famously disparaging profile of Love for *Vanity Fair* in 1992, and how along with this portrayal came “suggestions she

may be an unfit parent” (319). Indeed, much of the media coverage of Love in the 1990s revolved around her identity as a mother, and particularly as a mother who did not fit traditional model requirements. Just like Love, Quillévére’s Suzanne is not a typical mother figure. After discovering that his daughter is pregnant, Suzanne’s father (François Damiens) asks her why she is keeping the baby, to which she replies “parce que j’en ai envie.” She therefore refuses to engage in narratives of morality: this is not a cautionary tale of the dangers of teenage pregnancy, nor is it a fairy-tale, pro-life narrative of potential motherhood success. This is equally demonstrated by the lack of time the film devotes to Suzanne’s pregnancy, showing us only a brief glimpse of pregnant Suzanne sitting on a climbing frame, again emphasising her lost youth (fig. 2.9). When we hear Love’s distinctive vocals a few moments later, then, we are reminded of her associations with “unfit” motherhood (Hopkins 320): Suzanne is, like Love, an unconventional mother who does not fit the traditional mould. However, as Hopkins notes, in more recent years, Love also offers us “a revealing, alternative ‘reality’ check,” not shying away from “the crueller and uglier aspects” of culture (320). Much like Suzanne, Love does not present herself, or try to enact, a “perfect” femininity. Rather, she refuses to engage in the narratives of femininity that govern our dominant ideologies, presenting an alternative performance of a feminine persona. This angry, alternative femininity is also enacted by Suzanne, and when we hear Love’s voice on the soundtrack, we are invited to associate her with these particular traits. Via Love’s recognisable voice, her media persona and history is transcribed onto the scene in which she is heard, thereby adding extra layers of signification to the film’s music, and making Suzanne’s experiences all the more navigable for the spectator.

In *Suzanne*, then, female-voiced songs allow a proximity to the characters that is denied by the use of male-voiced songs. Where male-voiced songs, as in *LOL*, *Respire*, and *Bande de filles*, provide a means of positioning the film’s narrative as one of youthfulness, those performed by female vocalists encourage a closeness that allows for the navigation of the characters’ specific experiences. This is, of course, symptomatic of a patriarchal system in which women’s voices are continually characterised as Other, and men’s voices as original or universal. In music, as in other creative industries, this is revealed by the tendency to align female artists with specifically female concerns, conflating women’s voices and



Fig. 2.9 *Suzanne*. The sole shot of Suzanne while pregnant.

“the voice of woman,” and assuming that female singers, songwriters and artists express the concerns of their sex in a way that would never be assumed of men (Grieg 168-69). Dominant patriarchal ideologies imagine female creativity as secondary: where masculine creativity is the norm, feminine creativity is the Other, seemingly applicable only for and about women. There exists an inherent feminisation of women’s work in the creative industries as a whole, and especially in those where women are less represented than men. In recent years, this feminisation has collided with the increased visibility of girls and young women in the media and popular culture, leading to a societal expectation for successful women to “speak out” against injustices, and provide a public voice for other women. Take, for example, the 2018 Golden Globes ceremony, at which a number of women wore black as a sign of support for the Times Up movement, which seeks to highlight the problem of sexual harassment in Hollywood and other industries. While the news coverage of the movement was vast, women who chose, for whatever reason, not to wear black were frequently interviewed, both on the red carpet and after the event, to provide reasons or justification for their much-criticised choice. This not only moves the focus of press attention away from the movement itself and onto those who did not take part, but it also demonstrates the expectation, even requirement, for these women to somehow represent and speak for other women. Women, and by extension their work, then, are assumed to speak to and for other women. It is as a result of these ideologies that, in the films I have discussed in this chapter, male-voiced songs such as Supergrass’s “Alright” in *LOL* come to represent a universal experience of adolescence, and female-voiced songs, such as Courtney Love’s “Playing your Song” in *Suzanne* represent a specifically feminine one. However, while the

association of women's work with feminine concerns presents a problematically essentialist ideology that ignores diversity of experience and ascribes difference onto the work of women, it is nevertheless this stereotyping that is able to contribute to the layers of meaning evoked by the song. It is due to the deeply-embedded stereotypes associating female voices with female concerns—and female bodies—that female-voiced songs are able to encourage a closeness between character and spectator that is denied by the use of male-voiced songs.³ In the films I have discussed here, female-voiced songs encourage a closer proximity to the characters than those sung by male artists, and help in the creation of a specific girl-space that enables identification between the spectator and the on-screen characters.

Rihanna and Nina Simone: Specific Feminine Meaning

In the introduction to this thesis, I discussed how, in cinema, the female voice is associated with physical presence: it must emanate from within a visible (and therefore located within the diegesis of the film), physical body. This insistence on the visibility of the embodied female voice is manifested in other forms of popular culture, and notably the music industry, which continues to be male-dominated, and where women are routinely excluded from certain roles. Sheila Whiteley notes how the rock genre in particular is associated with masculinity, due to the “phallic power” demonstrated in rock culture by the “physical prowess” of the musician and “confrontational gestures” associated with the genre as a whole (“Introduction” xvii). In pop music more generally, women are restricted to certain roles, often acting as the performer rather than the creator. Barbara Bradby writes how, due to longstanding stereotypes that link “technological expertise with masculinity,” women are often excluded from the production of music in all but performance roles (156). Even though modern production techniques, with their capacity for greater creative freedom and the ability to bring together artists and producers from different locations, have the potential to “render [...] concepts of authorship redundant,” they in fact serve to widen the gap between male and female roles: production teams, including DJs, producers, and mixers, are overwhelmingly dominated by men, and women fulfil the role of “performer” only (156). This confinement of women to performance

³ I discuss how stereotypes contribute to meaning in film music in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

roles in pop music is symptomatic of the ideological requirement for women's voices to come from a visible body. As technical production is not a visible area of music creation, fewer female voices are permitted to enter these spaces. The music industry in general focuses overwhelmingly on appearance, rather than practical contribution: in recent years especially, with the rise of MTV and music video culture, music artists are placed under increasing visual scrutiny. Susan McClary examines this focus on women's bodies in her discussion of Madonna as a musical icon, writing that "most reactions to Madonna share [...] an automatic dismissal of her music as irrelevant:" discussions of Madonna, both in scholarly contributions and in the media, focus predominantly on her image, and have "nothing whatsoever to say about the music" itself (*Feminine Endings* 148). For McClary, this is a symptom of the ideological, systemic exclusion of women from the musical arts that has been evident for centuries (*Feminine Endings* 150). She writes how, throughout history, men's music has been regarded as more serious than women's music, arguing that, by creating something within a male-dominated domain, female musicians "have usually been assumed to be publicly available," thereby having to make their sexuality public (and visible) in order to progress in their careers (*Feminine Endings* 151). Women's music, therefore, due to the equating of women with performance rather than production, combined with the emphasis on female musicians' image, is required to emanate from a woman's body: women must be visible in order to participate in the creation of music.

The inclusion of women's music on a film soundtrack, therefore, presents an interesting tension: in the majority of cases, unless the music is included as part of an on-screen performance, the artist is not visible to the spectator, and therefore the voice we hear is not attached to a visible body. Thus, the voice is freed from its original bodily confinement, permitted to cross boundaries, break limits, and pass between spaces. While the stereotypical association of female voices with women's bodies enables, as I have discussed above, a proximity between the spectator and the on-screen characters, by disembodiment of the sung voice, it is also able to transgress traditional boundaries, remaining outside its "original" body. A female-voiced song therefore allows the girls' expression to escape the diegesis, thereby enabling the spectator to come into contact with their experiences, while also adding girl specificity to that expression. Above, I explored how the layer of meaning contributed by the gendered voice of an artist

can be enhanced with greater specificity by using well-known or recognisable artists, such as Courtney Love in *Suzanne*. Recognisable artists bring with them memories and associations that are inflected onto the film environment, therefore adding further layers of meaning onto the song text: songs can evoke memories of an artist, which contribute to the spectator's understanding of the film. The evocation of recognisable artists and their potential for meaning is highly significant in *Bande de filles*, where the eponymous girl gang, comprised of protagonist Marième and her friends, lip-sync and dance to Rihanna's "Diamonds." The film, like Sciamma's two preceding films, *Naissance des pieuvres* and *Tomboy*, is notable for its quietness: the characters are, in general, permitted only very sparse dialogue, despite their volume when gathered as a group.⁴ In the opening scene, for example, we initially hear the loud shouting and chattering of the girls in the American football team; once they leave the team environment, they are immediately cast into near-silence, getting ever quieter as their numbers decrease and as they pass male onlookers. Throughout the film, the girls' individual dialogue is lost in the crowd, never more than part of a whole, and often removed completely when the character is alone or, in particular, when she is on screen with a male character. This is similar to the lack of dialogue afforded to Suzanne when she is on her own: while the two sisters are very vocal when they are together, talking to (and insulting) their father's workmates over the radio in his truck, and catcalling the group of unsuspecting boys that pass by their house, Suzanne's voice is seldom heard above a whisper when she is alone. Therefore, while the girls in these films may not be completely silent, they do not have the freedom of expression that is assumed from their group volume. In Chapter 1, I discussed Kassabian's arguments for the existence of an "attention continuum," describing how, if one aspect of the soundtrack is removed, attention is drawn naturally to the other elements. A lack of dialogue, then, serves to highlight the music, whenever it occurs. As such, where the girls are not allowed to express themselves verbally, it is the music that allows their experiences to be communicated. In *Bande de filles*, as with Sciamma's other films, music is, in fact, used relatively sparingly, with ParaOne's original score, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 3, used mainly in between the film's "chapters," marked by the black screen separating each sequence. Indeed, discounting "Diamonds," there

⁴ I discuss the quietness of *Naissance des pieuvres* and *Tomboy* further in Chapter 3.

are only 23 minutes of music in the 1h48m film. The inclusion of Rihanna's song in the middle of the film, then, as I have mentioned above, presents an interesting particularity for Sciamma's work: not only is it a rare musical occurrence, it is also the first use of a pre-existing pop song in any of her feature films. Furthermore, the song is not cut in any way; the scene includes the song in its entirety, as it was released by Rihanna. The scene then, contrasts dramatically with the rest of the relatively quiet film. This dissimilarity, combined with the quietness of the girls themselves, and the fact that the scene in question is focused entirely on the music and the girls' interaction with it, causes the song to be foregrounded as a means of communication for the spectator. What is most interesting, for my purposes here, is the importance of using *Rihanna's* song for this scene. At interview, Sciamma has confirmed that "[t]he scene was in the first draft of the script, and it was Rihanna's 'Diamonds' when I was writing it," and also—as has now been widely publicised—that Rihanna gave permission to use the song, at a reduced cost, when she saw the sequence herself (Cadenas, *The Muse*). Rihanna was, therefore, the intended artist for this sequence: it is not only the lyrics or music, but Rihanna herself that is important in the film's narrative.



Fig. 2.10 *Bande de filles*. Lady looks down as the music begins.

The scene begins with a shot of Lady, the leader of the gang, facing the camera, with her head slightly bowed and her eyes closed (fig. 2.10). This image is highly reminiscent of the widely circulated—and subsequently highly criticised—image of Rihanna following her assault by her then-partner, R'n'B artist Chris Brown in 2009 (fig. 2.11). The image, showing the extent of Rihanna's injuries resulting from the assault, was first published online by *TMZ*, and



Fig. 2.11 The image of Rihanna published by TMZ following her assault by Chris Brown. "Face of a Battered Woman," TMZ, 22 Feb 2009.

subsequently circulated among a variety of media outlets. In the days and weeks that followed, sources that had published the image were highly criticised for the dissemination of crime evidence. Sarah Projansky reads the image as “resistant,” seeing Rihanna’s closed eyes as “a refusal to engage both the audience and various narratives about her” (“Rihanna’s Closed Eyes” 71). This is in reference to the number of media reports directed at Rihanna following the incident, in which she was criticised for allegedly reconciling with Brown after the assault. For Projansky, Rihanna closing her eyes acts as a “refusal to cooperate with the media,” demonstrating an awareness that the photograph would become public, but a refusal to engage with its publication (“Rihanna’s Closed Eyes” 72). In doing so, Rihanna not only refuses to engage with the media reproducing the photograph, but she also denies the audience’s gaze, thereby obtaining “privacy” even though her celebrity and the widespread dissemination of the photograph denies her this right (“Rihanna’s Closed Eyes” 72). In *Bande de filles*, as the music begins, Lady keeps her head lowered and her eyes closed, refusing, like Rihanna, to engage the audience’s gaze. In this film, where the girls are so often used as objects to be looked at, Lady refuses to engage with this, granting herself a moment of privacy and claiming the space as her own. Later, Lady herself

becomes a victim of domestic abuse, when, following a street fight, her father cuts off her hair. Although this event happens after the “Diamonds” scene, Lady’s association with Rihanna is recalled, along with her defiance in the face of the abuse. The music in this scene, then, both foreshadows and prepares us for Lady’s narrative later in the film.



Fig. 2.12 *Bande de filles*. Lady meets the camera's gaze.

As the music progresses, Lady’s eyes move upwards to stare into the camera (fig. 2.12), an action that I read, not as compliance or a willingness to engage, but as further resistance. Following her rejection of the viewer’s gaze, she confronts it, defying standard film convention to gaze back at the spectator and continuing to claim the screen-space as her own. The camera slowly moves away, distancing us from her and demonstrating her ownership of the space. As the scene continues, Lady’s attention turns to her friends as they join her, one by one. Just as in *Suzanne*, where Courtney Love’s “Playing your Song” allows the girls to claim the space in the car as their own, here the song allows the girls to dominate the film environment; these girls refuse to become objects of the spectator’s gaze, creating their own space that only they are permitted to fully enter. McNeill notes how the camerawork in the sequence aids in this refusal:

[T]he camera’s proximity means the girls’ movements constantly extend beyond the frame. A shallow depth of field allows them to emerge into and out of clear focus as they dance. Here too the “kinaesthetic contagion” is accompanied and undercut by a refusal to contain or fully display the girls as spectacle within the frame. (11)

This refusal to allow the girls to become mere objects of the spectator’s gaze is something that Sciamma has, as I discuss in more detail in Chapter 3, used previously in *Naissance des pieuvres* where, when character Anne dances at a party, the gaze is desexualised, denying the spectator the opportunity to judge or

objectify the young girls' body. In *Bande de filles*, this refusal contributes to the creation of a girl-only space. As McNeill goes on to argue, after the initial shot in which Lady engages the spectator's gaze, "the focus is entirely on exchanges between the girls:" as they dance and sing together, the performance presents "something generated between the girls, for each other" (11). When Adiatou (Lindsay Karamoh) joins Lady in the frame, Lady's gaze leaves the camera and does not return. Instead, she is wholly focused on her friend as they dance together (fig. 2.13). The camera shows a sometimes confusing whirlwind of arms and faces, not focusing on one particular girl as they dance, but emphasising the girls' ownership of the space. In contrast to the beginning of the sequence, when Lady meets and challenges the spectator's gaze, now none of the girls engages the spectator. The viewer is therefore permitted to partake in the girls' experience via the proximity of the camera and boundary-crossing music, but is not allowed to enter directly in to the girls' space.



Fig. 2.13 *Bande de filles*. The girls dance together.

In Chapter 1 I examined how the music in *LOL* and *Respire* helps to create a space that is characterised by youth. Here, not only does Rihanna's song, released only two years prior to the film, appeal to youth listening practices and therefore contribute to the creation of a youthful sensibility, it also helps to create a specific, "girl" space. Subsequently, the viewer is brought into contact with—though not permitted, initially, to fully enter—this space, enabling avenues of identification between spectator and the on-screen characters, and facilitating communication of the girls' experiences. Later in the sequence, a long, lingering shot shows Marième as she watches the other girls. At the beginning of the shot, the room is lit partly by the blue glow coming from the girls' dance space, and partly by the yellow light of the hotel table lamp, providing a more naturalistic



Fig. 2.14 *Bande de filles*. Marième watches the other girls.

colour palette that contrasts against the blue of the previous shot (fig. 2.14). This emphasises Marième’s marginal position; the newest member of the *bande*, she begins the sequence on the outside, as an observer. She is permitted, like the spectator, to come into contact with the other girls’ dancing space, but not allowed to fully enter into it. The camera slowly zooms towards Marième, and, as it does so, the colour palette gradually changes: as the yellow light is removed from the frame, we are left with only blue light, emphasised by Marième’s blue dress, which demonstrates Marième’s—and the spectator’s—increased proximity to the other girls’ space. While Marième does not move, as she listens to the music and watches the other girls dancing, she is, like the spectator, drawn to them, and is therefore brought into closer contact with them. The slow zoom towards Marième succeeds not only in bringing the spectator closer to the film-space itself, but aligning us emphatically with Marième as a character. Thus, when she joins the other girls, we, too, are permitted to enter into the space. When Marième begins to dance, the other girls form a semi-circle around her, with the spectator, via the camera, completing the circle (fig. 2.15). While the girls continue not to engage directly with the camera, they no longer turn away, thereby inviting the spectator to join in their experience; it is as if we, too, are dancing to “Diamonds.” The camerawork, then, reinforces the creation of the girl film-space created through the use of the song itself. The song is located, like “Playing Your Song” in *Suzanne*, in the trans-diegetic space, and bridges the gap between the spectator and the characters. While the girls lip-sync along with the music, locating the song within the diegetic space, there are no other audible sound effects; it is as though the song emanates from a space outside the film’s diegesis, as though it enters in to the internal film world from the external world of the spectator. The music



Fig. 2.15 *Bande de filles*. The camera positions the spectator into the circle.

therefore surrounds the spectator with girl(y) signification, aiding in the creation of a specifically girl film-space, and bringing the spectator into closer contact with that space. When, at the end of the sequence, the girls' voices are finally heard, the music seems to move back into the diegesis, and the distance between the spectator and the girls is increased. It is the music's boundary-crossing abilities, combined with the camerawork described above, that creates the illusion of proximity and invites the spectator into the girls' world.

The creation of this "girl-space" is something that is further enabled through the use of Rihanna as an artist. In her 2011 article, "Feeling Girl, Girling Feeling," Monica Swindle describes "girl" as, rather than a static, age- or gender-determined object, an affect that "circulates with/among objects [...] giving materiality to certain collectives of bodies [...] rendering them girls, and sticking to certain objects and people to create girl culture." In recent years, Swindle argues, the "significant shift" in the use of the word "girl" as an adjective as well as a noun signals the "emergence of girl as a new or at least qualitatively discernible affect, a [...] feeling of girlhood" ("Feeling Girl"). Previously, I discussed how the disembodied female voice has the ability to float among bodies and stick to those that are available. This is a similar process to that described by Swindle, who argues that the girl affect, created and circulated by objects of girl culture, floats among, and sticks to, bodies, resulting in the ability to feel "as girl, though not only *by* girls" ("Feeling Girl"). It is therefore not only girls—as described by physical or social definitions—that can come into contact with, and therefore experience via, the girl affect. Among the "objects of girlhood" capable of circulating the girl affect, Swindle identifies such things as "pink," "glitter," "tiaras," and "princesses," all of which are stereotypically associated with young, feminine culture. All of these signifiers have been, and are, associated

with Rihanna, in her music, media portrayal, and advertising campaigns. Indeed, Rihanna is presented, through the media, at interview, and in her music, as a “girl:” in titles alone her status as a girl is explicitly mentioned in two albums (*A Girl Like Me* (2006), *Good Girl Gone Bad* (2007)), two world tours (“Good Girl Gone Bad” Tour, 2007-09 and “Last Girl on Earth” Tour, 2010-11), and one single release (“Only Girl (In the World)” (2010)). Other songs are sung from a “girl” perspective, with lyrics referring to the singer as a girl, usually in opposition to boys. Similarly, the advertisement for her perfume, “RiRi by Rihanna,” presents the singer as a princess, wearing pearls and glittering jewellery, and swathed in pink satin that seems to shine with reflected light (fig. 2.16). Mary Celeste Kearney writes how this luminosity, this “sparkle,” is “ubiquitous in mainstream girls’ culture [...] it vies with pink as the primary signifier of youthful femininity” (“Sparkle” 263). She goes on to note how this “sparklefication” of the “visual landscape” of girlhood has resulted in the creation of a “visual trope” in girls’ media, in which “young female characters are stylistically highlighted today in ways that make them visually superior” (263-65). In the visual media, girls not only engage with “sparkle” through cultural means, such as the wearing of glittery makeup and clothes, but also physically embody it. In this way, “sparkle” can both stick *to* bodies, and emanate *from* them, creating a feedback loop of affective girl-ness that is at once created, communicated, and perpetuated. In *Bande de filles*, this luminosity is created visually, by the blue light that causes the girls’ skin to shine; aurally, through the song’s repeated lyrics “shine bright like a diamond;” and referentially, through the use of Rihanna, herself a luminous “girl” figure. The sequence, with its emphasis on sparkle, glitter, and diamonds, enables the creation of a specifically “girl” space by entering a girl(y) mode of meaning. The “sparkle” of the lighting and the music itself attaches to the girls on screen and is simultaneously communicated to us as spectators, allowing us to come into contact with the girl-ness and experience it, as Swindle argues, as girls.

Through the constant reminders, as I have discussed above, of Rihanna’s “girl” status, as well as her association with girl(y) signifiers such as “sparkle,” “pink,” and “diamonds,” Rihanna becomes a cultural symbol of youthful femininity. As with other young, female figures, Rihanna’s continued representation and visibility as a girl figure means that she begins to embody “girlhood,” transforming into an object of affective “girl” meaning that transcends national boundaries. Although prior knowledge of music cannot be assumed from spectators,



Fig. 2.16 The advertisement for Rihanna's perfume. ©Rihanna/Twitter. Ellen Scott, "Rihanna Gets Pretty in Pink," *Cosmopolitan* 22 Jul 2015.

Rihanna's status as an international artist means that the probability of recognition is greatly increased. Indeed, "Diamonds" alone reached the number one spot in over twenty countries worldwide, and spent twenty-nine consecutive weeks in the French top twenty following its release in 2012. Rihanna, then, represents an international girlhood; a signifier of girl experience that is not limited to certain national boundaries but is instead transnational. When the girls in *Bande de filles* lip sync and dance to her track, they also begin to take on Rihanna's girl persona. Their imitation of the song, combined with the visual similarities highlighted at the beginning of the sequence, means that the girls themselves adopt Rihanna's girl-ness, becoming an embodiment of "girl" and girl experience. In this moment, Marième and her friends cease to be *Parisian* girls, or even *French* girls, escaping their localisation to become global symbols of girlhood. I have demonstrated above how the use of J. Dash's "Wop" helps situate the film within a universal youth culture, allowing the girls to come into contact with the global. Here, a similar effect is achieved: the use of Rihanna, an international artist, provides a means of escaping the diegesis of the film, bringing the girls' local experience—demonstrated in other scenes in the film that make use of recognisable Paris locations—into contact with the global experience located outside of the film. However, this scene differs from the sequences featuring "Wop" in that the distance between the song, the girls, and the spectator

is much smaller. Above, I described the distance that is maintained between “Wop” and the girls (and subsequently the spectator), arguing that the song allows for a general evocation of youth culture, but does not allow us, as viewers, the intimate access to the girls’ experiences that is provided by “Diamonds.” In the hotel room sequence described above, we are invited intimately into the girls’ world, the song helping to provide a distinct girl-space, which brings the spectator into contact with the girls’ experiences. Like the other films I have examined so far in this thesis, in *Bande de filles* the songs featuring male voices retain a distance that helps evoke a general or universal youthfulness, but does not allow us intimate contact with the girlhood specificities of the characters’ experiences. On the other hand, the song featuring a female voice allows us that intimacy, that closeness, with the characters and opens up avenues of identification and communication between the on-screen girls and the spectator, even if the spectator is not, themselves, a girl. As one reviewer for the *Daily Telegraph* wrote following the film’s release, “I thought I was somehow watching my own teenage struggles and triumphs play out on screen. The fact that I’m not—nor have ever been—French, female or black didn’t seem to come into it” (Collin, *Daily Telegraph*). The music in *Bande de filles* succeeds in creating a means of expression that is not restricted to the local, but is permitted to enter the global, while simultaneously allowing the spectator to come into intimate contact with the girls’ experiences. Rihanna’s “Diamonds” serves, like Courtney Love’s “Playing Your Song” in *Suzanne*, to create a girl-oriented space that permits this intimacy and encourages a closeness between the spectator and the on-screen characters.

In *Suzanne*, it is not just Courtney Love’s song that allows this intimacy. Rather, it is at the end of the film that we encounter the most interesting—and arguably most emotionally revealing—use of music, when Nina Simone’s cover of Leonard Cohen’s “Suzanne” is heard over the closing sequence and the end credits. Just before the final scene, as the song’s guitar introduction begins to play, the camera focuses in close-up on Suzanne’s face, reminiscent of the bar scene discussed earlier in this chapter (fig. 2.17). As such, even though Suzanne herself is not visible when the vocals start, the music becomes attached to her and, equally, Charlie’s (who is the last character we see before the end credits) memories of her; this connection is reinforced by the fact that the first vocal sounds on the song are the long, drawn-out syllables of the word “Suzanne.” The



Fig. 2.17 *Suzanne*. The final close-up.

simple, arpeggiated guitar accompaniment and Simone's slow, melodic vocals are distinctly nostalgic, here: indeed, throughout the film Suzanne's experiences are marked with nostalgia, as demonstrated in my previous discussion of the emphasis on her lost youth. Throughout the narrative, references to her mother's (and then sister's) death, the thought of Charlie growing up without her, and thoughts of what might have been all provide the final incentive for Suzanne to hand herself in to the authorities. We are constantly reminded throughout the film of a version of adolescence that is not available to her, which subsequently marks her characterisation with nostalgia. This end song, then, acts as a culmination, an outpouring, of this nostalgia, inviting spectators to reflect on Suzanne's journey, commiserate her loss with her as a character, and simultaneously remember her with her father and Charlie, who are in the car driving away from her. In this way, the music here is polysemous: it represents a number of emotional experiences, including Suzanne's loss; the loss experienced by her father and son; and our identification with the different characters. However, all of these possible meanings are mediated through Suzanne as a character. While the song facilitates identification between the spectator and Charlie, for example, it is through a shared contact with Suzanne that this identification is permitted. By allowing an intimacy with Suzanne, the song provides a shared voice of experience that subsequently allows us to identify with Charlie at the end of the film: we experience his loss as we do our own.

The intimacy created by this music is emphasised by the specific use of Nina Simone's version of the song. In an interview for the film's press pack, Quillévéré describes the song as "comme un gospel...avec cette voix de femme

qui semble avoir tout vécu” (Vassé 15), highlighting the song’s capacity for a particularly feminine, nostalgic mode of meaning. In using Simone’s (female) version, Quillévééré encourages a closeness with Suzanne as a character, aligning the spectator more concretely with her and thereby facilitating our navigation of her experience. Cohen’s original version would, in this sequence, when combined with Suzanne’s lack of on-screen presence, seem to be singing *about* Suzanne, rather than reflecting her own specific experiences. Instead, Simone’s version provides avenues for identification and empathy, rather than objectification. The song seems to emanate, as with Love’s “Playing your Song” discussed above, from Suzanne herself, even though she is not visible. It therefore permits a point of contact with Suzanne as a character, providing a means of navigating her experiences and emotions that is not achieved by the male-voiced songs on the soundtrack. The use of female vocals, here, helps to create a distinctly feminine film-space, opening up avenues of identification with Suzanne, articulating her experiences and enabling the spectator to navigate the girlhood specificities of her emotions.

It is not just Simone’s female voice that provides the layers of meaning in this sequence, however, but the specific use of her as an artist. As with Courtney Love, Simone has a distinctively recognisable voice that provides a potential layering of meaning onto the song itself. Quillévééré explicitly reference’s Simone in her statement above, demonstrating that, like Rihanna in *Bande de filles*, she was a deliberate choice. Simone was known not only for her music, but as an activist as both a civil rights advocate and a feminist. Indeed, Daphne Brooks describes Simone as “an artist who defied the centre, ran circles around the margins, and [...] create[d] an off-beat repertoire that was, some might argue, ‘emo’ before ‘emo’” (176). It is this characterisation that contributes so strongly to the link between Simone’s song and Suzanne as a character. I discussed above how Suzanne does not adhere to traditional expectations or roles, which brings Courtney Love’s song closer to her; the same effect is achieved here with Nina Simone. Like Simone, Suzanne “defies the centre:” she is not defined by traditional definitions of femininity or motherhood. The associations of Simone as an activist who fights against traditional stereotypes, as well as her well-known volatile temperament which also corresponds with Suzanne’s characterisation in the film, bring the song closer to Suzanne, in a way that could not be achieved by the original version of the song. As such the song, with its additional layers of

signification brought by Simone as a well-known and recognisable artist, is able to foster identification between the spectator and Suzanne specifically, thereby contributing to the fact that the song seems to come from Suzanne herself, rather than simply be about her. Furthermore, it is not just Simone's character that is evoked by the song but her voice itself, being highly recognisable, is also a source of meaning on the track. Kathy Dobie writes how Simone's voice "seems to trigger grief," likening Simone's singing to other evocative sounds like "a fog horn, light rain on an empty lake, [or] trucks rolling down the highway in the middle of the night" (232). Above, I explored how Suzanne is characterised with nostalgia throughout the narrative of the film, through the frequent emphasis of her losses. Simone's voice, with its long, slow vowels and characteristic drawl, brings distinct nostalgia and loss to the song, layering on top of its already evocative lyrics and melody, to emphasise the loss we feel at the end of the film. This sense of loss and nostalgia brings us closer to Suzanne, and thereby facilitates our navigation of her experience. The extra layers of meaning provided by Simone as an artist contribute to the manifestation of these feelings; as in the earlier sequence when Courtney Love's recognisable persona layers on to the film-space to connect more closely with Suzanne's character, so here Simone's characterisation and recognizability opens up further avenues of identification and contact.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the layers of meaning provided by different artists in film songs, arguing that, as pre-existing songs are attached inextricably to their performers, that performer's persona becomes increasingly important. In Chapter 1, I investigated referential meanings that were largely general in nature, focusing on the way that pop music and the language of that music carry associations, which can then affect the meanings inferred by spectators and listeners during the film. This chapter has continued this examination of referential meanings, demonstrating the importance of both general and specific modes of meaning. An artist is able to encourage layers of meaning both generally, through their style, sound, or characteristics that do not require specific recognition, and specifically, whereby existing associations attached to a particular artist are inflected onto their music, and subsequently the film environment. Furthermore, this chapter has examined the importance of gender in how meaning is invoked in songs, exploring the impact of using different

gendered voices on a film's soundtrack. In the films discussed here, female-voiced songs are positioned closer to the girl protagonists than male-voiced songs, encouraging a closeness between the spectator and the characters that is not achieved by male-voiced tracks. This is not to say that songs featuring male voices do not relate to the characterisation of these characters; rather, they maintain a distance from them that denies the spectator the intimacy suggested by the female-voiced songs. Through layers of social stereotyping and gendered associations that position the feminine as Other to the masculine original, male-voiced songs contextualise the girls' experience in these films within a "universal" experience of youthfulness, rather than providing contact with their girl specificities. In this way, male-voiced songs maintain a relationship between the spectator and the girls which is tempered by an external gaze: the spectator views the girls' experience via a general evocation of youth. In contrast, the female-voiced songs, through a play on the liminality between embodied and non-embodied expression, and the excess of meaning created by the pairing of the visible female body with a different female voice, generate a closeness that transcends diegetic boundaries, connecting the internal girl-space of the film storyworld and the spectator's external world. When we hear these songs, the matching of the female body and voice creates the illusion that it could be the girl singing about her own experience, when in fact she is not. This adds to the liminality of the songs, which permits the girls' expression to escape the confines of the visible body and come into closer contact with the spectator. Earlier in this chapter, I discussed Mary Ann Doane's theory of the masquerade, which, by creating an "excess" of feminine signification, makes the filmic woman more visible. In the examples I have analysed in this chapter, the addition of a female singing voice creates an excess of girl signification, which therefore makes the girls' subjectivity more accessible to the spectator. The deployment of the female voice allows a closeness that is denied by the use of male-voiced songs, permitting the spectator to come into contact with the girls' specific experiences. This was seen in Chapter 1, where the predominantly male-voiced songs in *LOL* and *Respire* frame the protagonists' experiences as youthful, rather than specifically "girl."

In *Bande de filles*, the distance created by male-voiced songs is highlighted via the use of J Dash's "Wop." While the song does relate to the characters' personal expression of youth, it serves predominantly to, as this

chapter demonstrates, bring the girls into contact with a global youth culture, while simultaneously denying us the opportunity to enter into their locality. In contrast, while Rihanna's "Diamonds" also allows the characters to enter into the global, it retains a closeness between the spectator and the girls, whereby we are invited into their girl space and brought into contact with their specific experiences. In *Suzanne*, a similar distance is retained by the male-voiced songs that we hear, predominantly, in the bar and club scenes throughout the film. In the example considered in this chapter, music by Noir Désir helps to contextualise the film as a youthful narrative, while maintaining a distance from Suzanne's characterisation. Indeed, the distance is emphasised in this sequence, employed to align us with Suzanne, highlighting her loss of youthfulness and excluding her from the adolescent space created by the music on the dancefloor. Female-voiced songs, on the other hand, encourage a closeness that is denied by the male-voiced songs. This is due, at least in part, to the social stereotypes described above. In the introduction and first chapter of this thesis, I discussed how, in media culture, women's voices are confined to the body: female voices are expected to emanate from a female source. As a result, female voices automatically attach more readily to female characters in film, thereby contributing to the perceived closeness between female-voiced songs and female characters. In the next two chapters, I explore how stereotyping can function in this way in more detail, examining how deeply-embedded cultural stereotypes affect the way we listen to certain types of music, and subsequently have an impact on the meaning inferred by the music. In the films discussed here, songs featuring female voices contribute to the creation of a female film-space, which subsequently allows us to be brought into closer contact with the girlhood specificity of the protagonists' experiences. As such, the spectator is permitted an intimacy with the girls' emotions and sensations that is denied by the distance suggested by pairing a male voice with a female body.

The closeness that is encouraged by the use of female-voiced songs is an example of "general" extra-musical meaning, in that it is not reliant on recognition of a particular artist in order to function. However, as this chapter has shown, specific meanings that function through recognition add to the song's communicative value. Through recognition of an artist, associations attached to them are inflected onto the song and subsequently onto the film, contributing to our means of identification with the on-screen characters. In *Suzanne*, the use of

Courtney Love and Nina Simone encourages a deeper connection with Suzanne as a character, due to their characterisation in the media and through their performances of the songs. Both artists are characterised, like Suzanne, as non-conventional, rule-breaking women; these similarities connect the song more directly to Suzanne and encourage identification with her as a character. As a result, the songs seem to emanate from Suzanne, rather than simply be *about* her: she takes on the personas of the artists, and the associations attached to Love and Simone are inflected onto her, which enables further avenues of identification between the spectator and the character. In *Bande de filles*, the impact of recognition is perhaps even stronger: through the girls' lip-synced performance and images reminiscent of Rihanna's own, we are invited to recognise the similarities between the girls and Rihanna, and to recall associations attached to Rihanna as an artist. As this chapter argued, the girls in *Bande de filles* "become" Rihanna—or an embodiment of the associations attached to her—which fosters identification through recognition. By linking the girls' expression to something highly recognisable, their experiences become more navigable for the spectator. In both *Bande de filles* and *Suzanne*, the use of specific artists appeals to spectator memory, opening up further avenues of identification and enabling the spectator to navigate the girls' experiences. Earlier in this chapter, I discussed Drake's argument that using artists allow songs to "exceed" their potential for meaning. The "excess" of meaning provided by using recognisable artists, therefore, is manifested in film as feeling or emotion: pre-existing associations attached to artists encourage emotional identification between the spectator and the characters on screen.

Overall, this chapter reveals how artists, or artists' characteristics and voice types, can provide extra layers of extra-musical meaning in a film song. These layers of meaning may be general or specific, and work both to make the experiences of the characters more navigable for the spectator; and to bring us into contact with the girls' worlds without requiring them to break their required silence. These meanings are rarely evoked in isolation: rather, they work together, creating layers of signification that subsequently aid identification and empathy between spectator and character. Both Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 have demonstrated the significance of pre-existing associations in allowing the spectator to come into contact with a specific form of emotion or experience; by appealing to both existing stereotypes and spectator recognition, film songs are

able to articulate the specific experiences of on-screen characters. In using recognisable female artists, the spectator is permitted to feel *as girl*. The next chapter continues to unpack the importance of extra-musical association and stereotypes, extending the discussion to originally composed music as well as pre-existing music in order to examine the effect of certain musical genres on girl expression.

Chapter 3:

Gender/Genre: Girls, Musical Style, and Emotion

Introduction

This chapter examines the effect of musical genre on extra-musical meanings, exploring how genres, by the way they are formed and defined over time, appeal to expectations and, subsequently, form stereotypes. In this way, I expand on the work of the two previous chapters, which examined the significance of pre-existing associations in the communication of meaning in film songs. Chapters 1 and 2 showed the difference between general referential meaning—such as that provided by using English-language pop music in a youth film, or matching a female character with a female vocalist—and specific referential meaning, such as the layers of meaning provided by the inclusion of particular artists in a film sequence. This chapter is more concerned with general associations, which are formed over time due to longstanding stereotypes or conventions. This is explored further in Chapter 4, which focuses on the deeply-embedded gender stereotypes prevalent in musical scoring, and the way these stereotypes can help or hinder character identification. It is worth noting, here, that while the word “stereotype” has somewhat negative connotations, sometimes being used synonymously with “prejudice,” it does not, as I discussed in Chapter 2, have to be used pejoratively. While related to prejudice, in that prejudice is borne out of unchanging ideas, stereotypes are not inherently negative in themselves, as Tessa Perkins writes in her now seminal “Rethinking Stereotypes” (75). While stereotypes can be reductive because they tend to flatten definitions and reject nuance, they also offer us a shortcut to understanding characters within narratives. For this reason, stereotypes are, in part, key to how stories work, as they provide a necessary means of identification and understanding. As Perkins goes on to note, stereotypes are “central to interpreting and evaluating social groups, including one’s own” (82). A stereotype, then, can be described as simply a concept that is repeated often enough to become accepted as truthful; this idea of “truth” or “validity” of stereotypes is something I explore later in this chapter with reference to sociological studies of music genre stereotypes and what it is possible to learn from them. Here I open up the discussions of referential meaning established in Chapters 1 and 2 to include not only pre-existing music, but also originally composed music,

examining how genre idioms and style can appeal to memory even when the music itself is not pre-existing. This appeal to memory is caused by stereotypes and expectations attached to certain genres, which are created through the process of genre formation. As such, this chapter begins with a discussion of the formation of musical genres, and explores how the process of genre formation relates to, and creates, listener expectations. As one of the few musicologists to venture into the study of musical genres, Franco Fabbri's work provides a useful starting point for this discussion. I take Fabbri's argument that musical genres are defined by "socially accepted rules," and use it to extrapolate Peter Stockwell's cognitive approach to genre. Thus, this chapter takes Stockwell's exploration of genre classification as a cognitive process, and applies it to the musical domain. As this chapter demonstrates, when we view musical genres through Stockwell's cognitive lens, it is possible to identify them as arbitrary concepts that are reliant on context, and to recognise that musical genre classification is dependent on some kind of shared, community experience. This shared experience then facilitates the creation of common expectations, meaning that genres become more easily recognisable: by reinforcing the need for certain criteria, music can be classified into a genre, even if the listener is not within the original community in charge of providing the definition. Due to genre classification's reliance on shared experience, and the importance of expectations to the reinforcement and continuation of categories, it is easy for stereotypes to develop around certain genres. I differentiate between genre "expectations" and genre "stereotypes" as follows: expectations, as described by Steve Neale, for example, are the formal or thematic assumptions we make based on a genre classification (46-47). For example, a rock music classification might elicit the expectation of an electric guitar, strong drumbeat and rebellious lyrics. Genre stereotypes, on the other hand, while linked to expectations, are more related to the presumptions we may have related to the performers, listeners, or context of the music. Rock music listeners, for example, may be assumed to be teenagers, rebellious, or in some way counter to the ideals of the older generation. Genre stereotypes, therefore, are linked to, and in some ways stem from, audience expectations. To underpin these assumptions, I draw largely on sociological and psychological studies, notably those of Peter Rentfrow et al, which examine the relationship between music genre preferences and how listeners are perceived by others. These

investigations, while largely based in social psychology rather than musicology or film studies, provide a wealth of useful material for this chapter's discussion.

While it may be tempting, as I have discussed above, to disregard the concept of expectations and stereotypes as reductive or restrictive—indeed, assuming that genres somehow require certain pre-existing assumptions in order to be defined provides little room for creativity within a genre classification—I argue in this chapter that it is important to consider their affective potential for meaning. The expectations of listeners, and the stereotypes created by them, are vital in defining the experience of listening to music, and therefore have a strong impact on the way we respond to sounds. This chapter examines this impact, considering how musical genre expectations and stereotypes contribute to our listening experience, and have an effect on the communicative meaning of a film soundtrack. As with the pre-existing associations attached to artists or songs discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis, the expectations and stereotypes attached to genre categories are able to be evoked when music is used in film, thereby adding to the communicative value of the music, and providing a vehicle for emotions and experiences of the on-screen characters.

While this chapter is predominantly concerned with music genres, the way they are formed, and stereotypes that arise from musical genre classification, it is also useful, given the similarities between music and film as popular cultural forms, to consider filmic approaches to genre classification. In his article, "Questions of Genre," Neale describes how film genres are not just groups of films; they also comprise "expectations" that spectators bring with them to the cinema or other viewing space, which are then either reinforced or subverted by the film they are watching (46). Films that satisfy spectators' expectations serve to reinforce the genre classification, and therefore help to entrench the same expectations for subsequent film viewings. Similarly, films that go against spectators' expectations can help in the evolution of the genre categorisation to include a wider range of criteria for classifying within that genre. Genre classification, then, relies as heavily on spectator experience as it does on formal elements comprising generic definitions. Indeed, the ways spectators experience genre is vital to a film's box office success. As Neale argues, genre is "an important ingredient in any film's narrative image:" films are marketed in certain ways in order to live up to spectator expectation and attract certain audiences (49). Musical genre classifications function in a similar way: music is marketed

differently so as to appeal to listeners' existing expectation. As evidenced by the categorisation of albums and songs into genres, both in stores and online, genres matter to consumers, and previous experience of genres plays an important role in the exploitation of music listeners' purchasing practices. In recent years, the rise of digital media providers such as Netflix and Amazon has placed even more emphasis on genre as a means of targeting consumers, with the use of algorithms to recommend music, films, or TV programmes in similar categories to audiences. These algorithms provide a means of navigating and consuming culture through genre classifications, further emphasising the importance of these categories. This chapter takes its starting point from this concept of genre expectations, and explores how these expectations and subsequent stereotypes are manifested as meaning within the film-space, able to function as affective signifiers to communicate meaning.

While Neale's genre study provides a useful starting point for this discussion of expectations attached to different genres, it does not fully account for how genre classification works as a process, and how the development of a genre relates to—and indeed creates—the expectations attached to it. This is something that Rick Altman addresses in his 1984 exploration of genre approaches:

Genres were always—and continue to be—treated as if they spring full-blown from the head of Zeus. It is thus not surprising to find that even the most advanced of current genre theories, those that see generic texts as negotiating a relationship between a specific production system and a given audience, still hold on to a notion of genre that is fundamentally ahistorical in nature. ("Semantic" 7)

Here, Altman identifies a significant problem with discussions of genres that is, I would argue, prevalent not just in film theory but also in musicology: that genres are seen as givens, as ready-made classifications that exist to categorise cultural forms. However, as Altman recognises, it is important to consider the origins of genres, the methods of classifying film and/or music into generic categories, and the development of genres into wider classifications/groups of sub-genres, especially when discussing the expectations and stereotypes that are attached to different categorisations. In his discussion of popular music genres, Mark Shevy writes that "music genre can be considered as a culturally shared cognitive schema consisting of associations between the sound of the music and extramusical concepts" (477). While it is not possible, within the scope of this

thesis, to offer a full examination of cognitive theory and its relationship to genre, cognitive approaches to generic classification are nevertheless useful as a starting point for this chapter's exploration of how genres begin and evolve, and how expectations are subsequently linked to generic definitions. According to Shevy, music genres combine formal or structural elements with social and cultural ideas; this is much the same approach to genre classification as Neale presents with his combination of formal film elements and spectator expectations. Shevy goes on to describe how, through listening to music and watching music videos produced by an industry where it is important to have "easily identifiable genres, each with a distinctive culture," listeners gain knowledge and make associations that, when repeated, form "cognitive networks" in the memory (478). These memories have an impact on listeners' subsequent experiences of similar music, helping to reinforce the classification process and make genres easier to identify in the future. Subsequent listening experiences can then fulfil expectations (thereby reinforcing the generic definition) or subvert them (by altering or calling into question the definition). As Shevy summarises, "the sound of a certain genre might prime a group of extramusical concepts [...] and these activated concepts may enter working memory and influence subsequent message processing" (479).¹ This is a similar process to that discussed in Chapter 1, in which I argued that certain song features, such as the language of the lyrics, can become naturally associated with character traits, such as adolescence. It is this process of "priming" extra-musical references through repetition and association that helps to provide extra layers of meaning onto a song text. The generic classification of cultural forms into distinct categories can be understood as a continuous cognitive process, where generic definitions are continuously evolving based on listeners' experiences and expectations. In his work on literary experience, *Cognitive Poetics*, Peter Stockwell notes that "what gets included within a genre depends on what you think a genre is in general [...] Genres can be defined socially, historically, functionally, authorially, politically, stylistically, arbitrarily, idiosyncratically, or by a combination of any of these" (28). Genre, then, is an arbitrary concept, reliant on a number of variables that can change several times depending on the classifier's particular context. Stockwell

¹ For a comprehensive discussion of cultural cognition and the cognitive processes at work here, see Roy G D'Andrade, "Cultural Cognition," *Foundations of Cognitive Science*, ed. Michael Posner, MIT Press, 1989, 795-830.

goes on to identify examples of what he calls “cognitive models,” which make up our basic understanding of categories and inform our creation of classification systems (33). When these cognitive models are shared amongst communities, they become “cultural models” that are wholly dependent, as with the process of generic categorisation, on context. To explain this, Stockwell takes the example of fruit categorisation: when asked to quickly name something that is categorised as “fruit,” the majority of UK respondents answer with either “apple” or “orange.” In Singapore and Japan, however, this semi-automatic response changes: one of the first responses in these locations is “durian,” a fruit native to south-east Asia (29-33). Though this is a simple example, demonstrating how experience affects knowledge, it is nevertheless, as Stockwell acknowledges, useful to consider the cultural and contextual impact on auto-responses and associations made within categories. In addition, Stockwell notes how the process of genre classification is affected by previous experience of the cultural form. He writes that, in a literary context, the “process of reinforcing and refining our cultural models through reading is the process of increasing our literary competence” (39), just as Shevy notes how it is through listening to music that listeners are able to nuance their understanding of music genres. The classification of genres and the maintaining of generic categories is therefore reliant on prior experience and context, and, in the case of a medium that is encountered by many people simultaneously, the classification is largely reliant on community context and shared experience. Franco Fabbri defines musical genre as “a set of—real or possible—music events, whose course is governed by a definite set of *socially accepted rules*” (52, my emphasis): the development of a genre is dependent on rules that are “accepted” by a community. These rules can be created through the repetition of particular features, which form the basis of listeners’ expectations: these expectations, if fulfilled enough, then go on to form the rules that govern the generic definition. Sociologists Jennifer Lena and Richard Peterson apply a similar understanding of music genre creation, writing how genres are formed by and around communities of listeners. They identify four main “types” of genre, all of which rely on the presence of some pre-existing listening community: avant-garde genres such as thrash metal or punk, which are “form[ed] around members’ shared dislike of some aspect of the music of the day and the quest for music that is different;” scene-based genres such as Chicago Blues that come from “communit[ies] of spatially-situated artists, fans, [or] record

companies;” industry-based genres such as rap or rock ‘n’ roll that are organised around an industrial corporation or market; and traditionalist genres such as jazz or folk, which are created out of the desire to “preserve a genre’s musical heritage,” often with emphasis on “race, class, educational attainment, and regional origins” (701-6). For Lena and Peterson, then, genre is explicitly linked to notions of community and shared experience; indeed, the classification of music into a genre is reliant on the existence of a listener community to create and accept the “rules” referenced in Fabbri’s work. These rules, created by communities, go on to become listener expectations and form the basis of the generic definition.

Because musical genres are so intrinsically linked to their communities of listeners, stereotypes and judgements are easily developed out of the rules and expectations described above: the expectations become so entrenched that assumptions are created, which can then be applied to both the music itself, and the perceived groups of listeners. Stereotypes are also passed between listeners and genre: stereotypes about the listeners of a particular genre come to be attached to the genre itself, and stereotypes about the music come to be associated with its listeners. Rock ‘n’ roll, for example, first popular with the emerging teenage generation in the 1950s and 1960s, became associated, through both its listeners and its new sounds, with changing attitudes, more liberal views towards youth culture, and a rebellion against the conservative establishment of the older generation. As such, those who listened to rock ‘n’ roll began to be regarded as more rebellious, and music artists and producers continue to exploit these associations to maintain popularity with their dominant market. Indeed, the idea that music preferences can somehow reveal the values, traits, and personalities of listeners has been the topic of a number of psychological and sociological studies, which explore this stereotype cycle in more detail.² Recently, more work has been done to examine the validity of these stereotypes, and understand how they may affect listeners’ potential alignment with a genre. Peter Rentfrow and Samuel Gosling argue that the creation of music stereotypes is intrinsically linked to music’s role in self-expression, writing that

² See Wilfred Dolfsma, “The Consumption of Music and the Expression of Values”; William S. Fox and Michael H. Wince, “Musical Taste Cultures and Taste Publics”; Albert LeBlanc et al, “Music Style Preferences of Different Age Listeners”; Mark Tarrant et al, “Social Categorization, Self-esteem, and the Estimated Musical Preferences of Male Adolescents”; and Dolf Zillmann and Azra Bhatia, “Effects of Associating with Musical Genres on Heterosexual Attraction.”

“individuals prefer styles of music that reinforce and reflect aspects of their personalities and personal identities,” and going on to explain how, therefore, “music-preference information can influence how an individual is perceived” (307-8). Through a study of college-age students’ reactions to, and perceptions of, different genres, they were able to conclude that there exist “robust and specific stereotypes associated with different music genres” (317). These stereotypes were consistent among their sample of listeners, and therefore suggest that genre stereotypes are deeply rooted in musical culture. Rentfrow and Gosling go on to briefly discuss the accuracy of genre stereotypes, concluding that many of the stereotypes they study “possess grains of truth [...] these findings indicate that music-preference information communicates accurate information about the psychological characteristics of individuals” (323). Established stereotypes, then, offer an interesting assessment of music listeners and the associations of genres with certain values, personalities, and emotions. In Chapter 2, I explored how the stereotypical association of female voices with female bodies, while restrictive, nevertheless layers meaning onto a song text, and leads to a perceived closeness between the spectator, the singing voice, and the female character on screen. It is in this way that stereotypes are able to affect the meaning inferred by spectators; when stereotypes and associations are deep-rooted, they are evoked almost automatically by the music.

Peter Rentfrow et al expand on and continue Rentfrow and Gosling’s earlier work in their 2009 study, “You Are What You Listen To: Young People’s Stereotypes about Music Fans,” in which they discuss how listeners simultaneously use music genre stereotypes to help form their own expression of identity, and examine other people’s music preferences to obtain information about them:

[M]usic preferences appear to communicate information about individuals’ psychological characteristics—their personalities, values, and preferences. Indeed, knowing the kinds of music people like apparently activates stereotypes that contain sundry information about who they are. (331)

Music genre stereotypes, then, are deep rooted and explicitly linked to identity, both in the form of personality traits and social characteristics. This concept of “activating” stereotypes in order to communicate information is particularly useful for the purposes of this chapter: it is this activation that has the potential to reveal character information in film and help communicate meaning to the spectator.

In Chapters 1 and 2, I discussed how pre-existing film music relies heavily on spectator memory, and has the ability to draw on memories and associations that already exist for the viewer. However, with pre-existing songs, there is no guarantee that a spectator will have prior experience of the specific song. This is where the distinction between specific referential meaning, which requires particular knowledge, and general referential meaning, which does not, is important. Genre categories, however, are more wide-ranging, and, as has been proven by Rentfrow et al, even listeners who do not listen to, or are not very familiar with a genre can still largely identify the stereotypes associated with it (332). Genre stereotypes, therefore, provide an extensive appeal to memory, which is much more aligned with the general associations discussed in the previous chapters than the specific. When a character listens to a certain genre of music, stereotypes associated with that genre are activated in the spectator's memory, and are subsequently associated with those characters on screen. Indeed, even non-diegetic music can have similar effects: when a certain genre is heard on the soundtrack, any stereotypes attached to it may still be activated, and therefore layer meaning onto the film-space. Genre, then, and the stereotypes associated with it, can play an important role in the communication of information to a listener or spectator.

Anahid Kassabian writes how, in classical Hollywood film scoring, "the possibilities for female characters [...] are severely limited," due to the existing musical stereotypes used for scoring women, referring to Kathryn Kalinak's argument that classical Hollywood film music scores women as either a "fallen woman" or "virtuous wife and mother" (70).³ When neither of these stereotypical characterisations are applicable to a film's female characters, however, Kassabian asserts that popular music genres become more useful than classical scoring, "because they do not belong to a tight meaning system of classical Hollywood scoring practice" (73). Using a different musical genre, therefore, helps to emancipate the characters from the restrictions of using classical scoring: non-classical film scores provide character identification outside of traditional Hollywood constraints. Moreover, using a genre that does not frequently appear in film means that the music is not restricted by generic constraints and restrictions. The film can therefore represent the experiences of

³ I discuss these gendered musical stereotypes in more detail in Chapter 4.

its protagonists on its own terms, rather than playing into standard film practice. Kassabian goes on to discuss the importance of music genre to how spectators respond to a film and its characters, arguing that meanings that may be generated by the spectators' "relationships to the genres in general" can help open "particularizable paths of entry for identification" with characters (72-73). This chapter is concerned with this identification, made possible through recognition of generic contexts.

This chapter conducts a detailed study of two particular genres that are featured in the corpus of films discussed in this thesis, and examines how each genre affects our perception of the characters on the screen. Firstly, I examine the films of Mia Hansen-Løve, and her use of the folk genre, arguing that, due to its origins in the oral tradition, folk music carries a nostalgic, memorial quality. Overall, Hansen-Løve's films position girlhood as a nostalgic moment, highlighting the loss and longing of their central characters. The folk music in these films, therefore, helps to communicate this nostalgia, surrounding the spectator with signification that establishes a film-space reflecting the characters', and the spectators', memories. Hansen-Løve's films provide a particularly interesting study for this chapter, not only because they foreground folk as their dominant genre of music, but also because of the ways the nostalgia evoked by the genre is emphasised and exploited by repetition in the films: when the tracks are repeated, it provides a memorial experience for the spectator where earlier scenes in the film are directly referenced by the music. The evocation of nostalgia is therefore doubly significant, as it not only provides an aural representation of the emotions felt by the characters, but also directly references the events that cause them. In Hansen-Løve's films, the use of the folk genre allows the spectator a means of sharing the experience of the girl characters on screen, while also giving the film a particularly rich and complex temporality. Indeed, in an interview Hansen-Løve describes her first three films as "about the passing of time" (Wilner, *Now Toronto*), highlighting the importance of temporality to her work. As coming-of-age narratives, Hansen-Løve's films all move towards the present, constantly progressing forwards, while also gesturing towards the past. The use of the folk genre, both generally and specifically, in her films thus highlights these issues of temporality and allows the filmmaker to play with the spectator's sense of time.

Secondly, this chapter explores the electronic genre. Of course, it must be acknowledged that "the electronic genre" or "electronica" is in fact an umbrella

term for a number of genres and sub-genres. As Joanna Demers writes, “electronic music is not one single genre but rather a nexus of numerous genres, styles, and subgenres, divided not only geographically but also institutionally, culturally, technologically, and economically” (5). Throughout her work, Demers refers to “electronica” as a “metagenre,” to mean a “larger grouping” of smaller genres (5). This metagenre encompasses a range of different musical styles, such as House, Trance, Garage, and numerous others. Given the range and breadth of genres, sub-genres and styles that can be encompassed within the overall category of “electronica,” it could be said to be oversimplifying the musical culture to discuss this classification as one distinct category. However, as Demers goes on to acknowledge, there are certain overarching characteristics that can be used to classify music into the electronica category or metagenre. These include the use of electronic instruments or equipment; the construction and reproduction of musical sounds; and a rejection of “institutional affiliations” in favour of a focus on “pioneering individuals” (Demers 7). Also included in these characteristics is, as I discuss later in this chapter, the use of reduced lyrical content and repetitive electronic sounds. In addition to these characteristics, which serve to bring together a number of musical styles under one banner, the term “electronica” is helpful for describing, as I do in this chapter, music which may not neatly fit into one specific category. It is also a term most widely used by music listeners *outside* of specific communities: the detailed, technical differences between House, Garage, Jungle or EDM (Electronic Dance Music), for example, are not widely known outside of those who actively participate in music listening activities. The term “electronica,” therefore, can be used to describe music that fits within the broad electronic metagenre, in order to evoke generic characteristics or associations. Furthermore, the music in the films I discuss here does not readily fit into a specific genre category. This is due in part to its status as, first and foremost, film music, which has different aims to dance music or music for personal listening. I therefore employ the terms “electronica,” “electronic music,” and sometimes “techno” to refer to the music in these films, so as not to incorrectly ascribe meaning onto individual musical moments, while maintaining the overall generic classification.

This chapter begins its discussion of electronica by examining the significant position electronica holds within French musical culture. Thanks to the emergence and rapid global popularity of “Le French Touch” in the early 1990s,

electronica is particularly resonant with French audiences, whilst also having a French association for global audiences. For this reason, this chapter argues that in French cinema, electronica functions in similar ways to folk music: the genre is imbued with a particular kind of nationalist nostalgia that causes the genre to occupy a space between the new and the old; between traditional and modern. At the same time, the electronic genre offers particular significance for female listeners, who are able to dance freely to a genre that does not emphasise the objectification of the female body; the electronic genre therefore provides more opportunity for personal expression. This chapter explores these meanings, focusing on the work of Céline Sciamma. I have already discussed her third girlhood film, *Bande de filles*, in Chapter 2's exploration of how artists can help bring specific girlhood experiences into a global context. In this chapter, however, I focus on the originally composed music for the films, provided by French DJ ParaOne.

Through the analysis of these two specific genres, this chapter demonstrates how existing associations attached to genre classifications can be projected onto the film environment and impact how we, as spectators, interact with the characters on screen. Chapters 1 and 2 discussed how associations attached to pre-existing music can help to open further avenues of identification between the characters and the spectator; this chapter applies the same concepts to genre categories, exploring how, when certain genres are included on a film's soundtrack, the stereotypes and expectations attached to them can be exploited to communicate meaning. Genres have the ability to appeal to memory, through pre-existing stereotypes and expectations, which subsequently layers on to other musical and extra-musical meanings, and therefore provides additional means of identification for the spectator.

Repetition and Remembrance: Folk Music in *Tout est pardonné* and *Un Amour de jeunesse*

Hansen-Løve's first and third films, *Tout est pardonné / All is Forgiven* (2007), and *Un Amour de jeunesse / Goodbye, First Love* (2011), provide useful case studies for the concerns of this chapter, due to their privileging of the folk music genre in youth films which, as I discussed in Chapter 1, are usually culturally associated with pop or rock music. Indeed, when folk music is used in film, it is often employed as a specifically national signifier, using traditional or

stereotypical instrumentation to evoke a sense of setting or time. In her discussion of American country music (a subgenre of folk) in film, Barbara Ching argues that the music comes to “represent the best qualities [...] of the United States,” writing that “when mainstream directors integrate country music into their narratives, they [...] assume that country music bears a burden of particularly American authenticity” (202-04). The use of traditional instruments and folk sounds to evoke “authentic” settings in film is of course not limited to American country music: musical stereotypes are widely employed by filmmakers and composers as markers of place, exploiting pre-existing stereotypes to help transport the spectator to a certain location. This concept of “authenticity” is particularly suggestive in the context of Hansen-Løve’s work: the director has herself argued that she tries to avoid “artificial” uses of music in her film, preferring to evoke emotions “in a way that is justified” rather than “manipulat[ing]” viewers with music that is “injected in the film to make you feel something” (Hubert, *Interview Magazine*). At the heart of Hansen-Løve’s musical technique, then, is an “authentic” use of music that somehow differs from other film music. What is particularly interesting about Hansen-Løve’s use of folk music in her films, is the highlighting of non-French music: while place and cultural identity are important in all three of the films I examine here, the music is largely not employed as a cultural marker. Instead, the music is employed as a means of communicating the protagonists’ feelings to the spectator, providing an intimate insight into the girls’ experiences that moves beyond the verbal. As Fiona Handyside writes, the music in Hansen-Løve’s films (also referencing the music in Sciamma’s first three films, which I discuss later in this chapter) “functions to articulate feelings, intensities, and desires that can’t be named by the girls themselves, translating their emotions and sensations into sounds” (“Emotion, Girlhood and Music” 122). In the discussion that follows, I examine how the music in Hansen-Løve’s films achieves this translation of emotions, and explore how the genre of the music specifically relates to the positioning of her characters and, importantly, the positioning of the spectator in relation to them.

During the opening sequence of her first feature film, *Tout est pardonné*, we view a series of snapshot-like town scenes as the camera moves, as if on a vehicle, through the streets (fig. 3.1). At the same time, we hear the gentle introduction to Matt McGinn’s folk lullaby “Coorie Doon.” Each shot, strikingly devoid of human presence, lasts only a few seconds, before cutting to the next,



Fig. 3.1 *Tout est pardonné*. The opening sequence.

contrasting the transience of the picture with the lilting continuity of the soundtrack. This immediately foregrounds the music in the spectator's audiovisual experience: the lack of visible action draws attention to the film's audible elements. The song, characterised by McGinn's solo voice and its simple, lilting guitar accompaniment, comprises soft, wistful melodies that are representative

of both Celtic folk song and traditional lullabies, creating a sense of nostalgic longing despite the lack of visible characters. This sense of nostalgia or remembrance is stereotypical of the folk genre: due to folk music's development as a genre, it is intrinsically related to the past and, subsequently, the remembering of that past. As Philip Bohlman writes, the genre's origins in the oral storytelling tradition means that its development is based on the "repetition [and] recreation" of what has come before (53). In order for music to be classified as "folk," then, it must draw, at least in part, on the past. As such, the folk genre is imbued with a sense of nostalgia: the music is accompanied by the expectation of memory, through which the listener is invited to enter in to, and to be aware of, the folk tradition from which the music originates. In Chapter 1, I discussed the "listening histories" created by cover songs, which recreate an existing piece of music. A similar history is evoked in folk, which recreates (or adapts) existing musical techniques, sounds, or harmonies in order to develop as a genre. As Philip Brophy writes, folk music is often used in film to evoke "countrified clichés" such as "the resilience of the peasant, the strength of the extended family, the beauty of the land, the whimsy of life" (140), all of which are the products of a certain nostalgia, the looking back towards a seemingly simpler time, and evoke a nostalgic longing for what might have been. Allan Moore's examination of folk music's perceived authenticity supports this argument, writing how folk music privileges "anachronistic modes of performance" in order to maintain a kind of traditional "authenticity" that opposes "the modern" (212). Similarly, Geoff Mann writes how country music evokes "a nostalgic rural home [...] against [...] the empty city life" (85): folk music evokes a collective, cultural memory of times past. In the opening sequence of *Tout est pardonné*, then, the music helps to surround the spectator with nostalgic signification that gives an impression of "pastness." Combined with the washed-out, desaturated colours of the images, the music creates a sensation of looking back, as if through a flashback or window to the past, and contrasting to the urban images we see. After the opening snapshots have ended, the music continues for a few moments, ensuring the continuation of this nostalgic "pastness." In the next scene, in which the young Pamela (Victoire Rousseau) plays with her father Victor (Paul Blain), the sensations evoked by the music continue and are, therefore, inflected onto the scene (fig. 3.2). As such, the spectator views these first scenes always with the sense of "looking back" or "pastness."



Fig. 3.2 *Tout est pardonné*. Victor and Pamela play together.

In his exploration of the interaction between memory and place in the visual media, Victor Burgin, drawing on Ellie Ragland-Sullivan's work on Lacan's theory of *rémemoration*, notes how our construction of past events can be gleaned from experiences and interpretations in the present. This interpretation of the present to create a narrative of the past develops a kind of memory that is situated "between the unconscious and consciousness" (272). It is this kind of signification, located simultaneously in the present and the past, that is created in the opening of *Tout est pardonné*: while we watch the film in the present, the visual and aural clues provided by the film encourage an experience of the narrative as if it were in the past. The music here plays with the spectator's perception of time and chronology: while it would seem that the narrative progresses in a linear, chronological fashion—Pamela is young at the beginning of the film and gets older as it progresses—this linearity is complicated by the distinct nostalgia evoked by the folk music during the opening sequence. We experience this opening scene as if in flashback, even though no other narrative events have taken place. Later in the film, when the spectator is specifically aligned with the older, adolescent Pamela (Constance Rousseau), this confirms and validates this memory-like evocation in the opening sequence. The song therefore helps to locate the spectator in the "present" of the film's narrative—that is, in the period of Pamela's adolescence—and situates the opening scenes of Pamela's childhood in the past. As such, the music at the beginning of *Tout est pardonné* aligns the spectator with adolescent Pamela, allowing us to experience

her memories of her father from her perspective, before she even appears on screen.



Fig. 3.3 *Tout est pardonné*. Pamela looks out of the window.

The song's nostalgic connotations, their link to Pamela's childhood relationship with her father, and the affective responses they evoke from the spectator mean that, when the song returns later in the film, it is imbued with a double layer of meaning. No longer does the song merely reference feelings of nostalgia and memory in a general way, it also appeals specifically to the spectator's memories of the beginning of the film and our responses to the opening sequence. After Pamela has been reunited with her now-estranged father and begins her journey home, the camera follows her gaze as she looks out of the train window (fig. 3.3). Mirroring the opening credit sequence, we see glimpses of architecture and townscapes through the trees, while we hear a reprisal of McGinn's song on the soundtrack (fig. 3.4). Once again, the transience represented by the urban environment is contrasted with the continuous music we hear. Emma Wilson has noted how, in this sequence, the song's "masculinity and wistfulness [...] attach it to Pamela's father and his unspeakable loss and love [...] All too easily the words speak of Pamela's separation from and re-finding of her father, of her sense of his memory buried" ("Precarious Lives" 283). This re-affirms the song's link to Pamela's relationship with her father established at the beginning of the film. The repetition of the song aids in its nostalgic signification, and allows the music to function through more than its lyrics and melody. Paul Sutton's theory of filmic "afterwardsness" (after Laplanche's

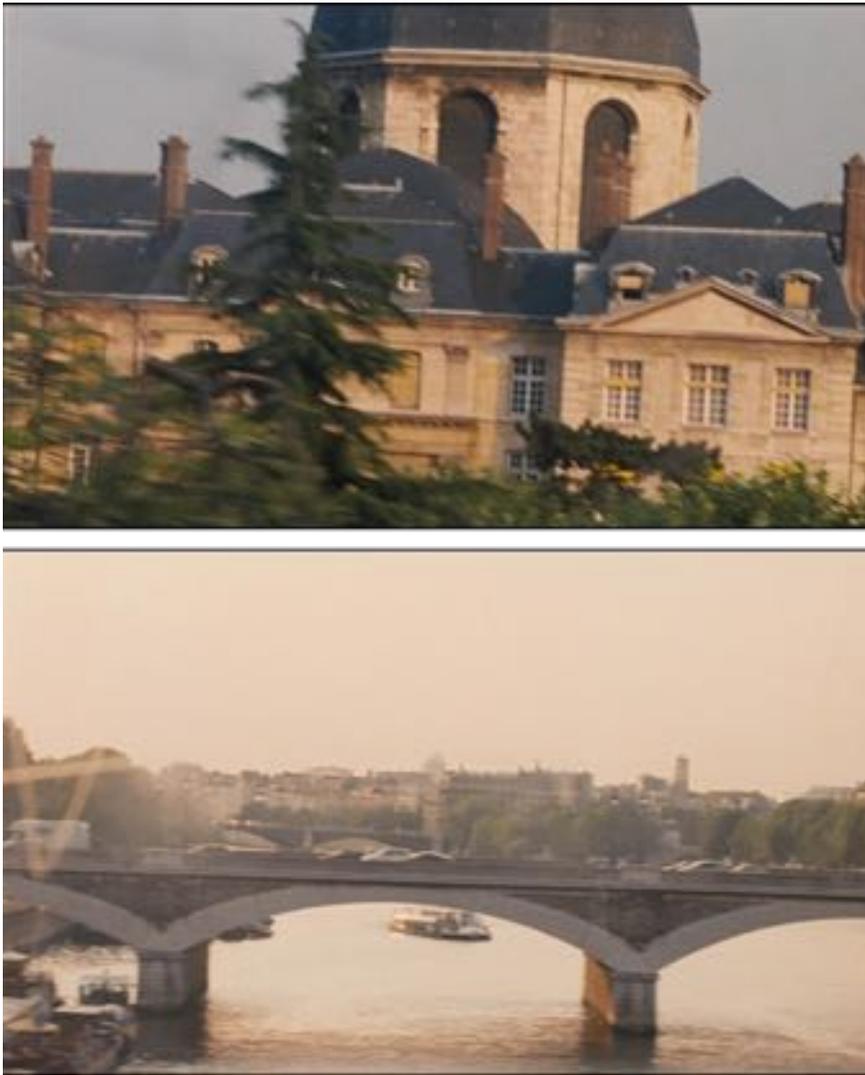


Fig. 3.4 *Tout est pardonné*. The views from the train.

translation of Freud's *Nachträglichkeit*) provides a useful starting point for explaining the effects of the song's repetition. Sutton writes how, when watching a film, the spectator is "not only [...] left with memories from, and of, the film after it has ended, but any number of [...] signifiers or messages may have been unconsciously recorded, requiring subsequent de- and re-translation" (386). While Sutton's focus remains on existing memories that are "re-translated" by the film experience as a whole, it is the concept of continual re-formulation of memory that is pertinent to this discussion of *Tout est pardonné*. When we watch a film, our memories are not confined to "before watching" and "after watching;" instead, we are subjected to a continual state of re-translation, recycling, and re-formulation throughout the film experience. In *Tout est pardonné*, the fact that we have heard the song before, combined with the visually similar images of landscapes viewed in movement, activates our memories of the earlier sequence in the film: not only are we invited, in the beginning of the film, to experience the

images *as if* in memory, in this second sequence, we are encouraged to remember the specific earlier scene, when Pamela and her father were together. Through the music, we are reminded of the opening sequence, and so experience this moment at the same time, and in the same way, as Pamela. While Pamela does not speak or communicate these feelings of remembrance verbally, the spectator is afforded an insight into her emotions and feelings through the music. Via the repetition of the music, combined with the nostalgic nature of the song itself, the film offers the spectator an experience that mirrors Pamela's experience, reinforcing our alignment with her as a character, and allowing for her emotions to be communicated. Just as Pamela remembers her childhood with longing and wistful nostalgia, so do we. It is to this end that the music here serves to articulate Pamela's specific desires in a way that is not expressed through dialogue or action.

A similar use of repetition can be seen in Hansen-Løve's third film, *Un Amour de jeunesse*, in which folk music is again prominently featured on the soundtrack. Like *Tout est pardonné*, the film focuses on female adolescence and loss, following the story of Camille (Lola Créton) and her journey after the absence of her first love, Sullivan (Sebastian Urzendowsky). In the middle of the film, when Camille is returning from her first date with her architecture teacher, Lorenz (Magne Håvard-Brekke), we hear the wistful folk melody of "The Water" by contemporary folk artists Johnny Flynn and Laura Marling. Although contemporary, and closer to pop music than more "traditional" folk music, the song demonstrates many of the stylistic and tonal features prevalent in the folk genre, such as simple, acoustic instrumentation, a memorable melody and simple harmonies. By "simple," here, I mean harmonies that contain few dissonances or "clashing" chords, and where the two melody lines move in the same direction: either up or down in pitch. The majority of listeners will be able to identify the music as less complex than other pieces, even though they may not understand the technicalities of what makes it "simple." Musicological terminology here helps to give vocabulary to the "feelings" and unconscious knowledge understood by listeners. I explore musical simplicity in more detail in Chapter 4, which examines how "simple" music evokes a certain youthfulness. In *Un Amour de jeunesse*, the music suggests a similar wistfulness and sense of nostalgia as "Coorie Doon" in *Tout est pardonné*. There is, in the use of a song such as "The Water," performed by contemporary artists in a neo-traditional style, the creation of a certain musical

genealogy, which speaks to the past while remaining rooted in the present. In Chapter 1, I discussed how cover songs, as reworkings of existing music, invite listeners to enter into “listening histories,” and provide “access” to the past. A similar effect is achieved here with “The Water,” which invites the listener to enter into the folk tradition, drawing on that which has come before, and linking the past with the present. In doing so, the song disrupts the film’s temporality, by referring back to a time that has not been depicted on screen. In his essay, Sutton describes how “afterwardsness” is characterised by this type of temporal disruption, arguing that it “open[s] up” a film’s narrative space, and provides the spectator with “a participatory space that moves beyond the traditional spatial and temporal orientations of the film and of the cinematic experience” (403). Hansen-Løve’s use of folk music disrupts the temporality of the narrative, inviting the spectator to remember—though it is not necessarily clear *what* is being remembered—and participate in the nostalgic identity formation of the characters. In this particular sequence in *Un Amour de jeunesse*, the music interacts directly with the characters and the expression of their emotions. The song is initially heard as source music, coming from the car radio to which Camille and Lorenz are listening. It plays softly for a few moments before Camille speaks, its nostalgic connotations seemingly affecting her in a similar way to the spectator. “J’ai aucune nostalgie du passé,” she insists, “J’attends tout de l’avenir.” Lorenz, however, sees through her somewhat unconvincing denial: “Faut pas raisonner comme ça. A ton âge, rien se perd,” he reasons, acknowledging the importance, both for Camille as a character, and the film as a whole, of remembrance and nostalgia. Here, the music both reinforces the emotion evoked by the dialogue, and also acts as a springboard from which Camille can continue her emotional recovery. The continued presence of the music, even after Camille and Lorenz have finished talking, foregrounds it within the spectator’s experience in much the same way as in the opening sequence of *Tout est pardonné*: the lack of dialogue and other sound effects means that our attention is drawn to the music, reinforcing its importance and cementing the links between the song and the characters’ emotions. When the song is playing in the car, we hear it—and therefore experience its nostalgic effects—at the same time as Camille. Once again, the music helps to position the spectator in alignment with the protagonist. The wistfulness of the music prompts Camille’s identification and subsequent denial of her nostalgia for the past, and simultaneously prompts

the same feelings in the spectator. We are therefore able to see through her denial like Lorenz: the song permits an insight into Camille's feelings and articulates her emotion.

As the scene progresses, the music continues to dominate our attention: when the shot changes, and Camille leaves the car (and therefore the audible range of the car radio), the music remains, transitioning from diegetic to non-diegetic. This shifts the music's focus from the characters on screen to the spectators, allowing it to function in new ways. In Chapter 1, I discussed how, when music transitions between the diegesis and the non-diegesis in this way, it is able to offer direct spatial access to the characters. When we hear the music in this sequence as source music, it readily connects to Camille and her emotions; when it moves out of the diegesis, it connects more readily to the spectator and brings us into contact with those emotions, therefore allowing access to the feelings experienced by Camille without the need for vocal expression. The nostalgic associations formed before the change of shot remain, but the song also begins to take on further associations specifically for the spectator. Until this point in the narrative, the film focuses on Camille's intense relationship with Sullivan, followed by her long period of recovery after he leaves. This moment in the film, however, represents a turning point for Camille, as she begins to accept the possibility of falling in love again. This narrative turning point, combined with the music's transition from the diegesis to the non-diegesis—which helps to foreground the music in the spectator's experience—serves to attach the song to these feelings of possibility. The song becomes imbued with positive associations that layer on top of the nostalgic signification already evoked by its genre and style, demonstrating a transition for Camille, and simultaneously for the spectator. As such, the spectator is brought closer to Camille's experiences through the music. Subsequently, when the song returns at the end of the film, the spectator is once again offered a double layer of signification: we are simultaneously nostalgic for the time Camille spent with Sullivan at the beginning of the film, and also provided with a sense of her independence and the closure she obtains following her new relationship with Lorenz. As in *Tout est pardonné*, the end sequence of *Un Amour de jeunesse* provides not only a repetition of music, but also of the visual: Camille has travelled to the Ardèche before, the first time during a holiday with Sullivan. In contrast to the repetition in *Tout est pardonné*, however, it is not the combination of both image and music together that is repeated: the

first visit to the Ardèche is accompanied by different music. As such, the spectator is bombarded with conflicting, but nevertheless intricately linked, signification that relies on reminiscence and memory. The song itself, as I have discussed above, provides a general evocation of nostalgia through its genre and style. This signification surrounds the spectator and invites us to remember past events. Combined with the image, which reminds us of the teenage lovers' summer together at the beginning of the film, the music evokes a sense of nostalgia for what once was. However, the music, taken from a scene of transition for Camille, reminds the viewer of Camille's acceptance, closure, and subsequent happiness. Thus, the music is able to alter the spectator's perception of what could be a distinctly melancholy scene—in which Camille revisits a location filled with reminders of the relationship she lost—into one filled with hope and possibility: the music becomes, like the film itself, about survival as much as it is about loss. In this way, the music serves to articulate Camille's experiences and emotions for the spectator. We are invited here, as in the abovementioned sequence, to experience the emotions simultaneously with the character: just as Camille remembers her first visit to the Ardèche with Sullivan, and is able to move on and recover, so we remember, and are surrounded with the positive signification brought by the song. The music brings us into contact with Camille's emotions, surrounding the spectator with references taken from the film itself as well as from the context of the song.

In these two examples, the folk songs allow the viewer an insight into the protagonists' lives and emotions, through a layering of nostalgic signification achieved both specifically, through the repetition of the song within the film, and generally, through the use of the folk genre and its connotations. This general evocation of nostalgia by the folk genre appears throughout the two films I discuss here. In Chapter 1, I explored the links between nostalgia and the representation of youth, arguing that using older songs, such as those in *LOL*, can elicit a nostalgic remembering of the spectator's own adolescence, which facilitates alignment and identification with youthful characters. This relationship between nostalgia and youthfulness can be clearly seen in Hansen-Løve's films, in which the filmmaker characterises adolescent girlhood as a particularly nostalgic experience. In these portraits of adolescence, Hansen-Løve positions girlhood as both near and distant: it is both rooted in the present as a time of transition from childhood (the past) to adulthood (the future), but is also fixed to the past in some

way; it is something to be remembered. Rather than using older songs, as in *LOL*, Hansen-Løve employs the folk genre to elicit this sense of nostalgia from the spectator. Rather than employing older pop music to position the spectator, Hansen-Løve uses folk music—sometimes, as in the case of “The Water” in *Un Amour de jeunesse*, by contemporary artists—to help immerse the spectator in a nostalgic, girlhood mode. Indeed, all of the music in *Un Amour de jeunesse*, though some may not be specifically categorised as “folk,” features folk idioms and instrumentation, thus evoking the sense of wistfulness that is produced by this genre. The inclusion of Violeta Parra’s Latin American folk tunes, for example, featuring Parra’s solo voice with guitar accompaniment, evoke a natural sense of longing thanks to their “folk-ness,” even though they are fast and upbeat in tempo. Not only do these tracks function specifically, serving to remind us (and Camille) of Sullivan’s recent departure to South America, and therefore providing a vehicle of reminiscence and loss, they also contribute to the overall musical aesthetic of the film, helping to position the girlhood story portrayed on screen as distinctly nostalgic. The folk music in Hansen-Løve’s films therefore functions not only to provide an insight into the girls’ specific feelings and experiences as they occur, but also to contribute to the creation of nostalgic layering of meaning, which, when paired with the image-track, combines this nostalgia with a distinctly youthful and girl(y) space. The music helps us to understand Hansen-Løve’s positioning of girlhood as a nostalgic moment, and aids in our identification with the characters experiencing that moment.

Le “French Touch:” Electronica, Frenchness, and Modern Authenticity

Hansen-Løve’s fourth film, *Eden* (2014), marks a move away from the stories of girlhood told in her first three films. This trend is mirrored in the work of Sciamma, who announced after the release of *Bande de filles* that she would be moving on to other topics (Rossi, *HungerTV*). Discussing this concept of a “girlhood trilogy” with reference to Hansen-Løve (and Sofia Coppola), Handyside writes how, for young female directors, the trilogy structure “encourage[s] identification between the self-fashioned brand of the girl director and her films [and] reinforce[s] the sense that we are gaining insight into the personal universes of the women who made them” (“Nameless Trilogies” 1). Hansen-Løve’s first three films, then, despite sharing no narrative plot, frame an autobiographical story of girlhood. As such, after *Un Amour de jeunesse*, which the filmmaker

describes as her “first film, which I turned into my last,” she made the decision to “start again” and move away from girlhood narratives (Délorme 52). Catherine Wheatley discusses this concept of new beginnings with specific reference to Hansen-Løve’s films, arguing that, through their depictions of vocation, they “open out onto questions of the post-secular” (“Vocation and the Quest for God”). Discussing how, despite the fact that Hansen-Løve’s films are not “about” religion, they nevertheless make use of religious imagery, Wheatley argues that they depict a “loss of religious belief through metaphors of the Fall,” usually represented by the “death or disappearance of a significant male” that results in “a loss of innocence” (“Vocation and the Quest for God”). In *Un Amour de jeunesse*, for example, shortly before Sullivan leaves for South America, the two teenagers “make love in the grass under a cherry tree before eating its fruit (presumably an apple tree would have been too obvious)” (“Vocation and the Quest for God”). Perhaps, then, for Hansen-Løve, in whose films girlhood is marked by a “loss of innocence,” this turn away from girl subjectivities is a kind of re-birth, the chance to begin again after the Fall represented in her girlhood narratives. Hansen-Løve nevertheless remains close to her own past in her fourth film, telling the story of her brother, Sven, and his experiences in the French music industry during the later 1980s and 1990s. As such, the filmmaker continues in *Eden* to privilege music as a means of communication, as well as, interestingly for my purposes in this chapter, to work through the different aspects of music’s genericity. Above, I discussed how music genres can be classified according to musical convention, scene, industry etc. It is possible to see how electronica fits within all of these categories in *Eden*, which places great emphasis on the blossoming techno culture during the late 20th century, and the people and places that allowed it to flourish. While Hansen-Løve chooses a different genre of music from her previous films, however, she still positions the music in *Eden* as specifically nostalgic, aided by the film’s basis in her own past.

It should be noted that this nostalgic position could be applied to any film depicting a specific musical culture and era: the nostalgia *Eden* has for 90s techno could be replicated in a film focusing on, for example, 1920s jazz, 1950s rock ‘n’ roll, or 1970s punk. However, what *Eden* captures, is the nostalgia attached to this specific moment in the development of the electronic music genre, and the French specificity of this moment. The film takes place during a key time in France’s emergence as a global exporter of the techno genre. “Le

French Touch,” as it came to be known, began to emerge during the early 1990s, before enjoying worldwide popularity during the very end of the 20th century and into the 21st. As Martin James notes, “[i]n the final years of the 20th century, the dance music emerging from France suddenly seemed to be everywhere” (7). Indeed, French electronica continues to enjoy worldwide popularity today: Daft Punk, by far the most successful of the “French Touch” artists, has achieved top 20 albums across the world, with their most recent album, *Random Access Memories* (2013), selling over 3 million copies worldwide and topping the charts in numerous countries, including France, the UK and the USA. Electronica and techno, therefore, having evolved and developed from the spread of the “French Touch” movement, have a specifically French connection. In his discussion of the success of the emerging genre in the 1990s, Chris Warne notes that critics “often fell back on occasionally rather simplistic notions of ‘Frenchness’ [...] the producers of the ‘French touch’ are overwhelmingly characterised as cool, sophisticated and sexy” (56). This “Frenchness” helped to solidify techno as a specifically French genre, both globally and locally; the international recognition of the music of the “French touch” contributed to its spread from Paris to other cities and to the “authentication” of the genre as a “culture in its own right” within the country itself (Warne 57). Electronic music, then, has a particular resonance with French audiences, and a particularly French association with other viewers. That Hansen-Løve, who has previously used traditional folk, chooses to employ electronica in this film, highlights the nostalgic, almost folk-like connection the genre has in the French context. Indeed, in an interview, the filmmaker notes the contrast “between the modernity and electronic music, dance music and at the same time a kind of naïve and idealistic approach to the world” (Rapold, *Film Comment*). It is this nostalgic idealism that is represented in *Eden* through its depiction of techno culture. The film, therefore, automatically faces the past; it is a mediated re-telling of events that have already happened, from the point of view of those who experienced it first-hand. This nostalgic signification gives the electronic music, like the folk music I have discussed above, a certain authenticity, which is made contemporary by the modernity of the genre itself. In all of her films, Hansen-Løve combines the modern or, to return to Phil Powrie’s terminology regarding song language, “future-facing” music with a distinctly nostalgic, “past-facing” sensibility (“Soundscapes of Loss” 541-42). Music and its layers of meaning are therefore used to create a rich temporality that moves

beyond a simple chronological progression. The added “Frenchness” of electronica contributes to this “past-facing” nostalgia, but also offers a resonance of national identity. This national specificity helps to locate the film within a certain context, something that is highlighted in Hansen-Løve’s work. In her girlhood films discussed above, the folk music we hear accompanies the protagonists on a journey, both literally between locations and figuratively as they navigate their girlhood experience and come of age. In *Un Amour de jeunesse*, for example, we follow Camille from Paris to the Ardèche, Berlin, Dessau, and Copenhagen, all on her spiritual journey to recover from the loss of her first love. Similarly, in *Tout est pardonné*, the narrative begins in Austria before Pamela and her mother relocate to Paris, in addition to the emphasis placed on travel throughout. While the girls in these films may not move permanently in a physical sense (both girls remain in Paris), they nevertheless undergo transformations throughout the films. In *Eden*, however, Sven ends the film as he started—as a struggling DJ. He does not undergo the same kind of transformation as the girls in the previous two films. That he is accompanied not by folk music, but by electronica, is apt: just as the music is fixed, as a French national export, so Sven remains fixed throughout the film.

This sense of immobility is echoed in Sciamma’s *Naissance des pieuvres / Water Lilies* (2007). The girls in this film, while they do “come of age” in some ways, do not undergo the same transformation as those in Hansen-Løve’s films. Indeed, the girls in this film also travel very little, remaining in the same town throughout. Taking place over the course of one summer, the film tells the story of Marie (Pauline Acquart) and her friend Anne (Louise Blachère), as they try to make sense of growing up, attraction, and friendship, all within the claustrophobic setting of a swimming pool in Cergy-Pontoise. They are accompanied throughout by an electronic score composed by Jean-Baptiste de Laubier, better known as DJ ParaOne. While the music is largely machine-generated, and feels frenetic and fast-paced, it is nevertheless, like the music in *Eden*, firmly fixed within the French national identity. This is reflected in the girls’ immobility: this film ends where it begins, in the swimming pool, and little has changed in the protagonists’ lives. These films, then, which contrast modernity and authenticity, transformation and mobility, reflect these contradictions in the way their music is used. Folk, associated with slow-moving, rarely-changing tradition, accompanies the girls on transformative journeys. Electronica, on the other hand, with its frantic, fast-

paced modernity, is used when the characters remain immobile or end where they begin, which is only emphasised by the genre's fixed national connotations.

Techno, Youth and Gender in the films of Céline Sciamma

In addition to this cultural resonance and fixed "Frenchness," the electronic genre is associated largely with young audiences: having entered the mainstream via the rave culture of the 1980s and 1990s, it is naturally associated with youthful activities. As Birgit Richard and Heinz Hermann Kruger note in their exploration of the German techno scene, following the "post-punk era of the mid-1980s [that was] defined by a patchwork of fragmented sub-cultures," techno and dance music became a "mass movement" that brought together millions of "youngsters and post-adolescents in the so-called 'rave nation'" (162). While Richard and Kruger's study is based specifically in the German context, their identification of techno music and rave culture with youth is applicable worldwide, with electronica having a largely young audience base and carrying associations of youth culture. Thus, when this music is used in cinema, it carries these associations with it. Above, in my discussion of Hansen-Løve's films, this concept was applied to folk music, demonstrating how the genre's long-standing associations with nostalgia and memory help to position girlhood as a distinctly nostalgic moment characterised by intimate longing. A similar understanding can be applied here, to electronic music. When we hear electronic music in a film, it is all the easier to attach to young protagonists due to its associations with youth audiences. This therefore facilitates the creation of a specifically youthful film-space with which the spectator is brought into contact.

As well as its youthful connotations, electronic music has specific ramifications with regard to gender, due to the genre's reliance on dance as a means of listener appreciation. Dance is an important part of techno music culture (Richard and Kruger 162-63), and this has significant effects on the genre's consumption. Ben Neill writes how, in rave culture, "notions of performer and audience are completely erased and redefined" (4). Where, in other popular music genres, the performer has a key role in the identification of a track and the establishing of an "image" for the music, in electronic music, the listener takes precedence, and the artist's role becomes the act of "channel[ing] the energy of the crowd and creat[ing] the proper backdrop for their social interaction" (4). Listeners' reactions and responses to the music are therefore just as, if not more,

important as the creation of the music itself. This has specific ramifications for techno artists, who, as Hansen-Løve shows in *Eden* through her featuring of Daft Punk struggling to get into exclusive clubs, are often more anonymous than artists from other genres. Techno, then, privileges the creation of spaces where listeners are free to explore the music through dance as a means of self-expression and appreciation. With this comes a breakdown of social division: the removal of specific artist identities and the privileging of collective dance environments means that dancers are united regardless of their differences (Richard and Kruger 162). This has particular consequences with regard to gender: while electronica has always been a male-dominated genre in terms of artists and producers,⁴ its audiences are not notably segregated in this way. Richard and Kruger argue that, despite the gendered history of dance styles, techno, “with its emphasis on the sheer fun of dancing and on body movement [...] is a less misogynist culture” than other styles such as hip-hop or rap (168-69). Victoria Armstrong contends that techno offers the opportunity for female emancipation, writing that “la scène techno était susceptible d’offrir un cadre pour les femmes désireuses de transcender les rôles féminins traditionnels” (33). Techno, therefore, does something to dance that liberates it from usual gendered constraints and stereotypes. Where female dance is usually bound up in stereotypical associations and judgements, techno provides a space for women to dance for their own gains and self-expression. In their 2007 study of popular music lyrics, Brook Bretthauer et al explore how the lyrics of popular songs (a sample taken from the Billboard “Hot 100” each year between 1998 and 2003) promote the objectification of women. They note how in nearly 20% of the songs analysed, women are viewed “as objects for men to comment on, look at, even touch, hit, and eat,” and how over 15% of the sample include explicit messages of physical violence against women (40). This is in addition to the general emphasis in pop song lyrics on the “physical characteristics” of women and girls (30). These lyrics, as a means of “teach[ing] social norms” (32), communicate certain messages to the listeners, altering the way that listeners respond to both the song itself, and others around them. The lyrics carry with them expectations of certain models of behaviour, including gendered and sexualised norms such

⁴ According to a study by media outlet *Vice* in 2016, all twenty-four electronic music festivals in the first half of that year featured less than 50% female-identifying artists, with some featuring as low as 3.2% (Friedlander, *Vice*).

as the objectification of women; the existence and validation of the patriarchal hierarchy; and the promiscuity of women who dance. Listeners are invited, through the lyric content of popular songs, to objectify other dancing women in the way that women are objectified in the song itself.

However, in most electronic music, there are no lyrics to carry such expectations for the listener. As such, electronica has the ability to remove this invitation to judge or objectify, even though dance is an important part of techno culture. Combined with this lack of lyrics is the freedom of the instrumentation and production methods in the genre: synthesizers and computer-generated music tracks require far less musical training than other, acoustic musical instruments, and allow for a wider variety of sounds than is possible with live instruments. As such, there are far fewer existing assumptions attached to the orchestration or musical features themselves in electronica. This means that assumptions come largely from contextual and cultural information, rather than musically from the tracks themselves. Where in other genres, such as hip-hop or rap, lyrics often express the hyper-sexualised expectations of female dancers, placing emphasis on the appearance of the body, and the sexual availability of those who flaunt it, in the techno genre this is not the case. Indeed, Richard and Kruger describe rave culture as “a culture of sexual avoidance,” a space in which “women can dance without fear of sexual harassment” (169). Angela McRobbie links the perceived safety of rave culture with both the fear of AIDS among young people, especially during the height of rave culture in the 1980s and 1990s, and the symbolic “sealing off” of the body through accessories, such as whistles or lollies that “insulat[e] the body from ‘invasion’:” even though dress codes associated with techno are often sexualised, with minimal body coverage, the “protective” clothing and accessories worn on the dance floor mean that women can be both “sociab[le]” and “self-sufficien[t]” (*Postmodernism* 169). This is further emphasised in the clothing associated with the German techno scene, which incorporates crop tops and other sexualised garments paired with combat trousers, large boots, or accessories such as chains and straps. Techno music therefore offers women a space to dance—a space for self-expression—that is not restricted by pre-existing expectations of gender norms. Thus, electronic music lends itself to a girl specificity: by combining youthful associations with this freedom from gender constraints, electronica provides a canvas for girl

expression that brings us closer to a youthful subjectivity but does not invite pre-judgement or assumptions.

Sciamma's films are useful, here, due to their foregrounding of the girlhood experience as non-verbal, and their emphasis on other audio-visual methods for exploring their girls' experiences. *Naissance des pieuvres*, for example, uses electronica for both its underscoring and its source music, and privileges music over dialogue as a primary means of communicating the characters' experiences. Indeed, the girls in *Naissance des pieuvres* rarely express themselves verbally. As Tim Palmer writes, in the film Sciamma "removes dialogue and limits her actors [...] to remote, doleful stares. *Water Lilies* is a film that unfolds—often up to ten minutes at a stretch—[...] with no verbal exchanges" (37). This lack of dialogue has the potential to distance the spectator from the characters: with less verbal expression, the girls risk becoming objects to look at, rather than characters with which we can identify. However, it is the music in this film that offers us an opportunity to enter the girls' world, providing avenues of identification that were previously closed: throughout the film, the music provides crucial clues for understanding the girls' experiences. As Handyside writes:

The music used by Sciamma [...] works to give form and expression to girls' emotions [...] it is a disembodied, non-identical expression of their feelings [that] simultaneously offer[s] us insight into the heightened, disoriented sensations of the girls' encounters with intimacy, but allow[s] the girls to retain their opacity and privacy. ("Emotion, Girlhood and Music" 121)

The "privacy" that comes from the lack of dialogue, then, is simultaneously upheld and reversed: the girls are not obliged to vocalise their feelings—indeed, the occasions when the girls do talk about their feelings to each other are invariably awkward and marked with uncertainty—but at the same time the music (which often comes from outside of the girls' physical world) allows us, as spectators, to comprehend their experiences. Indeed, through removing exchanges of dialogue, Sciamma ensures that our attention remains firmly on the available musical expression.

In the opening sequence of the film, as the opening credits begin, we hear the sound of girls' voices. None of the voices is clear; instead, we catch snatches of conversation from an otherwise incomprehensible rabble of noise. Visually, the screen remains predominantly black, showing the opening credits, while a single bright tentacle of colour stretches across the screen from the left-hand side (fig.



Fig. 3.5 *Naissance des pieuvres*. The opening credits.

3.5). As the tentacles reach the text, ParaOne's electronic score pulses in, a simple, two-note synthesiser pattern repeated over the voices. There is very little difference, once the music comes in, between the volume of the vocal noise and the volume of the music; as a result, they become almost entwined, overlapping and connecting fluidly like the movement of the tentacles on screen. Where, traditionally, dialogue is privileged on a soundtrack, taking precedence over the music and sound effects for reasons of narrative clarity, in the opening sequence of *Naissance des pieuvres*, this is not the case. The lack of clarity in the dialogue is an important factor in this equalising of the dialogue and music tracks: as we are unable to hear individual conversations, they are not privileged in our attempts to understand and process the film as we experience it. As I discussed Chapter 1, Anahid Kassabian has written how, within the three elements of a film's soundtrack, there exists an "attention continuum" whereby the spectator's attention is balanced between dialogue, sound effects, and music, which means that the absence of any one element focuses attention onto one or both of the others (52). In this scene, the music is foregrounded as an alternative means of expression: as the dialogue offers us no more information than the music, both are equally important audio features. After the initial credits, we are provided with a visual confirmation of the source of the voices we hear: in a changing room, a number of girls prepare for a synchronised swimming competition, putting on make-up, changing into costumes, and practising their routines (fig. 3.6). Then, the image, and with it the sound of the girls' voices, disappears, leaving only the



Fig. 3.6 *Naissance des pieuvres*. The girls' changing room.

music to accompany the blank screen. Here, then, where previously music and dialogue have had equal standing, the music now commands our full attention and is foregrounded as the dominant mode of expression. This is reinforced a few moments later when the image shows one of the film's protagonists, Marie, as she walks along the poolside while the audience applauds. We can see the audience's applause, here, but the sound pulses in and out of earshot, giving the impression that we, like the swimmers, are moving in and out of the water. The music, however, remains audible throughout: even when all other sounds are inaudible, we are permitted to hear the music. Handyside notes how, in this sequence, the music's "strangeness and muffled quality expresses the cut off and isolated underwater world of the girls" ("Emotion, Girlhood and Music" 128). However, the music's expressive abilities are not, I argue, limited to the underwater world. The fact that we hear the music from both an underwater (signified by the moments we cannot hear the audience's applause) and an above-water (when the applause is audible) position places the music in the liminal, in-between space occupied by these girls. Like the girl characters in this film, who occupy a world between childhood and adulthood; between the family home and the swimming pool; between land and water, so the music is able to slip between these areas, allowing us contact with the girls' own specific spaces and their intimate encounters within them. Through the music, we are permitted into the mysterious, underwater girl-space of the swimming pool, as well as their experiences above the surface. The music therefore serves as a reminder of the



Fig. 3.7 *Naissance des pieuvres*. Marie and Floriane go to Axe Majeur.

isolated girl-world inhabited by these characters, becoming representative of the sensations and feelings of girlhood found, both figuratively and literally, beneath the surface. Handyside states that the music “plays at moments where the film crosses the portal between the fantastical world of the pool [...] and the ‘normal’ banal world of suburban Paris” (129). When Marie and swimming captain Floriane (Adèle Haenel), sit on the steps of Cergy-Pontoise’s monumental modern artwork, Axe Majeur, for example, ParaOne’s ethereal, pulsing music plays over the top of their conversation, thereby acting as an audible representation of the visible collision of worlds (fig. 3.7). As such, the music permits access to the hidden, underwater world the girls inhabit even while they are located in the “banal” world above the surface. The music provides a means of navigating these worlds, making the girls’ feelings accessible above the surface of the water, and bringing the spectator into contact with the multifaceted nature of their experiences.

In *Naissance des pieuvres*, the music helps to express the girls' world, and provides the spectator with a point of contact that permits access to the characters' sensations and experiences, allowing the spectator to slip between their own (external) subjectivity, and the girls' (internal) film-space. The genre of the music only increases this point of contact: the electronic genre and its associations with youthfulness provide, like the English-language music discussed in Chapter 1, easier points of entry and facilitate spectator identification with the girl characters. The association with youth, carried by electronica due to its origins in rave and dance culture, are brought into the filmic context. Through memory, recognition, and association, the music in *Naissance des pieuvres* attaches to the girls on screen; it is these memories that make the soundtrack so effective for fostering links between the spectator and the protagonists. This attachment, combined with the aforementioned emphasis of music in the aural hierarchy, ensures that music is marked as a primary means of identification and expression. This is further reinforced by the fact that this is the music the girls themselves listen to throughout the film: it is not merely an ethereal, non-diegetic presence, but traverses the boundary between the diegetic and non-diegetic spaces, thereby playing a crucial role in the creation of the "girl" film-world we are invited to enter. We are surrounded continuously by youthful signification, constantly aligning us with the young characters. This is aided and reinforced, of course, by the complete lack of adult characters in the film: in removing signs of parents or other adult influences, Sciamma gives the girls the opportunity to occupy their own space. Through the inclusion of music that the girls would (and do) listen to on their own terms, Sciamma retains a verisimilitude, ensuring that the sounds we hear remain realistic and reflective of the young protagonists.

In a later scene, during a house party hosted by one of the teenagers, we hear a high-speed techno track, again composed by ParaOne, but heard as source music, to which Anne, the socially awkward friend of Marie, dances alone enthusiastically (fig. 3.8). I have already demonstrated how techno music, with its lack of lyrics, permits women and girls the freedom to dance without judgement, liberating female expression from gendered constraints. In *Naissance des pieuvres*, it is Anne who is afforded this chance. When Marie leaves her alone at the party, preoccupied by her own fascination with—and seduction by—Floriane, Anne dances to the music by herself. The camera lingers for a moment, allowing us to watch her wild dancing in the background of the party. In this moment, Anne



Fig. 3.8 *Naissance des pieuvres*. Anne dances alone.

appears to dance for no one else. While her ultimate goal for the party is to attract the attention of a young boy also at the event, here all is forgotten as she allows herself to dance freely. She pauses briefly, attempting to persuade Marie to dance with her. When this attempt fails, Anne continues to dance alone. While she is the only character in shot, here, framed by the window behind her, the camera does not objectify Anne's body. Unlike the synchronised swimming routine in the beginning of the film, in which the camera lingers on the girls' bodies as they move through the water, inviting us intimately into the swim routine, here no emphasis is placed on Anne's body except perhaps her arm movements as she dances. We are shown only her upper body at medium distance, her muted outfit allowing her to almost blend in to her background, and her dancing attracts no glances from other party-goers. The gaze here is de-sexualised: it is a gaze that is observant rather than objectifying; that invites the spectator to witness, rather than judge, her display of youthful abandon. This is made all the more possible by the lyric-free techno playing on the soundtrack. The song, composed by ParaOne, but unnamed and not released separately to the film, contains no suggestion for the listener (both on-screen and among the spectators), which therefore removes any expectation or restriction upon how Anne is able to dance. There is no invitation to judge or objectify Anne's dancing: indeed, it is only when the music stops that Anne's body comes under more scrutiny, when she becomes suddenly conscious of the sweat patches that have formed under her arms and stops dancing, attempting to hide behind a curtain (fig. 3.9). The music in this



Fig. 3.9 *Naissance des pieuvres*. Anne hides behind a curtain.

sequence, then, provides Anne with the opportunity to transcend her usual restrictions and insecurities and dance purely for her own pleasure and enjoyment. Similarly, the spectator is not restricted or distracted by any lyric content, as there are no messages conveyed through the lyrics to affect our navigation of Anne's characterisation. In this way, the music provides us with a blank canvas that does not pre-empt our expectations of the young girl, rather offering a space for our perceptions to develop.

Later in the film, Anne is visited by François, the boy over whom she obsesses throughout the film. After ascertaining that she is alone, François enters the house and the two make love, albeit on François's terms rather than Anne's. Throughout the sequence, there is no music; the only sounds we hear are François's heavy breathing. There is no means for Anne's self-expression, here: she is in the subordinated position, with François on top, and lays passively while he pleasures himself (fig. 3.10). However, when Anne next encounters François, at the second party towards the end of the film, the music has returned. Once again the teenagers listen to electro music and, while Anne does not dance on this occasion, its emancipating qualities are evident. We see Anne and Marie standing at the party, the music playing quietly in the background underneath the general rabble of voices. As François catches Anne's eye and beckons for her to follow, with, as we discover shortly afterwards, the same motives as when he visited her house, the music becomes quieter, suggesting that Anne will be subjected to a similar subordinating experience as before. However, when Anne



Fig. 3.10 *Naissance des pieuvres*. Anne lies passively under François.

nods, the volume of the music begins to increase. Marie asks Anne, “Ça va aller?” and with a small nod, Anne moves out of the frame to follow François. As she does so, the music becomes suddenly louder, with a strong beat similar to the track heard in the earlier party. This loud volume and strong beat act as an audible reflection of Anne’s current strength, and serve as a reminder to the spectator that this time, her encounter with François will be on her terms. Indeed, when François attempts to recreate the earlier scene, Anne manoeuvres herself to a much stronger position over him before spitting in his mouth and leaving. The music, then, serves to reinforce Anne’s strength and power over François. The strong beat reflects this element of her character, while the lack of lyrics provides the space required for her emancipation, as there are once again no pre-existing expectations taken from the song.

The music in *Naissance des pieuvres*, then, provides the girls with a space for self-expression that is simply not found elsewhere in the film-space. It is almost as if we hear music *in lieu* of dialogue, allowing it to fill the gaps left by the lack of vocal expression of the protagonists. To suggest that the music simply replaces the dialogue, however, would be overly simplistic. Instead, the music provides an expression of the girls’ experiences that is at once connotative—just as the girls do not express themselves with words, so the music does not include lyrics or other verbal cues—and symbolic of the girls’ internal emotions. In this way, the music provides both a tangible reinforcement of the girls’ non-verbal communication, and a means of expression. That the music is electronic only

serves to add to this signification. The lack of lyrics found in the techno genre means that the music is able to signify, demonstrated in the opening credit sequence of the film, in different ways from the other songs I have discussed previously in this thesis, relying wholly on the music itself. In *Naissance des pieuvres*, while there is no doubt that the music belongs in the electronic genre, it is much closer to classical film scoring than the songs examined in Chapters 1 and 2, largely because of the lack of lyrics and the frequent use of underscoring that is, at times, easily left unnoticed. ParaOne's score therefore occupies yet another middle ground, between "traditional" film scores and popular soundtracks, which enables it to more fully represent the film's girlhood experience. The music itself, with its discordant pulsing, readily aligns us with the girls' underwater world; the lack of lyrics reflects the lack of dialogue and avoids distracting the viewer, permitting the girls a means of expression that is not bound by patriarchal judgement; and the music's genre (along with ParaOne's status as a DJ) ensures that the music remains reflective of the girls we see on screen. The music thus increases the chance of contact between the spectator and the girl characters. In this film, which foregrounds the girls' encounters with (predominantly sexual) intimacy, we too are invited to enter intimately into their world through the music. It is the electronic genre specifically that allows for this entry, allowing enough space for the girls' visual representation and bodily expression, while also guiding our film experience and permitting points of contact with the girls' adolescent world.

As has been demonstrated in the above discussion of *La Naissance des pieuvres*, the electronic genre is able to signify in various ways in order to promote identification with the on-screen characters. Both of Sciamma's other girlhood films, *Tomboy* (2010) and her 2014 tour de force, *Bande de filles* also use electronic music on the soundtrack, again provided by ParaOne. In *Bande de filles*, as in *Naissance des pieuvres*, the music is void of lyrics, and is usually played over a blank, black screen. Once again, we see the removal of dialogic (and indeed visible) distractions, which focuses our attention on the music itself and, with its strong, club-like beat and synthesised melody, resembles in more than one way the music we hear in Sciamma's first film. Here, however, the music is tied to a narrative of progress and development: with each passing "chapter," the music grows in complexity (both melodically and harmonically), reflecting the

development of protagonist Marième.⁵ The blank screens also serve as ellipses in time: the film is sectioned into almost snapshot-like moments separated from one another by blank screens. The music in this film helps us to navigate these periods, all the while retaining the youthful signification present in the soundtrack to *Naissance des pieuvres*. Once again, the electronic genre offers the space necessary to allow us points of entry into the alienating and, at times, incomprehensible world of these girls, without unnecessary lyrical distraction. That the music occurs predominantly as chapter markers on blank screens means that we are invited to process the preceding, and pre-empt the following, sequences, without any assumptions: there are no lyrics to cast judgement on the girls or sway our opinions about them, and we are simply invited into the girl film-space and surrounded by musical signification.

In contrast, ParaOne's music in *Tomboy* does include lyrics, notably when protagonist Laure/Mikaël (Zoé Héran) and Lisa (Jeanne Disson) dance together in Lisa's bedroom. The track "Always"—the only song to feature in the film—combines electronic beats and synthesised sounds with light, summery vocals, repeating the line "I love you always." The music in this sequence is neither diegetic nor non-diegetic: it begins with no visible source and no certainty that the girls can hear the music at the same time as the viewer, before transforming into something that both the characters and the spectator can hear, and finally reverting back into the non-diegetic, as the girls stop dancing but the music remains audible to the spectator for a few moments before fading away. The music in this sequence is therefore situated both *within* the girls' world, allowing us a glimpse into their tastes and preferences, and *outside* of it, providing a reference point from which we observe their experiences. As Isabelle McNeill writes, the music saturates the filmic space, becoming both independent of the visible characters but also governed by their movements (4). As in *Naissance des pieuvres*, the music here "blur[s] the boundary between [...] the space of the audience with the world of the characters" (McNeill 4). Once again, the music offers increased entry points for identification with the characters. Furthermore, this sequence—another moment of sheer youthful delight and abandon—demonstrates electronic music's emancipatory function. While there are lyrics in this song, their repetition and tinny quality means that they become almost part

⁵ I discuss the musical developments in *Bande de filles* in more detail in Chapter 4.

of the backing track: the electronic auto-tune causes the vocals to seem synthesised and instrumental, and the repetition of the same line over and over means that there are fewer lyrics to distract the spectator from the rest of the audiovisual experience. The lyrics almost get lost within the sounds of the song, overtaken by the catchy rhythms, hand-claps, and other instrumental sounds. While the lyrics in this sequence inevitably affect the audiovisual experience in this sequence—it is not possible to completely ignore the words—it is the music, and the way the girls dance so enthusiastically to it, that is most important. In an interview that appears in the film's *dossier de presse*, Sciamma states that the sequence is “un morceau solaire et enfantin, avec la mélancolie des mélodies en contrepoint” (Payen, *UniversCiné*): the melodies and rhythms we hear in the backing track are more important than the lyrics. Despite the “melancholy” of the melody (caused by the slightly dissonant and subdued chord throughout the song), the scene retains its childlike qualities, providing the space for Laure and Lisa to dance freely. McNeill argues that this moment presents the “one moment when Laure/Mikaël can [...] avoid conforming to any particular gender norms, enjoying a corporeal expressivity and intimacy without the pressures that accompany being a boy or a girl” (4). This freedom is akin to that offered to Anne in *Naissance des pieuvres*: the characters are provided with the opportunity to express themselves through dance, with no pre-assumptions or judgements. The choice of the electronic genre offers more space for the characters to express themselves, and more opportunities for the spectator to enter into this mode of expression. Like in *Naissance des pieuvres*, the music occupies a liminal space between the world of the spectator and the on-screen girl world, and consequently promotes and provides avenues for identification between spectator and character.

In all of Sciamma's films, then, the music provides increased entry points for the spectator, connecting the spaces inside and outside of the film in order to allow us to enter into the girls' film world. The electronic genre aids this process, providing a non-judgemental space free from assumptions and allowing more liberated modes of expression of the girls' experiences and sensations. The electronic genre, as with the folk genre, signifies in both a general and a specific sense in these films. Previously, I demonstrated how pop music, with its longstanding associations with youth, can elicit nostalgia in spectators, which is then translated onto the film medium and helps to create a generally youthful film-

space. A similar effect is achieved in these films, where the electronic genre, associated with (French) youth culture, allows more entry points for the spectator. The music therefore allows spectators to identify with the girl characters on screen, even if they themselves are not girls, due to the external references that become attached to its style. This general signification then paves the way for more specific signification within the film itself: the music's communicative ability is increased by the genre. Further, the freedom made possible by the form and structure of electronic music retains a certain ambivalence of meaning. As I have discussed above, there are fewer pre-existing meanings attached to music without lyrics and with more freedom of composition. This ambivalence allows the music to transcend boundaries, both within the film itself, and between the world of the film and that of the viewer. The spectator is therefore also able to slip between these worlds, recalling their own responses to the music and projecting them onto the film as they watch it. Simultaneously, this ambivalence allows the music to serve as an audible representation of the liminal space occupied by the girls themselves, between childhood and womanhood, and therefore allows additional points of entry into this liminal world. The electronic genre, then, provides numerous opportunities for spectators to identify with and experience film events at the same time as these girl characters.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated how genre is a vital factor in a piece of music's potential for meaning. It has revealed how genres are able to signify and the effect they have on listeners/spectators in film, and has demonstrated how genre stereotypes work to add meaning to a piece of music. Chapters 1 and 2 discussed in detail how pre-existing associations have a great impact the communication of meaning when music is included on a film's soundtrack, exploring how pre-existing associations contribute to music's potential for signification. The associations spectators may already have formed regarding the music's artists, lyrics, or release context can greatly affect how we respond to the music in a film scenario. This chapter furthers these findings to apply them to genres, showing that similar pre-existing associations become attached to certain genres and their listeners. Due to the way that genres are created, often within very specific communities of listeners, and around loose rules that depend largely on context as well as specific musical features, stereotypes are easily made and attach to

both the genre, and its listeners. Stereotypes are also easily reinforced by the record industry, which continues to peddle stereotypes in order to ensure a core fan base and appeal to known listeners. When music is used in a film's soundtrack, then, these stereotypes are translated onto the film medium. This chapter has demonstrated how generic stereotypes can help to create specific film-spaces, and convey information about settings or characters. In the films examined here, the genre of the music helps to position the spectator within the mode of girlhood depicted by the filmmaker. In Hansen-Løve's first three films, for example, she positions girlhood as intensely nostalgic, and as such uses the folk genre on her soundtrack. Due to its history in the oral storytelling tradition, folk music has something almost inherently nostalgic about it: the genre is constantly evolving and repeating what has come before it. As such, folk music helps to paint a film with a coating of nostalgia which permeates through the narrative and helps us to experience the sensations felt by Hansen-Løve's characters. There is also something nostalgic, although perhaps less obviously so, about the way Sciamma positions girlhood in her first three films, though she predominantly positions her girlhood narratives as a search for identity within a distinctly liminal existence. Both of these genres, then, are able to position the spectator – and the film-space itself – in the same way as the girls, allowing us a point of entry into their world and the world of the filmmaker. The genre provides an overall sense of positioning that aligns the spectator with the girl characters and makes further identification easier.

Musical genres do not only signify in a general way, however; it is also possible for them to connote meaning within the narrative as well as outside of it, creating a double layer of generic signification. In Hansen-Løve's films, not only do folk music's nostalgic connotations create a general effect that helps position girlhood as a nostalgic period, the music is also used at specific points in the narrative to allow us to experience the same emotions and sensations as the characters on screen. As this chapter reveals, the girls in Hansen-Løve's films have moments of powerful nostalgia, intensified for the spectator by the folk music used to accompany them. In Sciamma's films, the electronic genre serves to provide the girls with the space required to express themselves, providing the spectator with a means of identification with the characters: as electronica does not usually contain any lyrics, there are far fewer risks of distraction or extra-filmic meaning than with other genres. What is also interesting to consider about these

genres, is how they are both able to signify in similar ways with different intensities. As I have mentioned above, there is also something nostalgic about Sciamma's positioning of girlhood. While electronica serves to provide space for the girls' expression and provide an audible representation of their liminal position, there is a certain amount of nostalgic signification that comes from the electronic genre, particularly within a French context. This chapter has argued that the electronic genre has the ability, for French audiences, to function like folk music, by evoking a particularly youthful "Frenchness." As such, French spectators are invited to remember their own youthful experiences with electronica, which is very similar to the effect achieved by the older songs featured in *LOL* discussed in Chapter 1. Similarly, while the folk genre's principal function in Hansen-Løve's films is to provide nostalgic signification, it also serves to reflect the liminal experience of girlhood. Through using contemporary folk music, Hansen-Løve uses music that is both traditional and modern, situated between the old and the new. Contemporary folk lies both within a longstanding folk tradition, and in the landscape of modern popular music, thereby providing a similar representation of liminality as the electronica in Sciamma's films.

These two genres, then, do something for girlhood: they provide an audible representation of the girls' sensations, both specifically within the narratives of the films, and more generally for the filmmakers' positioning of the experience of girlhood. This perhaps explains the relatively high frequency of these musical genres in girlhood films. By using music that itself occupies a liminal position, filmmakers can help to position spectators in relation to the characters and open avenues of identification between the spectator and the girls on screen. This chapter has explored how these two genres relate both specifically and generally to the experiences of the films' girl characters. While it has been concerned predominantly with the way these genres function within their particular films, this chapter has also demonstrated how music genre can signify within a cinematic context: the stereotypes and associations attached to genres affect how spectators experience and react to the film in which they appear. Genres are able to signify more generally than particular songs, owing to their more wide-reaching stereotypes and associations. They therefore offer a particular way of reaching spectators and allowing them to identify with the characters. This chapter has shown how genres can help the viewer to experience sensations and emotions at the same time as the characters, as well

as provide an overall impression of the girls' experiences in the world. The next chapter continues to examine how music, and in particular musical stereotypes, can help to provide a general impression of girlhood. This takes the form of an examination of original composition, and the way that composed music can make use of existing musical stereotypes to appeal to, or challenge, pre-existing assumptions.

Chapter 4: Composing Girlhood

Introduction

This chapter extends and enriches my previous chapters' examination of the role musical stereotypes play in creating meaning, turning here to the question of original composition and classical scoring. In Chapter 3, I examined how genre classification leads to the creation of stereotypes which, when they become deeply embedded in a culture, affect the meaning of the music. In this way, genres and their associated stereotypes form a mode of referential meaning within a piece of music. In this chapter, I continue to examine the referential potential of musical stereotypes, focusing on compositional modes of meaning in originally-composed film music. As I discussed in Chapter 3, while it is easy to dismiss stereotypes as essentialising or simplified generalisations, they nevertheless provide a referential base which can be exploited to facilitate the evocation of meaning. As Richard Dyer writes, stereotypes are a means by which society can identify, order, and express values ("Stereotypes" 207-9): it is through stereotypes that we are able to understand the world around us. This chapter examines how, through the continued use of certain musical stereotypes, composers can facilitate identification with on-screen characters. In order to achieve this, I largely employ musicological analysis and theory, exploring the gendered discourse surrounding classical music and acknowledging film music's place in the genealogy of classical composition. While film music differs from other classical composition, most notably due to its intentional relationship with characterisation, and the accompanying images that affect the way listeners perceive the sounds, it nevertheless forms part of a compositional timeline or genealogy. This means, therefore, that it is linked to—and affected by—that which came before. In Chapter 1, I discussed the concept of a "listening history," formed by the repetition of listening experiences, either by passing down tastes from generation to generation, or by the release of cover versions of songs. These listening histories contribute to the referential meaning of a song, and affect how listeners respond to the music. The genealogies I refer to in this chapter function in a similar way: compositional styles evolve over time, adapting, or taking influence from, previous styles. As such, certain compositional codes and methods are passed down from generation to generation, eventually

becoming so embedded that they may not represent a conscious choice by the composer. In this chapter, I explore how certain musical codes become gendered, examining the rise of gendered musical discourse in the 19th century, and how these codes are subsequently passed down through generations of compositional practice. In addition to compositional stereotypes, I examine the social and cultural stereotyping that genders certain sounds or instruments, exploring how these stereotypes contribute to listeners' perception of music, and how this functions in a film environment specifically. In Chapter 3, I demonstrated how long-standing stereotypes relating to genre can contribute to the referential signification of a musical track, and subsequently have an impact on the meaning of the piece in a film context. Here, I examine how certain compositional stereotypes evoke meaning, and therefore help to facilitate identification and communication between the spectator and the on-screen characters.

In order to explore gendered stereotypes present in classical composition, it is first necessary to examine their development, and the gendered discourse used to describe music. The history of the sonata form is particularly useful, here. While the term "sonata" has its origins in Baroque music, meaning a short piece that is composed to be played rather than sung, the structural form commonly called "sonata form" first became popular in the Classical period, in the 18th century. The term "sonata form" describes the structure of a piece, usually the first movement of a sonata or other longer musical text, comprising three main sections: the exposition, the development, and the recapitulation. All three of these sections revolve around two main themes, called the first subject and the second subject. The exposition section presents these themes for the first time; usually, the first subject is played in the tonic key, then links via a transition or bridge to the second subject, which is in a different—but related—key. The development section then develops or transforms the two subjects, and the recapitulation section presents the original subjects again, but in a slightly different form, and usually both in the tonic key (fig. 4.1). These strict rules regarding tonality, harmony, and harmonic cadence were vital to the Classical sonata form. Moving into the Romantic period, however, as the form developed and evolved, the specifics of tonality and harmony became much less important. Rather than focusing on tonality and key, composers of the Romantic period began to use the two subjects to emphasise character and feel, using two opposing musical ideas instead of a change in key. In his 19th-century treatise,

Section	Exposition				Development	Recapitulation			
Theme or subsection	Theme 1	Transition	Theme 2	Codetta	Either/Both of the themes	Theme 1	Transition	Theme 2	Coda
Tonality	Home or Tonic Key	Modulation	New, related Key	Tonic key	Multiple modulations, changing keys	Usually Home or Tonic	Modulation	Home or Tonic Key	Tonic Key
Example key	C Major	C maj - G maj	G Major	C Major	G min, D min, A min	C Major	C maj - C min - C maj	C Major	C Major

Fig. 4.1 A diagram of typical Classical sonata form. The diagram shows the modulations in key (including examples below), and the arrangement of the themes.

Theory and Practice of Musical Composition, Adolf Bernhard Marx discussed these contrasting themes in terms of gender, writing that the first theme “is the one determined at the outset, that is, with a primary freshness and energy” and the second theme is “created afterward, serving as a contrast, dependent on and determined by the former [...] more supple than emphatically shaped, as if it were the feminine to that preceding masculine” (Hepokoski 494). James Hepokoski notes how Marx’s gendered vocabulary became readily incorporated into written tradition, spreading “like wildfire” through Europe to become commonplace in musical discussion (494). As such, the gendering of a sonata’s themes grows into an expectation. As Robin Wallace writes, accepting the gendered classification of the two subjects allows the piece of music to tell a classic love story, purely through its form and structure: in the exposition section, a “hierarchical relationship” is set up, comprising the masculine and feminine themes. This relationship then “work[s] up to a high point of emotional tension” in the development section, before being “satisfactorily reconciled” in the recapitulation (2). The stereotypical heteronormative and gendered categorisation of certain musical sounds, then, allow the music to have meaning before any notes are heard. As in the previous chapter, which discussed how expectations of certain genres can contribute to our perception of the music, so expectations attached to the sonata form contribute to a listener’s reactions; the listener’s gendered expectations can either be reinforced or subverted by the music itself.

In addition to the sonata form, the Romantic period also saw the gendering of other musical structures. While the terms “masculine cadence” and “feminine cadence” are now rarely used in musicological analysis, they are occasionally still

referenced, and present another interesting stereotype in classical composition. The term “cadence” refers to the way that a piece of music, or a phrase within a piece, ends. While the term is more often used in a harmonic sense, to describe the chord progression used to end a piece, it can also be employed in a rhythmic sense, to describe the rhythms and syncopations used. It is these rhythmic cadences that are classified with gendered language. Within the rhythmic structure of a piece of music written in standard notation, there are bars comprising a certain number of beats. The number of beats in each bar is called the time signature, and is indicated at the beginning of a piece of music. Each of the beats in a bar will, as a result, have a different emphasis when played and heard. For example, in a piece that has a time signature of four beats in a bar, the first and third beat will usually be stronger than the second and fourth, with the first being strongest overall (fig. 4.2). A “masculine” cadence, then, is a phrase that ends on a “strong” beat, and a “feminine” cadence is one that ends on a “weak” beat. The problematic nature of this terminology has been noted by feminist musicologists such as Susan McClary who describes how, in standard definitions, the feminine cadence is described as having been “postponed” to the weaker beat (*Feminine Endings* 9-10). As such, the feminine cadence is described *in relation to* the masculine cadence: it is a postponement of the masculine ending. Consequently, the masculine cadence is considered the “normal,” and the feminine becomes “abnormal” (*Feminine Endings* 10). Indeed, in standard notation, it is more common to end a piece of music on a strong beat than a weak beat. While the terminology describing cadences as “masculine” and “feminine” is now rarely used in musicology, it is nevertheless interesting and revealing to examine the use of such conventions in musical composition. As I have described above, the repeated use of compositional methods or conventions easily leads to stereotypes, whether or not they are consciously evoked by the composer. In this chapter, I examine how certain gendered musical stereotypes continue to appear in classical film composition, and how this can therefore have an impact on how the music interacts with characters.

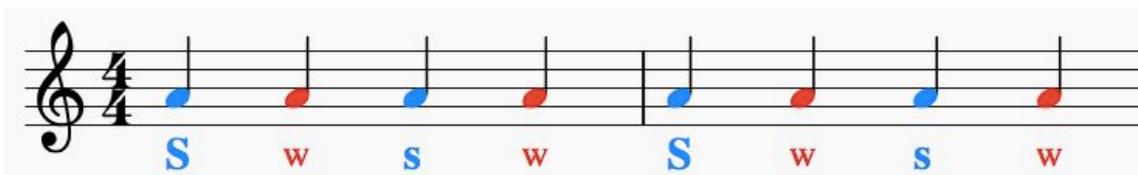


Fig. 4.2 A diagram showing the “strong” and “weak” beats in 4/4. Strong beats are coloured in blue, and weak beats in red. The larger “S” label denotes the strongest beat in the bar.

The language used to describe these gendered musical stereotypes is particularly helpful for exploring how listeners may “hear” gender in music, and for examining the way that gendered stereotypes are expressed through musical sounds. That Marx’s masculine subject is “determined,” “fresh,” and “energetic,” in contrast to the “supple,” “dependent” feminine subject is representative, as is the differentiating between masculine and feminine cadences in terms of “strength,” of socially normative gender characteristics. Sounds that correspond with social norms, then, such as “strong” beats or “energetic” noises corresponding with masculinity, are readily associated with that characterisation. In Chapters 2 and 3, I discussed how stereotypes, while borne out of normative and essentialist generalisations, can nevertheless, through an unconscious plane of knowledge, facilitate identification between on-screen characters and the spectator. By “unconscious plane of knowledge,” I mean that the spectator, or indeed the composer, need not be aware of the musical stereotype in order for it to contribute to meaning. A composer, for example, may unconsciously include “feminine” cadences in a piece of music, not because he or she identifies the sound as such, but because, due to its continual reinforcement through repetition, it simply “sounds” more feminine to them. In this chapter, I examine similar relationships, by exploring how stereotypes function in relation to characterisation. As with the stereotypes and references discussed in the previous chapters, not all listeners will have detailed knowledge of the musicological history at play, here, nor will they necessarily have knowledge of “feminine” endings and rhythms; however, this does not reduce the impact these stereotypes may have. Like the genre stereotypes discussed in Chapter 3, the repetition of stereotypes embeds them in cultural memory as conventions; it is possible for listeners to be culturally aware of conventions and stereotypical references, even with no prior knowledge of the music. Indeed, a study by Paul R. Farnsworth et al, in which individuals with no musical training were asked to rate music as “masculine” or “feminine,” found that listeners were able to classify music consistently, and in accordance with compositional convention (258). In addition to these more technical, musicological conventions that classify a piece of music as “masculine” or “feminine,” there are also certain sounds and instruments stereotypically related to one gender or another by both composers and listeners, usually in line, as with the stereotypes outlined above, with socially accepted gender norms. Farnsworth et al write how “loud” or “direct” sounds,

brass instruments, the drums, and “rhythmic emphasis” are largely viewed as “masculine,” whereas quiet, “indirect” and “tranquil” sounds, string instruments and the flute are associated with femininity (261). Certain music, it seems, just “sounds” more masculine or feminine to the public ear than other music.

What, then, is the effect of these stereotypes in a film environment? In this chapter, I explore these musical stereotypes in detail, asking whether they continue to be upheld, how they may affect spectator response, and how they interact with the musical characterisation of girlhood. Firstly, I demonstrate the existence of feminine musical stereotypes in contemporary film scoring, using Mona Achache’s *Le Hérisson / The Hedgehog* (2011) as a case study. This film is particularly helpful here, both because of the emphasis it places on music as a means of characterisation—the film includes over 38 minutes of music, comprising just under 40% of its runtime—and because it focuses on both a young girl and an older woman as protagonists. Not only, therefore, does the film provide a useful case study for examining the existence of feminine musical stereotypes, it also allows for a study of the difference between younger and older female characters. While there has been a large amount of work on feminine modes of composition, there is very little on specifically *youthful* modes of composition. In the first section of this chapter, then, I explore how music can sound youthful, and how these youthful sounds may combine with feminine modes to create a specifically “girl” sound.

Following this, I investigate the tension that arises when applying these modes of composition to adolescence, located in the liminal space between childhood and adulthood, through a detailed examination of the score to François Ozon’s *Jeune et jolie / Young and Beautiful* (2013). What makes Ozon’s film so compelling for the concerns of this chapter, is the way that the music helps to position the protagonist in this liminal space, allowing her to slip between characterisations of youthful innocence and adult experience. In this section, I draw on the work of Anahid Kassabian and Kathryn Kalinak, who, as I discussed in Chapter 3, demonstrate the musical construction of female sexuality in film. Using their framework, I unpack the differences in scoring when the character is an adolescent, asking how it is possible to construct youthful female sexuality through music, and the effect this music may have on the spectator’s perception of the characters.

Finally, this chapter examines two films with more contemporary scoring, to explore how differences between masculine and feminine scoring are manifested in contemporary compositional styles. By “contemporary style,” I am referring to music that is composed with, usually, more modern instrumentation such as synths or electronic instruments: these compositions are more rooted in modern musical composition techniques than in the 19th-century styles usually featured in film music. To demonstrate this difference, I examine *Belle Épine / Dear Prudence* (Zlotowski, 2010), in which the musical differentiation between female and male characters is particularly obvious. While the compositional style is more contemporary, gender differences do still exist within the framework of classical stereotypes examined above. Céline Sciamma’s *Bande de filles* also provides a useful case study for this final section, both due to its foregrounding, as I have described in previous chapters, of music as a means of characterisation, and because of the way the score seems to go against traditional gendered stereotypes while still maintaining a link with the girl characters. Through a study of the scores for *Belle Épine* and *Bande de filles*, I examine how contemporary scores maintain a difference between male and female musical characterisation, and how the music retains a certain femininity, which subsequently facilitates identification with and characterisation of the girls on screen. Overall, this chapter demonstrates the continued existence of gendered stereotypes in film scoring, arguing that while they may originate from essentialist ideologies, they can facilitate the characterisation of girls on screen by encouraging identification with the spectator. This chapter, then, seeks to understand what “girl” sounds like in film. While it is beyond the scope of this project to conduct a more comprehensive study of girlhood scores, this chapter creates an initial taxonomy for the specific sounds of girlhood, and provides a springboard for further study into the ways that girlhood can be characterised through film score. These “sounds of girlhood” subsequently encourage a closeness between the girl characters and the viewer: like the female-voiced songs I discussed in Chapter 2, stereotypically “feminine” or girl(y) sounds are more easily associated with girl characters, and as such bring the spectator into closer contact with their world.

What does “Girl” Sound Like? Contrasting “Feminine” and “Youthful”

Scoring in *Le Hérisson*

Mona Achache’s 2011 film, *Le Hérisson*, tells a dual narrative, focusing on the interconnecting lives of young Paloma (Garance Le Guillermic), an eleven-year-old girl who, with the help of her video camera, documents her family life in order to expose the idiosyncrasies and mundane chaos found behind closed doors, and Madame Michel (Josiane Balasko), the solitary and unsociable concierge of the apartment building where Paloma and her family live. It is this combination of both young and older female characters that provides such a useful study for the concerns of this chapter, which asks how music can differentiate not only between genders, but also between ages. The score, composed by Gabriel Yared, draws heavily on Romantic influences, combining traditionally lush string sounds with more contemporary scoring. What makes Yared’s score particularly notable, are the different themes associated with the different characters in the film: both Paloma and Madame Michel have their own named tracks on the soundtrack. These themes function as a kind of *leitmotif* throughout the film, introduced when the characters are first encountered, and subsequently forming the basis of other music throughout the film.¹ “Madame Michel,” comprising a rich, melodic cello line accompanied by strings, and “Mademoiselle Paloma,” featuring a lighter piano melody with harp and string accompaniments both reappear within the structure of other musical tracks in the film, thus reinforcing their association with the characters and influencing the music for the remainder of the narrative.

What is useful to note, for my purposes here, is the way both of these character themes fit into existing musical gender stereotypes, including some of those discussed above. Both of the character themes are in triple time, meaning that there are three beats to each bar. This varies slightly throughout the individual tracks and in the variations of the themes found later in the score, when the time signature occasionally shifts from simple time (in three) to compound time (in six, separated into two groups of three). In the majority of western music, the most common time signatures are in four (also called common time) and two (cut common time). In these time signatures, as I demonstrate above, every other

¹ A *leitmotif* is a recurring theme in a musical composition, related a particular person, idea, or concept. Particularly associated with the work of Richard Wagner, *leitmotifs* are commonly used in classical film music to recall ideas or characters.

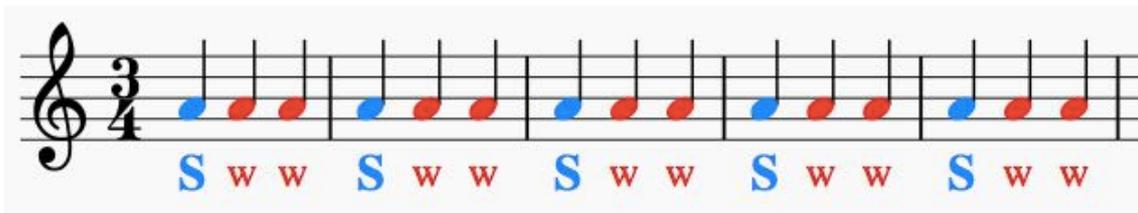


Fig. 4.3 A diagram showing the "strong" and "weak" beats in 3/4.

beat is stressed: there are an equal number of strong and weak beats. In triple time, however, only the first beat of each triplet is stressed (fig. 4.3). As such, triple time offers more opportunities for unstressed (feminine) cadences: only a third of the available ending-notes are stressed, as opposed to half of available notes in common or cut common time. Common time, with its steady, rhythmical symmetry, is stereotypically much more masculine-aligned than the gentler, lilting triple time. Indeed, it is telling that, according to the study by Farnsworth et al, subjects considered the music of Richard Strauss, known predominantly for his waltzes (in triple time), to be much more feminine than the music of other composers (258). In *Le Hérisson*, Yared's score comprises a number of "feminine" cadences within this triple time structure. "Mademoiselle Paloma," for example, begins with an off-beat rhythm, the stressed chord falling on the second beat of the bar rather than the first (fig. 4.4). This motif, itself an example of a "feminine" rhythm, is repeated throughout the track, helping to retain a gentle, lilting feel. At the end of the piece, it seems at first that it will end on a traditionally masculine cadence, with a tonic chord placed on the stressed first beat of the final bar. Instead, Yared adds a second, higher chord on the second beat of the bar to end the piece (fig. 4.5). The end of the piece is therefore "postponed," characterised as feminine rather than masculine.

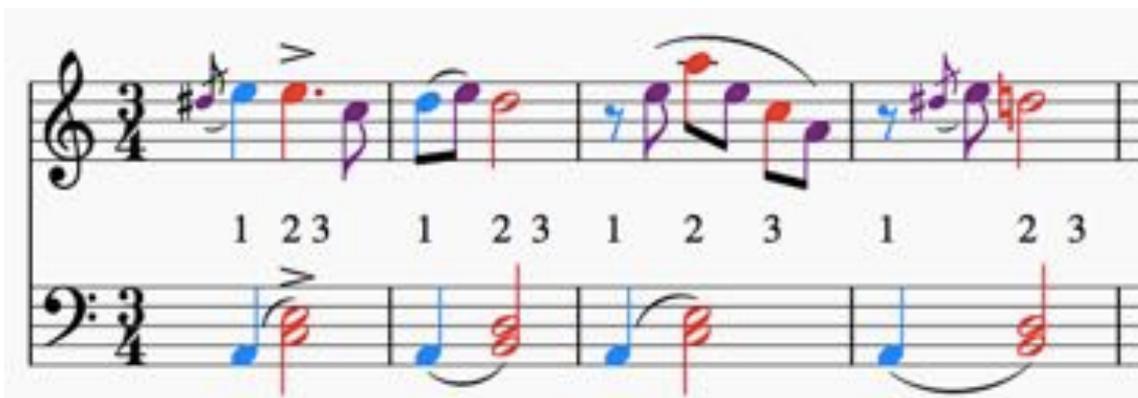


Fig. 4.4 A transcription of the opening bars of "Mademoiselle Paloma." The transcription shows the accent (>) on the second beat of the first bar. Notes have been coloured to show those that fall on strong beats (blue), weak beats (red), or off-beats (purple). The approximate position of each beat when counting is given between the two lines.



Fig. 4.5 A transcription of the closing bars of "Mademoiselle Paloma." The extract shows the slowing down of the tempo (marked by "rall") and the addition of extra notes at the end of the piece.

In contrast to "Mademoiselle Paloma," the "Madame Michel" theme contains fewer feminine cadences, with the phrases in the cello melody largely ending on the dominant beat of the bar. However, once again, Yared includes a number of rhythmic idioms that contribute to a stereotypically feminine compositional style. The strong, low notes, for example, are consistently placed on the second beat of the bar, creating that characteristic lilt and emphasizing the unstressed beat more than would usually be expected. Similarly, while the main melody line largely sticks to masculine rhythms, the accompaniment often places emphasis on the weak beats. At the end of the piece, while rhythmically the cadence is masculine, the dramatic slowing of the tempo means that the final note is "postponed" in much the same way as a feminine cadence. Harmonically, too, the piece ends feeling, as with rhythmically feminine cadences, unfinished: the piece finishes, not on a tonic note, but on the seventh, or "leading note." As such, though the theme goes against certain rhythmic stereotypes in some ways, it also adheres to certain "feminine" stereotypes from classical composition tradition, and its melodic structure is in fact more typically "feminine" than "masculine."

In addition to the rhythmic and melodic conventions of traditional classical convention, the instrumentation in these pieces is interesting to consider in relation to gendered musical stereotypes. As I have discussed above, certain musical sounds or instruments are strongly associated with different genders by listeners, with traditionally loud instruments, such as the trumpet, French horn, and oboe being associated with masculinity; and smoother, higher, or quieter instruments such as the flute, harp, and string instruments being associated with femininity (Farnsworth et al. 261). In "Madame Michel," while the melody is very

low, it is smooth and flowing, and accompanied by high strings. These traits are all stereotypically feminine, and as such the sounds contribute to the piece's feminine characterisation, which is reinforced by the pairing of the theme with the on-screen image of Madame Michel. Similarly, in "Mademoiselle Paloma," the high-pitched notes of the piano, combined with the traditionally feminine harp and flute, ensures that the piece adheres strongly with feminine musical stereotypes. Thus, both of these pieces conform to a traditionally "feminine" mode of composition, adhering to gendered musical norms and also perpetuating those norms through their association with female characters: in using musical features associated traditionally with femininity, and associating them with female characters on screen, the music both contributes to, and aids in the continuation of, these musical traditions. It is important to note, here, that the spectator or listener will not necessarily be aware of the technical elements of these traditions. However, it is nevertheless interesting for the purposes of this chapter to see how the musical characterisation of female characters may be imbued with conventional stereotypes, particularly in relation to the previous chapters of this thesis, which have demonstrated the power of referential meaning and the way that stereotypes can assist in creating meaning in music. While spectators, or even composers, may not be consciously aware of these musical stereotypes, they nevertheless appear in musical tradition, and therefore carry a certain expectation or potential for referential meaning. As Kathryn Kalinak notes, musical stereotypes can help "to determine the audience's response to and evaluation of" different characters, even though the music "functions subliminally for most of the audience" ("Fallen Woman" 76). Musical codes become familiar, both consciously and subconsciously, to spectators, and therefore help to characterise certain personalities on screen. In previous chapters, I have examined how musical stereotypes and associations help evoke meaning from the music, which can subsequently ease identification with the on-screen characters. In Chapter 1, for example, I demonstrated how, in using music traditionally associated with youthful listeners, it is possible to encourage identification with young protagonists. There are similar modes of meaning and identification at play here: in using stereotypically "feminine" music associated with the female characters in the film, *Le Hérisson* encourages empathetic alignment, and opens avenues of identification between the characters and the spectators.

What is interesting to consider, however, is not just how gender differences are manifested in film composition, but also how age differences might be composed: what, if there is one at all, is the distinction between general “feminine” composition and specific “girl” composition, and how might these differences contribute to the communication of girl characters’ experiences? Is it possible to turn “feminine” into either “girl” or “woman,” and how might those “girl” sounds differ from the traditionally feminine conventions I have discussed so far in this chapter? While gendered musical structures and conventions have been relatively well explored within the field of musicology, there is very little concerning the musical characterisation of childhood, or the conventions that may make a certain composition particularly youthful.² Nevertheless, I would argue that there are certain musical sounds that are associated with particularly childlike qualities, and can therefore help to characterise child or childlike personas. Opera provides a useful starting point for this exploration. In Bizet’s *Carmen*, there features a children’s chorus, named the “street urchin chorus.” At the times when they appear on stage and sing, the music is often very rhythmic, featuring plucked string sounds and staccato (clipped) melodies. The pitch of the music is usually higher, combining with the naturally higher voices of the children, and the melodies are generally more percussive, with simple rhythms. In “Marche et chœur des gamins,” for example, the introduction comprises short, clipped trumpets, high staccato piccolo sounds, and pizzicato (plucked) strings to reflect the youthful innocence of the children (fig. 4.6). This simple, percussive style characterises the music with more youthfulness than other music in the production, which is often heavier and rhythmically complicated, reflecting the complex and passionate love story told in the narrative. Prokofiev’s symphonic fairy tale, *Peter and the Wolf*, composed in 1936, also follows this trend: Peter’s theme, played by the string section, is high, rhythmic, and joyful, reflecting Peter’s childish optimism and vigour. This theme contrasts, for example, with the Grandfather’s theme, which is played on the bassoon, using a much lower pitch and a more minor tonality (fig. 4.7 & 4.8). In these examples, it is the combination of rhythm, pitch, and tonality that makes the music sound youthful: simple rhythms, percussive themes, and major keys all inflect the melodies with a certain

² One reason for this may be the changing views of what constitutes “childhood” over time: Jerome V Reel notes how children did not begin to appear in operatic composition until the eighteenth century, when there began a “real interest in the child and the child’s life,” and how the images of children in Opera tended to reflect society’s concerns about children in general (73).

The image shows a musical score extract for "Marche et chœur des gamins" from *Carmen*. It features three staves: Piccolo, Trumpet, and Violin. The Piccolo part is in the treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of high, staccato notes, each marked with a dot above it. The Trumpet part is in the treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 2/4 time signature, featuring short, staccato blasts. The Violin part is in the treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 2/4 time signature, featuring pizzicato (plucked) strings. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p* (piano) and *pizz.* (pizzicato).

Fig. 4.6 Extract from "Marche et chœur des gamins" from *Carmen*. The score shows the high, staccato (marked by the dots above each note) piccolos, the short trumpet blasts, and the pizzicato (plucked) strings. Transcribed from the score by the author.

The image shows a musical score extract for Peter's theme from *Peter and the Wolf*. It features a single staff for Violin in the treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is characterized by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and includes dynamic markings such as *f* (forte).

Fig. 4.7 Extract from Peter's theme from *Peter and the Wolf*. Transcribed from the score by the author.

The image shows a musical score extract for Grandfather's theme from *Peter and the Wolf*. It features two staves for Bassoon. The top staff is in the bass clef with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature, showing a melody with dynamic markings such as *f* (forte) and triplets. The bottom staff is in the treble clef with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature, showing the same melody transcribed for easier comparison with the high violins in Peter's theme.

Fig. 4.8 Extract from Grandfather's theme from *Peter and the Wolf*. The bassoon melody, usually written in bass clef as in the top diagram, has also been given in treble clef for easier comparison with the high violins in Peter's theme. Transcribed from the score by the author.

simplicity or innocence that speaks of childhood. As David Metzger writes in his discussion of the image of childhood in Charles Ives' music, Ives composes the "volatility" and "kinetic" nature of childhood by using "fast tempos," "syncopations" and "rhythmic strata" to contrast against the "static" nature of adulthood (81). In music, then, childhood is evoked primarily through rhythm, with help from other elements that may add to the youthful evocation. This rhythmic difference is also evident in the score to *Le Hérisson*, which combines the stereotypically feminine idioms discussed above with youthful musical traits.

In addition to “Mademoiselle Paloma,” there is one other principal track that is associated with the character of Paloma: “Dans 365 jours.” First heard near the beginning of the film, the piece is subsequently reprised as part of two other tracks, “Je n’ai pas peur” and “Plus tard, je serais concierge.” The piece is percussive and rhythmic, featuring a variety of tuned and untuned percussion instruments, as well as flute, piano, and synth accompaniment. The main emphasis in this piece is, rather than the melody line, the fast, somewhat chaotic off-beat rhythm. Like “Mademoiselle Paloma,” which, while gentler than “Dans 365 jours,” still includes light, syncopated piano chords, the music of “Dans 365 jours” is filled with jaunty rhythms and percussive phrasing, reflective both of Paloma’s youthfulness and her frenetic energy that we see throughout the narrative. The lightness and energetic nature of Paloma’s musical themes is contrasted greatly by “Madame Michel,” with its slow, even rhythms that comprise very little syncopation or variation. This absence of rhythmic energy is what gives “Madame Michel” its mature sound, more easily associated with the slower, more reclusive concierge than the young girl. As well as the rhythmic elements of the music, the maturity of sound in “Madame Michel” is also achieved by the instrumentation: the solo cello, with its lower pitch and rich tone, immediately creates an older, more mature sound than the piano and percussion found in Paloma’s themes. Both “Mademoiselle Paloma” and “Dans 365 jours” use much higher pitches and more percussive sounds than “Madame Michel,” using piano, harps, and percussion instruments that do not achieve the richness of tone produced by the cello. Indeed, the pitch ranges used in both characters’ themes are drastically different: the cello in “Madame Michel” begins, as I have discussed above, with a long arpeggiated sequence, ranging from the second-lowest note in the instrument’s range (D2), across two octaves to the high end of the cello’s middle range (D4). The gaps between the pitches in the musical sequence are large, causing the player to use different strings in single phrases, and emphasising the extreme low and high notes in the tune (fig. 4.9). Contrastingly, the opening piano melody in “Mademoiselle Paloma” is much less diverse in pitch, with most of the notes falling in the same octave on the piano, all from the same upper-middle register (fig. 4.10). This small pitch range gives the melody the impression of simplicity, more suited to a young character than to an older character.



Fig. 4.9 A transcription of the opening passage of "Madame Michel." The cello's full range is given at the beginning of the transcription for comparison. The lowest and highest notes of the melodic sequence are highlighted in green.

A musical score for the piano in 3/4 time, key of D major. The score shows a melodic line starting with a low note (A0) and ending with a high note (C8). The notes are: A0, C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6, C7, C8. The notes C5, C6, C7, and C8 are highlighted in green.

Fig. 4.10 A transcription of the opening passage of "Mademoiselle Paloma." The piano's standard full range is given below the transcription for comparison. Note how the majority of the notes in the melody fall between C5 and C6, in the upper-middle part of the piano's range.

While both themes in *Le Hérisson* could be classified as “feminine,” then, there are distinct differences that help to characterise the music in terms of age. Yared combines existing musical stereotypes related to gender differences with other conventions, in order to musically differentiate between Paloma and Madame Michel. The youthfulness of Paloma’s themes does not overtake the femininity: her musical themes, aided by their audio-visual pairing with her as a character, still “feel” girl(y): the youthful conventions I have discussed simply help to differentiate between the older and younger female characters. In so doing, the score helps facilitate alignment and identification with the characters. Through the inclusion of traditional musical conventions, the music in *Le Hérisson* helps in the construction of Paloma’s character: though she does not often speak her feelings out loud—instead confined to watching and documenting the lives of others around her—she is characterised through the music associated with her. The music helps to communicate information about Paloma to the spectator that is not conveyed via verbal means. In addition, the creation of a specifically “girl” sound, combining both feminine and youthful sounds, helps to surround the spectator with girl(y) signification. In previous chapters, I argued that the inclusion of youth-oriented music helps to position the film as youthful, thereby inviting the

spectator to enter into a youth space. A similar effect is achieved here, with the use of “girl” sounds: the music invites the spectator into the characters’ space, bringing us into contact with their world and their experiences, and providing an aural means of identification between the characters and the spectator.

Musical Liminality: Youthful Sexuality in *Jeune et jolie*

One of the reasons that *Le Hérisson* makes for a particularly useful case study is, as I have discussed above, its distinct contrast between the older and younger characters: Madame Michel is a middle-aged woman, and Paloma is still a child. Paloma’s young age makes it all the easier to combine “feminine” and “youthful” conventions to musically characterise a young girl. However, *Le Hérisson* is, for this project, something of an exception in its inclusion of such a young girl: the majority of the films I discuss here are concerned with adolescents rather than children. The girls in these films are not classified as children, nor are they adults: they are located in the in-between of these two life stages. Therefore, it is important to consider the functions of music in characterising these girl figures: how is it possible for the music to retain youthfulness while also characterising the girls’ liminality? François Ozon’s *Jeune et jolie* presents an interesting case study to explore these questions, because of its emphasis on the protagonist’s sexual maturity, while also highlighting her youthfulness. The film tells the story of seventeen-year-old Isabelle (Marine Vacth) who, after a somewhat anti-climactic holiday romance during which she loses her virginity, embarks on a secret career as a high-end call girl, stealing her mother’s clothes and meeting clients in chic hotel rooms around Paris. Kate Ince writes how Ozon, France’s “first mainstream queer filmmaker,” pays particular attention in his films to “the complexity and difficulty of human sexuality” (133). This film explores this complexity, showing the process of Isabelle’s realisation of her sexuality and its role in the coming of desire, placing it within the constraints of the bourgeois family. Todd Hoffman notes how this familial placement “bewilders” viewers, who can find no reason for Isabelle’s behaviour in her “stable home environment” (114). Indeed, when Isabelle’s secret is discovered in the film, her mother forces her to see a therapist in an attempt to understand her actions, using the money she has earned as a prostitute to pay for the sessions. The family environment is shown throughout the film to be a space of interruption, where desire and sexuality are simultaneously revealed and hidden, such as when Isabelle’s

brother Victor (Fantin Ravat) secretly watches her masturbate; when Victor himself is then caught masturbating by their step-father; or when Isabelle accidentally interrupts her step-father leaving the bathroom in the nude. Hoffman notes how Isabelle is “everywhere surrounded by the pressures of bourgeois romantic idealism,” with both her mother and brother requesting information about her first sexual encounter with brief lover Felix (Lucas Prisor), and learning a poem at school that reinforces the romantic idealism of savouring and protecting virginity (118). This, of course, contrasts dramatically with the family’s reactions to Isabelle’s other means of expressing her sexuality, which must be concealed and hidden from the outside world. This film, then, is characteristic of Ozon’s filmmaking in the way he queers the normative, middle-class family environment through his focus on sexuality. As Ince writes, the family is central to Ozon’s filmmaking, in which he attempts to “open up” the nuclear family and demonstrate the performativity and theatricality of the bourgeois “*bonne société*” (123). In *Jeune et jolie*, Isabelle’s overt—but also coldly passionless—sexuality contrast starkly with her family’s middle-class ideals. Throughout the film, Isabelle is firmly located in a state of liminal “in-between-ness,” at a junction between childhood and adulthood emphasised by her desire to appear older than she is, her sexual experience, and her youthful *naïveté* surrounding the consequences of her actions. The music in the film thus provides a means of navigating her sexuality while remaining aware of her innocence: where Gabriel Yared’s score for *Le Hérisson* provides a useful measure of how musical traditions can be manipulated and combined, *Jeune et jolie* provides a filmic situation in which the music must simultaneously evoke youth and (sexual) maturity to successfully characterise the protagonist. In this way, the music, as demonstrated in the following analysis, provides quite a conservative, normative means of navigating the film’s complexity: it provides a recognisable way of understanding Isabelle’s characterisation and, though the knowledge it provides is based in traditional, normative stereotypes, it invites the spectator into the complex, non-normative film-space.

As the film opens and the opening credits begin, we hear Philippe Rombi’s first composed track for the film, “*Été*.” After a fast, vibrating string introduction, there is a smooth, mellow cello melody that gently rises and falls. This melody, reminiscent of the tune to “*Madame Michel*” in *Le Hérisson*, has a distinctly mournful tone and slow tempo, which contrasts with the youthful composition

structures I have discussed above, and instead adds a sense of maturity. However, the pitch of the melody is very high, located in the upper register of the instrument (beginning on F#4). This use of a pitch from the extreme upper register of the cello causes the sound to become tensioned, removing some of the mellowness that characterises the lower notes of the instrument, and creating a brighter, more youthful sound. Indeed, a reviewer of the score writes that the theme on the cello “speaks of [...] summer breezes” (Broxton, *Movie Music UK*): the sounds heard in “*Été*” are very different from the low, mature sounds heard in, for example, “*Madame Michel*.” As the opening credits end, and Isabelle comes onto screen, viewed through binoculars, the cello is replaced by the lighter sound of the piano, playing the melody one octave higher than previously. I have argued above that the percussive, more detached sound of the piano is more youthful than the flowing, lilting sound of the cello, and the combination of this new sound and the image of Isabelle on screen automatically aligns the two together. This goes some way to expressing Isabelle’s liminal status between childhood and adulthood: when she comes into view, the sound changes from the more mature cello to the lighter, more youthful piano, while retaining the same melody.

Further, when the theme returns a few moments later, the melodic tune is joined by split chords on the harp and bell-like percussion, reminiscent of Paloma’s themes in *Le Hérisson*. The addition of these instruments softens the cello melody to provide a youthful sound that aligns more readily with the image of Isabelle. While the opening tune is in fact more rhythmically “masculine,” with evenly-spaced notes in common time, at the end of the track this even rhythm is broken, with the harp and percussion shimmering sporadically over the vibrating strings. The sound does not follow the rhythmic structure previously heard in the track, making it more difficult to identify the even beat provided by the opening cello melody, and masking the overall beat of the track almost completely. This disrupts the even flow of the music, therefore becoming more rhythmically “feminine.” This technique is echoed in the two other composed tracks in the film, “*Chambre 6095*” and “*Jeune et jolie*,” both of which maintain a lush, string base accompaniment. “*Chambre 6095*,” named for the hotel room in which Isabelle meets one of the regular clients, opens with a repetitive string pulse, with shimmering harp chords over the top, followed by the main theme from “*Été*” played on the piano. In the second section of this track, however, the

accompaniment changes to an off-beat rhythm on the piano, comprising a sequence of traditionally “feminine” cadences. In “Jeune et jolie,” we once again hear the main theme, this time played on the glockenspiel and piano, with lighter accompaniment that appears much sparser and detached (and therefore more youthful) than the opening of “Été.” Through the addition of percussive instruments and feminine rhythms to the base melodies of the tracks, the music in *Jeune et jolie* becomes, not only more conventionally “feminine,” but more youthful, combining the musical techniques we have observed in *Le Hérisson* to create a mid-point between the two styles, thereby creating an aural expression of Isabelle’s liminal experience between childhood and adulthood.

One of the main factors that positions Isabelle in this liminal state is her overt sexuality, and it is thus interesting to consider how this may be constructed by the music. Kathryn Kalinak offers a detailed study of the relationship between film music and female sexuality, examining the musical tropes developed in classic Hollywood cinema composition. She asserts that there are two main musical stereotypes that emerge during this period: the “fallen woman,” characterised by jazz instruments, chromatic harmonies, and syncopated rhythms; and the “virtuous wife and mother,” represented by “lush” orchestral violins, even rhythms, and “upward movement” in the melodic sequences (“Fallen Women” 76-77). Like the “feminine” musical characterisation developed in 19th-century classical music, these musical markers for female sexuality developed into stereotypes that featured prominently in classical Hollywood cinema, repeatedly employed in films until they were “firmly entrenched” as a coded system of meaning in film composition (79). Kalinak goes on to note how a film’s music can both reinforce character assumptions, such as in *The Informer*, when Max Steiner’s score exemplifies the above conventions for both the female characters’ identities, or, conversely, disrupt or add nuance to the assumptions (78). For example, in her discussion of *Gone with the Wind*, Kalinak notes how, while both women “are scored as virtuous wife/mother because of their Southern aristocratic upbringing,” there are also differences to their musical characterisation (78). Scarlett O’Hara’s theme, for example, includes “elements of the musical stereotype of the fallen woman,” becoming “more chromatic” as she becomes “more dissociated from a traditional role” (78). Similarly, the instrumentation and melodic material featured in Belle Watling’s theme are suggestive of the “virtuous wife and mother” stereotype, demonstrating

Hollywood's tendency to "look kindly" upon "fallen women" (such as prostitutes) who "made restitution for their sins" (79). As such, while the "fallen woman" and "virtuous wife" stereotypes were widespread and deeply entrenched in scoring practices, individual film scores are able to play with the conventions depending on their specific character needs, adding nuance to a character's aural representation.

In *Jeune et jolie*, this nuance and combination of different musical features and stereotypes is what helps Isabelle's liminal characterisation. Throughout the film, the upward melodic sequences, orchestral instrumentation and even rhythms exemplify Kalinak's "virtuous wife and mother" stereotype, contrasting with her visual characterisation for much of the film: when she begins advertising as a call girl, Isabelle is shown to be manipulative and deceitful, hiding money from and lying to her family. However, the music does not reflect these traits. Instead, the music creates a certain validation and legitimisation of her actions, and does not invite pre-judgement of her character: Isabelle, for all of her faults, is not dislikeable. In fact, the youthful, innocent sounds achieved by the harp and piano aid in our alignment and identification with her as a character, and help to encourage empathy from the spectator: the music reflects Isabelle's youthful innocence, denying the viewer the opportunity to judge as we perhaps would with an older female character. In this way, the music offers a means of communication that Isabelle is not otherwise permitted: she is, throughout the film, extremely non-verbal. Like Paloma in *Le Hérisson*, Isabelle speaks little out loud, often reduced to the role of cold, passive observer. The music thus provides an articulation of Isabelle's character that permits the spectator access to her experience while allowing her to remain silent.

Nevertheless, throughout the film, the music does not only reflect Isabelle's youth and innocence, but also helps to construct her sexuality as it develops throughout the narrative. As the film progresses, Isabelle develops an ever-growing sense of her own sexual identity, and the power that comes with it; this is articulated by the music that accompanies her actions. The shimmering harp, even note spacing and youthful instrumentation of "Été," for example, appear at the beginning of the film, before Isabelle's first sexual experience. The music, as well as emphasising her youth, reflects her sexual innocence, the mellow strings and high cello tone speaking more of idealised romance than of sexual experience or passionate desire. Towards the end of the track, the light,

shimmering percussion and harp played over the fast, vibrating string sound is almost magical, exemplifying Isabelle's youthful innocence. "Chambre 6095," however, heard later in the film, is much more intense. While the magical, shimmering harp and piano heard at the beginning of the track remind us of Isabelle's youthfulness, the majority of the piece presents a more mature, dramatic sound. The cello becomes deeper and richer, and the heavy string accompaniment, based around a repeated pulsing motif, speaks less of romance and more of passion and pleasure. At the end of the track, the harp and piano are almost completely eradicated, replaced by a strong string sound that combines long, expressive notes with discordant harmonies. This discordant sound typifies the chromaticism discussed by Kalinak in reference to the "fallen woman" musical stereotype: the aggressive, clashing sounds in "Chambre 6095" contrast dramatically with the floaty, magical sounds heard in "Été," and help to articulate Isabelle's growing sense of sexual identity and power. At the end of the piece, after a loud, dramatic climax, the harp and piano are heard once more, serving as a sudden reminder of Isabelle's inexperience and underlying naïveté, and ensuring that the spectator remains empathetic and forgiving to her character. The music, therefore, reflects the development of Isabelle's sexual identity: we hear, as well as see, the growth of her confidence and sexual maturity as the film progresses. The track heard at the end of the film, however, is where this aural development is most interesting. Titled "Jeune et jolie," the track provides a shift away from the passionate strings of "Chambre 6095." It begins, like "Été," with buzzing strings accompanying the rise and fall of a cello melody. This melody, however, is joined from the beginning with the youthful percussion sounds found earlier in the film. As such, the track combines two motifs together: we hear both a mature, rich string sound and an emphasised, staccato percussion line. In the middle of the piece, the melodic sequence changes and, rather than rising and falling as it does in the previous two tracks I have discussed, continues to rise upwards throughout the phrase. This upward movement, and the bright, major key it leads to, are much more characteristically virtuous than we have come to expect from the previous musical and visual development of Isabelle's sexual power. Almost as suddenly as it begins, however, this bright sound changes, returning to the minor, solo cello melody heard previously. This final piece, then, provides a mid-point between the others in the score: it articulates both the passionate intensity found in "Chambre 6095"

and the youthful innocence first heard in “Été.” Through the combination of young, old, virtuous, and “fallen” musical features and stereotypes, Rombi’s score articulates the different intensities felt by Isabelle in the film, maintaining a sense of her girl identity while reflecting the development of her sexuality throughout the narrative. In combining different sounds of femininity, the score reflects Isabelle’s liminality: rather than inviting judgement, the music serves as a reminder of her youthfulness and innocence while still demonstrating the more mature aspects of her character. The music thus articulates Isabelle’s navigation of the space between childhood and adulthood, thereby allowing the spectator to come into contact with the specificities of her girlhood experience. The music is intrinsically linked, like in *Le Hérisson*, with the feelings and sensations of girlhood, but it is adapted to reflect the particularities of Isabelle’s expression. The spectator is thus invited to come into contact, not only with a generic expression of girlhood, but with the specific girlhood experience on the screen; the music is able to foster avenues of identification that would otherwise be unavailable. Kalinak writes that the musical score “carries subliminal power to mold audience perception,” with the power to either reinforce or contradict the visual characterisation of a film character (“Fallen Woman” 82). In *Le Hérisson*, the music reinforces Paloma’s visual representation, reflecting her chaotic, youthful femininity through the use of high, syncopated melodies. In *Jeune et jolie*, the music subverts the visual image, using soft melodies and characteristically virtuous sounds to invite the spectator into Isabelle’s world even while we do not understand or agree with her actions. In both of these films, it is possible to identify the beginnings of a “girl” sound, combining feminine musical stereotypes with youthful sounds to articulate “girliness.” This “girl” sound is then able to be manipulated and adapted to express the specificities of the girlhood experience on screen; in this way, the music works in partnership with the image to allow closer contact with the girls’ experience.

***Belle Épine*: Gender Differences in Contemporary Scoring**

So far this chapter has demonstrated how musical stereotypes and conventions are inherited through the classical musical tradition, and how they play into the musical characterisation of on-screen characters. Both of the films that I have examined have featured relatively traditional scoring, using largely conventional instrumentation and melodic themes. What is interesting to

consider, then, is how the stereotypes I have discussed affect, or are affected by, more contemporary styles of composition. While contemporary scoring is distanced from traditional composition techniques, they nevertheless form part of the composition tradition, and therefore still draw on and incorporate elements from older, more traditional techniques. The soundtrack to Rebecca Zlotowski's *Belle Épine* (2010), for example, on first listening, seems far removed from the scores we have heard in *Le Hérisson* and *Jeune et jolie*: the music comprises predominantly electronic and synthesised music, with heavy drum beats and aggressive electric guitar chords throughout. However, what makes *Belle Épine* such an interesting case study is that there are, despite the aggressiveness of the score as a whole, distinct differences separating the tracks associated with male characters and those associated with the female characters. In this film, then, it is possible to observe a development of the stereotypes discussed above, and how certain conventions continue to be used in a more contemporary style.

The film tells the story of Prudence (Léa Seydoux) who, without any parents at home, discovers the dangerous world of the Rungis motorcycle circuit, where she attempts to fit in and earn her own place among the gangs in charge of the track. Narratively, we can draw strong comparisons with *Jeune et jolie*: at sixteen, Prudence is on the cusp of adulthood, her transition through childhood accelerated somewhat by her sudden freedom from parental control, just as Isabelle in *Jeune et jolie* propels herself into adulthood through her dishonesty about her age. Prudence, like Isabelle, is positioned in a state of “inbetweenness,” between childhood and adulthood: she is independent from traditional constraints, while remaining dependent on her older sister and their (largely absent) parents. The soundtrack, like *Jeune et jolie*, comprises both pre-existing and original music, with the original score composed by Robin Coudert under his stage name, Rob. Although this was the first collaboration between Zlotowski and Rob, he went on to compose the scores for all of her subsequent feature films, much like ParaOne became a regular contributor to the works of Céline Sciamma. In fact, music, and the way it features in her films, is extremely important to the filmmaker herself: in an interview given shortly after the film's release, Zlotowski discusses the importance of music in her work:

La musique doit faire partie du film: elle ne doit pas être artificielle. C'est un des outils du film, autant que les images. On a fait la bande son comme si c'était la moitié du scénario. Dans l'attention particulière que j'ai portée à la

musique comme quelque chose qui relevait du scénario, qui participait de l'écriture, et dans l'expression de ce qui ne peut pas être dit, il est clair que j'ai foi en autre chose que dans le dialogue naturaliste entre les gens. (Hurtrez, *Critikat.com*)

For Zlotowski, then, music is much more than background noise, or a superficial comment upon the action: it is an integral element of the film itself, and a tool for expressing the unsaid. Composer Rob expresses similar opinions on the role of music in the film, discussing at interview how “pour *Belle Épine*, je me souviens de longues conversations pour parler des sentiments, de ce que l'on ressent quand on est adolescent, ce que c'est d'être une jeune fille” (Basirico, *Cinezik.com*). What Rob aims to do with the film's music, then, is to express the feelings and sentiments of female adolescence through sound; to allow the spectator to understand what it is to be a girl.



Fig. 4.11 *Belle Épine*. The Rungis motor track.

The original soundtrack, available as a stand-alone album—and included in some DVD box sets as a separate disc—can be separated into two distinct groups of pieces, corresponding with the two different modes of characterisation in the film. The first set comprises the tracks associated less with the individual characters themselves, and more with the motorcycle circuit the teens visit. The main theme in this set is the aptly named “Motors,” featuring heavy percussion and a repetitive electric guitar theme that is reprised in later tracks. The electric guitar features prominently in all of the music associated with Rungis, using aggressive slides and long sustained notes that create a claustrophobic sense of heaviness to match the dark, dangerous scenes at the circuit (fig. 4.11). Previously in this chapter, I discussed how the use of percussive sounds such as those heard in Paloma's themes in *Le Hérisson* help to convey a sense of

youthfulness or innocence. However, the sounds in the motorcycle music heard in *Belle Épine* are nothing like the gentle, light, lilting rhythms of *Le Hérisson*. Rather, the music is aggressive and stereotypically masculine, both rhythmically and instrumentally: using deep sounds from traditionally masculine instruments such as the drum kit and electric guitar, the tracks comprise solid, symmetrical rhythms and even note spacing. “Motors,” and the other pieces like it, are less associated with Prudence as a character than with the Rungis circuit itself and the atmosphere during the nights Prudence spends there with her friends. The stereotypical masculinity of the music distances the sounds from Prudence as a character, rather aligning with the male gangs who descend on the motorcycle track after dark. Although the music is not associated with Prudence’s own character, it nevertheless helps us to understand her feelings while at the circuit, through its reflection of the crowded, suffocating atmosphere, matched by the scenes we view on screen (fig. 4.12). When at the circuit for the first time, Prudence is awed and overwhelmed by the aggression, noise, and crowds. At the same time, the spectator is surrounded by the heavy noise of the music, allowing us to experience the scene in much the same way as Prudence. In Chapter 2, I discussed how songs by male artists create a distance that denies us a closeness with the female characters on screen, while still allowing us to navigate their experience of adolescence. It is a similar effect achieved here through the use of a hyper-masculine composition style: it denies us the closeness achieved by, for example, the stereotypically feminine music found in *Le Hérisson* and *Jeune et jolie*, while simultaneously permitting us an insight into Prudence’s adolescent experience.



Fig. 4.12 *Belle Épine*. Prudence pushes through the crowds.



Fig. 4.13 *Belle Épine*. Prudence walks through the woods.

When Prudence visits Rungis for the first time, after she arrives at a bus stop near to the circuit, the camera follows her as she makes her way through the woods in darkness, lit only very dimly from above (fig. 4.13). The heavy drumbeat and electric guitar of Rob's "Premier Circuit" adds to the disorienting and claustrophobic darkness. Once Prudence arrives at the circuit itself, this sense of disorientation continues, as she walks through the crowds of leather-clad people, unsure of where to go. Prudence herself is largely in shadow, with her back turned to the camera. The camera works here to emphasise Prudence's discomfort and exclusion, keeping her in darkness while focusing on other people at the circuit (fig. 4.14). The music contributes to this exclusion, its steady beat contrasting with Prudence's uncertainty. In Chapter 2, I discussed how the music in *Suzanne* works to emphasise Suzanne's exclusion from youth culture in the bar scene; a similar effect is achieved here in *Belle Épine*. The aggressive nature of the music serves to highlight Prudence's innocence and the fact that she does not fit within the hyper-masculine, dangerous world of the motorcycle circuit. As spectators, we are visually aligned with Prudence, following her through the crowds, and this alignment is reinforced by the music, which continues throughout the scene and denies us the opportunity to hear the conversations of the people whom Prudence does not know. As such, the music provides a means of distancing the spectator from Rungis, as well as highlighting Prudence's exclusion. Later in the sequence, when Prudence and her friend, Maryline, are in the café, Prudence looks out to a group of men servicing a motorcycle as "Motors" begins to play. Once again, the contrast between the world of the bikers and that of Prudence is contrasted, with Prudence now positioned in the well-lit interior of the café while the men outside are in darkness, lit dramatically from the side by



Fig. 4.14 *Belle Épine*. The camera emphasises Prudence's exclusion.



Fig. 4.15 *Belle Épine*. Prudence watches the bikers.

a motorcycle light (fig. 4.15). The matching of the masculine music with this image once again serves to highlight Prudence's exclusion: this is a world in which she does not belong, but so desperately wants to fit into.

The second set of pieces on the soundtrack is drastically different, and much more readily associated with Prudence herself: we hear them when she is

alone on screen, or when her emotions are emphasised by the narrative. The first track of this type is “Xy,” and is starkly different from the music that appears before it. The track begins with a xylophone-like synth, which plays a syncopated, bell-like melody over a simple bass line. The contrast between these lighter, more syncopated sounds and the sounds in “Motors” is dramatic: where “Motors” is low, aggressive, and strong, “Xy” is higher-pitched, gentle and syncopated. It is this syncopation that is particularly interesting in the context of musical stereotypes. The piece is in simple time, with four beats in a bar, but rather than ending on the first or third beats (the “strong” beats), the majority of the phrases end on beat two or on the off-beats of the bar (fig. 4.16). As such, phrases are often delayed, postponing the end of a cadence by one beat. The delaying of the cadence typifies the “feminine” cadences found in, as I discuss above, 19th-century Romantic music. Despite the contemporary style of the piece, these are in fact the most traditional examples of feminine cadences that I have observed so far in this chapter. In addition to these traditional cadences, the track also features more “feminine” rhythms throughout, with an off-beat, syncopated tune over the top of the main melody that disrupts the straight tempo and symmetrical rhythms underneath that would be more typical of traditionally masculine music. The instrumentation, too, contrasts with the virile, masculine sounds of the electric guitar used in “Motors” and the other tracks associated with Rungis. Instead, “Xy” features higher pitches on bells and synth that are both more feminine and more youthful in style than the aggressive instrumentation heard in earlier tracks. Indeed, even once the synth is joined by a drumbeat, the drums do not play a solid, heavy beat like the one featured in “Motors,” but rather a chaotic, arrhythmic sequence that emphasises Prudence’s femininity and youthfulness. Just as the tracks in *Le Hérisson*, for example, contrast Paloma’s youthfulness with Madame Michel’s age by using higher sounds and staccato rhythms, here the faster, less predictable rhythmic structure contrasts Prudence’s femininity with the hyper-masculinity of the Rungis motorcycle track.



Fig. 4.16 A transcription of “Xy.” The position of the beats is marked by vertical lines to illustrate the syncopation of the piece.

The next piece on the soundtrack, “Épiphanie,” once again presents a contrast to the Rungis pieces. The track opens with the sound of two flutes playing in harmony, accompanied initially by sustained, high strings, and followed by a harp-like, plucked guitar. This instrumentation is reminiscent of the pieces heard in *Jeune et jolie*, adding a youthfulness and femininity to the film-space. The plucked guitar line provides a more clipped, separated accompaniment that offers a contrast to the very smooth flute melody on top, and injects a stereotypical youthfulness into the piece. In addition, the piece is, like the music from *Le Hérisson* discussed above, in triple time, offering increased opportunities for “feminine” cadences. Indeed, there is a lot of emphasis throughout the piece on the second beat of the bar, creating a disruptive, lilting rhythm that feels much more focused on the off-beat, even though the phrases are in fact quite rhythmically straight. This sense of disrupted musical time occurs in many of the pieces on the soundtrack, and most often with those that are paired, as with “Xy” and “Épiphanie,” with Prudence as a character. “Cheyenne” and “Le Rayon,” the two other pieces most closely related with Prudence, both begin with syncopated rhythms, which disrupt the steady beat. In the case of “Le Rayon,” this syncopation makes it almost impossible to detect a clear time signature: while the piece eventually lands in simple time after the introduction, at the beginning it is not clear at all. I have discussed above how the disruption of the time signature plays into traditionally feminine musical stereotypes, creating a sound that is much more “girl(y)” than strict, straight rhythms. Here, the disruption of the steady, masculine beat, combined with the visual matching of the music with Prudence, marks the piece as more feminine, encouraging a closeness with the protagonist that is not achieved by the more stereotypically masculine pieces on the soundtrack.

I have already explored how the music in *Jeune et jolie* helps articulate Isabelle’s liminal position between childhood and adulthood through the combination of different musical stereotypes that simultaneously reflect youthfulness, experience, and sexual development. In *Belle Épine*, the syncopated disruption of the steady beat achieves a similar effect, whereby the music aids in our navigation of Prudence’s position. While the music features a simple time signature and traditional, non-chromatic harmonies, markers of Prudence’s independence and desired maturity, the syncopated and chaotic rhythms betray her youthfulness and innocence. In “Le Rayon,” this is

emphasised particularly through the instrumentation, with bell-like synth tones and detached piano chords playing over more traditional, lower-pitched, sustained strings. The detached, percussive nature of the main theme is distinctly youthful, much like the sounds heard in Paloma's themes in *Le Hérisson*, and it detracts from the more traditional, stereotypically older sounds of the strings. As the piece progresses, the string sound evolves, increasing in pitch until it becomes almost voice-like, and ends on a high, sighing soprano note. Reminiscent of a female voice, this synthesised sound feminises the piece, marking the music as feminine and aligning more closely with Prudence.

In *Belle Épine*, then, while the score itself is much more contemporary and rooted in popular music styles than the music in *Jeune et jolie* or *Le Hérisson*, the music still makes use of compositional stereotypes and conventions, marking certain themes as more “feminine” or “girl(y)” than others. In this way, the score contrasts between Prudence's femininity and the stereotypically aggressive masculinity of the motorcycle track. This distinct contrast between Prudence's music and that associated with Rungis serves to emphasise Prudence's exclusion: she gets an invite only because she has an empty house to offer her new friends, and though she tries so desperately hard to fit in, she is always positioned outside of the group environment. The music associated with Prudence highlights her femininity and youthfulness against the environment of the motorcycle track, and the aggressive nature of the music associated with Rungis serves to exclude her—and the spectator—further. Thus, the stereotypically feminine sounds featured in Prudence's accompanying music permits, like the female-voiced songs discussed in Chapter 2, a closeness that is denied by the more masculine-oriented tracks, which emphasise the overwhelming experience and danger of the motorcycle racing, and are distanced from Prudence's personal identity. That the music attached to Prudence is filled with traditionally feminine stereotypes demonstrates their continued existence, however unconscious their inclusion may be, in contemporary composition. The music associated with Prudence as a character simply *feels* more girl(y) than the other music, and it is this feeling, created by stereotypical instrumentation, rhythms, and phrasing, that helps to align it with Prudence and contrast between her characterisation and that of the Rungis motor track. The use of traditional “feminine” cadences, percussive melodies, and high pitches ensure that Prudence's music feels youthful and feminine, highlighting her status as a girl,

and aiding in our navigation of her experience during the film. This is combined with the contemporary, electronic scoring: as I discussed in Chapter 3, the electronic genre itself presents a youthful, adolescent sound that aids in the spectator's identification with young on-screen characters. Thus, these two modes of meaning overlap and combine, to create an overall youthful, but also crucially girl(y), aural environment that aligns us with Prudence, and assists in the navigation of her experience and the articulation of her sensations.

Aural Character Development in *Bande de filles*

I have discussed Sciamma's *Bande de filles* (2014) previously in this thesis, investigating the significance of the pre-existing songs on the soundtrack in Chapter 2. However, it is not only the pre-existing music in the film that is interesting for the concerns of this thesis, and particularly for the concerns of this chapter. The rest of the music on the soundtrack comprises a score composed by Sciamma's frequent collaborator, Jean-Baptiste de Laubier, working under his performance name, ParaOne. As I have mentioned previously, *Bande de filles* features more music than either of Sciamma's previous feature films, comprising 27.5% of the film's total runtime. The emphasis the film places on music as a marker of character identity, demonstrated by the privileged position given to the pre-existing songs, combined with its direct link between the score and the protagonist's character development, is what makes this film a particularly interesting case study. The music is, like the score in *Belle Épine*, electronic in style, and features lots of synthesised instrumentation. However, while Rob's score for Zlotowski's film features, as demonstrated above, many traditional composition techniques in its differentiation of gender, the score in *Bande de filles* is less obvious in its feminisation. All of the music featured in the original score is very steady and rhythmic, and therefore does not immediately conform to traditionally "feminine" stereotypes. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the music in *Bande de filles* is very much linked to its girl characters, and particularly in the development of protagonist Marième's identity. The film is split into chapter-like sections, separated by a black screen that signals the change to the spectator. It is over these blank transition screens that we hear the majority of ParaOne's score, signifying both a change in time, and a change for main protagonist Marième, which is manifested either by a change in characterisation or by a choice she has to make. The black screens visible while the music is

playing ensure that nothing distracts from the music itself: the music is foregrounded in the viewing experience and, in those moments, is the only available method of understanding meaning in the film text. What is interesting to consider, then, is how the music encourages identification between the spectator and the protagonists, even though it is non-traditional in its style. How can the music still sound “girl,” and retain a certain youthful femininity, even if its stereotypes are less obvious? There are no traditionally feminine cadences in the music in *Bande de filles*: the music is, from the perspective of its cadences, traditionally “masculine,” usually ending on a strong beat. However, while the music is generally symmetrical and straight in rhythmic structure, it is nevertheless closely aligned with the female characters, and does not deny us the closeness achieved by Prudence’s themes in *Belle Épine* in the same way that the “Rungis” tracks do. Indeed, the music in *Bande de filles* is drastically different from the hyper-masculine themes of the motorcycle tracks discussed above. What I am interested in, here, is how the music is able to retain this closeness while rejecting, at least on the surface, the traditional feminine stereotypes discussed so far.

The main theme of the soundtrack, named “Girlhood” after the English translation of the film’s title, has a very symmetrical, set beat: features that would, if examining the music using the framework of stereotypes discussed so far in this chapter, mark the piece as masculine, in contrast to, for example, the lilting, asymmetrical rhythms heard in *Le Hérisson* and *Jeune et jolie*. However, like some of the tracks in *Belle Épine*, the time signature is in fact hard to detect when listening to the piece. Consisting of lots of repetitive, pulsing chords, the track contains little melody; that is to say, there is no obvious differentiation between a tune and accompaniment. As such, the location of each of the beats is difficult to pick out, without the assistance that a distinct melody line would offer. Using the changing harmonies, it is possible to separate the music into bars of three, four, or six beats, with each beat separated into four, six, or one notes respectively. It is only when the bass line comes in, followed by the syncopated string motif over the top of the repeating chords, that it becomes possible to differentiate between the beats of each bar and place the piece more convincingly in triple time. I have discussed how music in triple time (with three beats in a bar) creates more opportunities for feminine rhythms than the more masculine common time, and usually includes lilting, waltz-like melodies that are more readily identified as

feminine than masculine. However, while ParaOne's "Girlhood" makes use of this more feminine time signature, the steady subdivision of the beats refuses any opportunity for smooth, lilting rhythms, thereby masculinising the triple time signature. However, the string motif that begins towards the middle of the piece is syncopated against this steady subdivision, disrupting the rhythm and making the track even more chaotic. This disruption of the masculine rhythm is where the track gains an amount of stereotypical femininity, with the high strings interrupting and playing against the strong pulsing of the masculine accompaniment. It is this combination of strong, steady repetition and chaotic syncopation that relates so emphatically with the non-stereotypical femininity displayed by the protagonists. I have already shown how, in this film, the girls are extremely quiet, either when alone or with male characters. When the girls are together, however, they present themselves as tough, loud, violent, and outspoken, which are all stereotypically more masculine traits. Indeed, when Marième begins working for drug dealer Abou, and lives with two young men, she deliberately masculinises herself, binding her breasts and wearing baggy clothing (fig. 4.17). In this film then, the girls enact a form of femininity that is marked with stereotypically masculine features. This masculinity is, of course, moderated by stereotypical, highly sexualised displays of femininity, such as, as I discussed in Chapter 2, when the girls are dancing together. This combination of masculine and feminine traits is mirrored in the music, in which the steady, symmetrical beat's masculinity is tempered by the syncopated, chaotic string tune. While the music is not as stereotypically feminine as that in *Belle Épine*, there are nevertheless elements of the gendered musical stereotypes discussed so far in this chapter that occur in the scoring.

Another track from the film, and the first that appears on the soundtrack album, "Néon," is similar to "Girlhood" in its construction, though it is much easier to hear the triple time beat from the beginning of the piece. The track makes use, like "Girlhood," of a repetitive chord pattern that, despite its steadiness, retains elements of youthful femininity. The track features high pitches, emphasising the girls' youthfulness and femininity in much the same way as the high flute sounds in *Le Hérisson*, or the strings in *Belle Épine*. Indeed, the instrumentation throughout the soundtrack to *Bande de filles* is conventionally very "girly," with high-pitched sounds from string instruments or tuned percussion. In "Néon (reprise)" and "Girlhood (reprise)," both re-imaginings of the pieces already



Fig. 4.17 *Bande de filles*. Marième wears baggy clothing.

discussed in this chapter, the introductions comprise percussive melodies played on the marimba. These melodies are reminiscent of the tunes heard in Paloma's themes in *Le Hérisson*, adding a chaotic sense of youthfulness to the music. The marimba melody is, like the strings in "Girlhood," highly syncopated, and is thus disruptive to the beat of the pieces. This disruption of the beat marks the music as more stereotypically feminine. In both of the reprises, the marimba introduction later combines with the repeated string chords from the original tracks; this emphasises the disruptive nature of the marimba, causing a chaotic mix of syncopated tuned percussion, steady, repeated string chords, and a triple time beat. Like the tracks in *Le Hérisson* or *Jeune et jolie*, these pieces in *Bande de filles* combine high-pitched instrumentation with rhythmic elements that add both a sense of youthfulness and a stereotypically "feminine" sound.

What makes ParaOne's score for *Bande de filles* most interesting is the way the music directly relates to Marième's character development throughout the narrative. The music not only relates to a general sense of youthful femininity, but also to the specific version of girlhood on screen. In the beginning of the film, Marième and her friends are stuck at a juncture: it seems they have few choices that can make a difference for their future. The musical score, heard between the film's chapters, reflect any decision Marième has to make, or any development to her character. As such, the music acts as a marker between each major change of situation or choice of path. The pulsing strings, which features in all of the tracks, reflects this constant decision-making; the sense that no pathway is obvious or correct; and the weight of each of Marième's options. The pulsing strings are heady and loud, representative of the impact of the film's events on Marième as a character. The repetition and close harmony creates a heaviness

that recreates Marième's experience, thereby making it more tangible for the spectator: the music provides the opportunity to experience sensations similar to those felt by Marième, both increasing our alignment with her as a character, and offering a means of navigating her experience.

This means of understanding is particularly important in this film where, as I have mentioned previously, the girls do not express themselves through dialogue: while they are loud and vocal as a group, when they are separated—and particularly when they are with male characters—they are much quieter. The noise they make as a group is, while high in volume, often lacking in coherent substance. Heather Warren-Crow, drawing on Adriana Cavarero's work comparing *phone* (noise) and *semantike* (meaning), argues that girls' voices are often dismissed as noise rather than meaningful speech, noting how speech coaches dismiss the "girly voice" for its "laziness and inauthenticity" ("Screaming" 1113). This contrast between "girl noise" and more masculine speech is mirrored in *Bande de filles* where the girls' chatter comprises only inseparable and incoherent shouts, compared with the low volume and even silence of the girls' individual voices. It is these gaps of communication that are filled by the musical interludes between the film's chapters. Unlike in *Belle Épine*, where some of the pieces seem to relate specifically to Prudence as a character, and some to the environment around her, in *Bande de filles* almost all of the score refers explicitly to Marième and her friends. In "Les Etages," a track heard near the beginning of the film, we hear high string sounds accompanied by sporadic, low bass beats, similar to the rhythm of a heartbeat. Like "Girlhood" and "Néon," there is no clear time signature or beat: the bass seems to come and go, with no indication of a specific time. The strings are then joined by other seemingly random sounds on the synth, playing sustained notes and pulses in both the extreme high and extreme low registers. What is particularly interesting about this track, however, is the use of volume. The track is, compared with the other sounds in the film, quite loud, dipping in volume only slightly towards the end of the piece. Indeed, there is a lot of sound throughout the piece, with a sustained synth and strings that naturally increase in volume as the notes are held. However, despite the amount of sound we hear during the piece, it still feels sparse: it is not the rich, melodic sound we hear in "Madame Michel" in *Le Hérisson*, for example; instead, the music feels heavy, but not "full." In this way, the music is reflective of how Marième expresses herself: she is both loud (when in a group) and silent (when

alone); both vocal and sparse. This disjointedness is mirrored in much of the music heard during the film, with high sustained strings creating a loud volume, but thin texture. Where, the disruptive rhythms and high notes mark the music as feminine and youthful, the pieces are also adapted to reflect the specific sensations and experiences of the characters on screen.

In *Bande de filles*, while the music itself is contemporary and seems very steady and symmetrical, it nevertheless draws on certain stereotypes and compositional conventions that mark the music as “girl.” The score to *Bande de filles* thus demonstrates how these stereotypes become anchored in compositional practice, while also remaining adaptable to reflect the specificities of different girlhood experiences. In its use of disruptive rhythms, high pitches, and instrumentation, the music is marked as stereotypically youthful and feminine. This immediately offers the spectator a means of alignment with the girl characters on screen by assisting in the creation of a girl-oriented space and permitting a closeness to the girl characters in much the same way as the female-voiced songs examined in Chapter 2. However, the music also infers the specific sensations of girlhood experienced by the film’s characters, through the adapting of stereotypes and the nuance provided by the music’s composition and context within the film itself. The music therefore invites the spectator into the narrative, and provides a means of experiencing the film’s events simultaneously with Marième: the musical chapter breaks in *Bande de filles* assist in our navigation of her identity development. Overall, then, the music provides a means of aligning with Marième and her friends, even though they are not permitted the freedom to speak their feelings aloud. The music’s stereotypical femininity aligns it with the girl characters, and therefore permits us an avenue by which to enter their world, while the nuances within the composition itself provide more specific identification with the characters.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the continued existence of gendered musical stereotypes, exploring how stereotypes and conventions borne out of both 19th-century Romantic and classical Hollywood composition continue to appear in contemporary film scoring. These stereotypes, passed down and perpetuated within the timeline of composition history, become entrenched in social and cultural memory, therefore providing, as with the genre stereotypes

discussed in Chapter 3, a form of pre-existing association or meaning for the listener. Although stereotypes can be viewed as reductive or essentialist, they can also facilitate the communication of meaning. The association of certain instruments or rhythms with femininity, for example, while borne out of normative dichotomies that mark femininity as weak, quiet, and passive against masculinity's strength, volume and active nature, nevertheless provides an easy avenue of identification between listeners/spectators and female characters, due to the unconscious, semi-automatic responses elicited by the music. As such, stereotypically feminine music enables a triangulation of closeness between the music, the female characters, and the spectator: the music is more easily associated with the characters, which subsequently facilitates identification for the spectator. The composition can then be adapted to align more strongly with the specific experience depicted in a given film. In *Le Hérisson*, for example, both of the female characters' themes contain stereotypically "feminine" elements, but then differ according to age, with "Madame Michel" much lower, smoother, and mature than the frenetic, chaotic youthfulness inferred by the percussive themes associated with Paloma. This inflection of youthfulness using higher pitches and percussive melodies occurs in all of the case studies discussed in this chapter. While there has been very little research into the relationship between musical sound and perceived age, this chapter has revealed that there are distinct differences between the composition styles associated with older or younger characters. While it is beyond the scope of this project to examine this relationship between music and age in more detail, this is something that could, and should, be investigated in further study to cement the links revealed by the detailed analysis in this chapter.

This relationship between music and age has particular impact on the composition for adolescent characters. In *Jeune et jolie*, for example, we hear a combination of youthful and mature sounds that reflect Isabelle's liminal experience between childhood and adulthood, as well as a combination of sexual stereotypes that facilitate our navigation of her sexual development throughout the narrative. In *Belle Épine*, the differences between the hyper-masculinity of the musical tracks associated with the Rungis motorcycle circuit and the gentler, more feminine composition associated with Prudence demonstrate the continued existence, even in contemporary scoring, of gendered musical stereotypes, and show how stereotypes can provide a useful tool for composers to encourage

identification between the spectator and their characters. The stereotypical femininity of the tracks in *Belle Épine* encourages a closeness between Prudence and the spectator: as in Chapter 2, which discussed how the pairing of a female voice with female characters reduces the perceived distance created by the pairing of a male voice with a female body, the use of stereotypically more feminine music permits the spectator to come into closer contact with the female character(s) on screen. In contrast, stereotypically masculine music—such as that heard during the Rungis sequences—maintains a distance and emphasises Prudence’s exclusion. This closeness is even more evident in *Bande de filles* when, even though the music is largely heard over a black screen, with no characters visible, it is clearly related to Marième’s experiences. The music draws on feminine stereotypes to disrupt the masculinity of the music, demonstrating its alignment with the female characters, and its position as a chapter marker throughout the film permits the spectator to simultaneously reflect on the previous action, predict the next chapter, and feel the weight of Marième’s decisions at the same time as the character.

By its nature, film music functions within a system of coded meanings, which are largely drawn from stereotypes that become embedded as conventions. Both Kalinak and Kassabian have discussed this link between musical stereotype and identification, demonstrating that film music, by adhering to existing codes and conventions, can facilitate engagement from the spectator and open avenues of identification or understanding that were not previously open. This chapter has employed detailed musicological readings of the chosen film scores to demonstrate *how* these stereotypes are manifested in film, and therefore how they have the ability to “sound” girl(y). This subsequently facilitates the spectator’s navigation of the girl(y) film-space and offers a means of expression that goes beyond the verbal. It is worth noting, here, that not all film music may be employed to relate to character in this way; as I discussed in the introduction to this thesis, film music has many functions, not all of which relate to character. Nevertheless, the films I discuss, both in this chapter and in the thesis as a whole, are particularly character-driven, and thus the music inevitably plays a role in how we react to and identify with those characters. In a fiction film, music is a device that filmmakers have at their disposal to assist with the spectator’s navigation of the film storyworld, and therefore of the characters’ experience of that world. This chapter has demonstrated one way that music can

be used to this effect, and how it achieves this. As it functions within an existing system of meaning, originally composed music can mean through association in similar ways to pre-existing music, thereby providing additional avenues of communication with the spectator. Where, as I discussed in the previous chapters of this thesis, pre-existing music can draw on spectator knowledge to facilitate communication, original music does not have the same capability. However, deeply entrenched stereotypes and conventions force a kind of recognition, enabling original music to communicate in a similarly referential way. The soundtracks of the films discussed in this chapter all make use of certain “feminine” elements that, while they do not necessarily represent a conscious choice from the composer, facilitate the association of the music with the female characters and therefore as a means of communicating their experiences. Music that “sounds” feminine is, as with the female-voiced songs discussed in Chapter 2, more easily attached to female characters; the feminine-sounding music encourages a closeness between the spectator and the character that is not permitted by traditionally masculine-sounding music. These stereotypes combine with other musical elements to interact with the specificities of the girls’ particular experiences, creating not only a general sound of girlhood, but also engaging directly with the on-screen characters and providing a means of navigating their feelings and experiences. Overall, this chapter has revealed some of the potential “sounds of girlhood” that can enable the spectator to enter into the girls’ adolescent film storyworld while retaining the required privacy of the girl characters, thereby creating extra knowledge that links the external world of the spectator and the internal film world and providing an alternative means of communication that moves beyond the verbal.

Conclusion

During an interview after the release of *Naissance des pieuvres*, Céline Sciamma states that “je pense bien sûr qu’on ne naît pas fille, on le devient. Donc ce moment précis de la naissance du désir, de la problématique amoureuse, c’est aussi la naissance de la problématique de la féminité” (Lalanne, *Les Inrockuptibles*). For Sciamma, then, girlhood is a moment of “becoming,” which is intrinsically linked to feeling. This is because, as Sciamma explains, the moment one begins to desire, when one gains the capacity to feel, is also the moment that the “problematics” of femininity—the sense of what it is to identify as a woman in society—are born. When one *feels* a certain way, therefore, one *becomes* a girl. This notion of girlhood becoming echoes others within the field of girl studies, who position girlhood as a process that is constantly in flux. As Monica Swindle writes, drawing on Judith Butler’s discussion of the process of “girling,” girlhood is “contingent and indeterminate, always necessarily ongoing and incomplete” (“Feeling Girl”). Girlhood forms part of the process of “becoming-woman,” representing a stage between childhood and womanhood; however, it can also reverse this process and “girlify” women (“Feeling Girl”). Girlhood is therefore a fluctuating process, governed by feelings that are never static. The four chapters that comprise this thesis have argued that music can provide a means of bringing us into contact with these feelings, of making audible—and thus comprehensible—the otherwise unexpressed specificities of girlhood experience when they are represented on film. Music takes the embodied emotions and sensations of a particular girl character and provides a non-identical, non-corporeal way for spectators to understand them without appropriating them. As Anahid Kassabian writes, music “draws filmgoers into a film’s world [...] it conditions identification processes, the encounters between film texts and filmgoers’ psyches” (1). Music has the power to provide a point of contact between the film storyworld and the world of the spectator, adding layers of meaning to a film that slip between the diegesis and the non-diegesis. This fosters identification between spectators and on-screen characters, and permits girlhood expression to escape the visible female body in which it is confined by patriarchal systems that seek to protect the male subject from his own deficiency in being unable to access a feminine subjectivity. This thesis therefore demonstrates music’s ability to liberate the female experience from these

confines, and to re-establish a means of girlhood expression that is located outside of the visible body.

French Cinema: A Cinema of Music and Femininity?



Fig. 5.1 *Cléo de 5 à 7*. Cléo sings emotionally towards the camera.

In Agnès Varda's *Cléo de 5 à 7* / *Cleo from 5 to 7* (1962), a young singer, the eponymous Cléo (Corinne Marchand), anxiously awaits news regarding a cancer diagnosis. At the film's halfway point, the self-centred and shallow Cléo sings a song, accompanied on the piano by her composer, played by Michel Legrand (who was also the song's composer in reality). As she sings, the camera closes in, until the signs of her apartment setting are removed from the frame and all that is visible is Cléo's tear-stained face against a black background (fig. 5.1). Momentarily, time stops: in this film, where the uncontrollable passing of time—be it agonisingly slowly or too fast—is foregrounded in the viewing experience, this musical moment forces the spectator to stop and *listen*. We are brought into Cléo's world, and experience, at the same time as the protagonist herself, her transition from object to subject; from observed to observer; from superficial to melancholy and emotional. As Phil Powrie writes, this is a "momentous musical moment" in which the song "affects us as deeply as it does her" (*Crystal-Song 2*). This music, then, is as important for the development of Cléo's identity within the film storyworld as it is for our perception of that development: it permits the viewer to experience this moment of emotion simultaneously with Cléo, thereby bringing us into much closer contact with her as a character.

Nearly twenty years later, in Jean-Jacques Beineix's *Diva* (1981), it is music, and specifically the aria "Ebben? Ne andrò lontana" from Catalani's opera *La Wally*, performed by titular diva Cynthia Hawkins (Wilhelmenia Wiggins Fernandez), which glues the otherwise confusing narrative together. When the aria is performed for the first time, at the beginning of the film, we are simultaneously invited to view the effects of the performance on the audience—and in particular her young admirer, Jules (Frédéric Andréi)—and experience the performance as if we ourselves are audience members. At the end of the aria, the camera focuses in on Cynthia's face as she gazes emotionally up to the sky, before facing forwards, almost—but not quite—into the camera (fig. 5.2). The song, and Jules' illegal recording of it, provides a link to Cynthia's operatic world, offering a way for Jules and, by extension, the spectator, to feel closer to Cynthia.



Fig. 5.2 *Diva*. Cynthia sings the aria from *La Wally*.

These two examples foreground the significance of music for the construction of youthful female identities, a significance the films themselves underline through making their characters singers, and naming themselves after this figure. Furthermore, such careful attention to the emotional worlds of female protagonists is highly unusual in the broader industrial and production contexts from which these films emerge. Famously, Varda was the only female director associated with the New Wave, and, as Genevieve Sellier comments, "*Cléo from 5 to 7* [...] and *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (Resnais, 1959) are the sole films from this period to attempt to position a female character as a focal consciousness with whom the subject might identify" (126). Beineix's *Diva* riffs on film noir tropes, as befits its postmodern desire to play with genre. This allows it to revisit the figure

of the *femme fatale*, and the diva is transformed into a warm, caring, maternal figure who can be trusted and is able to trust in return. These two films hint at the importance of music, both for the forging of sympathetic youthful female identities on film, and for French cinema in general. This thesis addresses both of these areas, offering a feminist film music analysis of contemporary French cinema. Such an approach, drawing from the disciplines of film studies, musicology, and girlhood studies, builds on the insights offered by Varda and Beineix: music offers a way into the complexity of film girls' worlds which opens them up to us, while also respecting the girl's autonomy and agency.

This thesis looks at contemporary French film, arguing that music allows us to access a young, female subjectivity that escapes the confines of the diegesis. This focus on the contemporary is due to the increased interest in female experience and subjectivity that scholars such as Carrie Tarr and Brigitte Rollet (*Cinema and the Second Sex*), Emma Wilson ("Children, Emotion and Viewing"), Tim Palmer (*Brutal Intimacy*), and Mary Harrod (*From France with Love*) have remarked upon in the current French cinematic landscape. Furthermore, as Palmer demonstrates, given French cinema's long-standing institutional support for the debutant and youthful filmmaker, this increased representation of female experience and emotion has been especially marked by an intense interest in girlhood. Palmer discusses the five 2008 nominations for the "Best First Film" César to illustrate his point; all directed or co-directed by female filmmakers (Lola Doillon, Céline Sciamma, Mia Hansen-Løve, Anne Le Ny, and Marjane Satrapi), and four of the five specifically focused on a girl's coming-of-age. However, none of these scholars have paid particular attention to the importance of music to the representation of female subjectivity. Indeed, there have been few scholarly interventions that deal with music in French cinema; as Powrie argues, while the study of film music is now a "major strand" of film scholarship, the vast majority of works focus exclusively on Hollywood cinema (*Crystal-Song* 4). Even in French-language scholarship, including the now canonical *œuvre* of Michel Chion, very few works focus specifically on French cinema. Cécile Carayol's recent work on symphonic scoring has, to some extent, begun to address this imbalance, as has Powrie's extensive work on the subject; this thesis joins these interventions to extend and enrich the existing field of film music study beyond Hollywood.

Therefore, this thesis tackles two main gaps in scholarship. On the one hand, it builds on work by Powrie and Carayol and attends to the importance of film music in French cinema. On the other hand, while the theme of gender in relation to film has been discussed in France, notably through the work of Geneviève Sellier, the precise question of girls and girlhood remains unexplored. Girlhood studies concentrates specifically on the construction of femininity during adolescence, the period in which the girl is being constructed as future consumer/citizen. Currently, Anglophone scholarship (including the works of Diane Negra, Catherine Driscoll, Moya Lockett, Mary Celeste Kearney, Faye Woods, and Sarah Projansky), which is mainly focused on Anglophone cultural production, dominates the field. Caroline Caron, whose work focuses on Québécois girls, underlines the absence of francophone girlhood in girlhood studies (“Girlhood Scholar”). Rachel Gouin and Fathiya Wais explain that this Anglophone approach creates “a form of [...] homogenization which silences diverse and alternative stories of girlhood” (34). As such, this thesis opens up the study of girlhood representation in contemporary cinema and stresses the need for awareness of linguistic and locational diversity. Music is particularly compelling for this analysis, as it slips between and around questions of language and diversity, sometimes tied to a particular language/national context through song or genre, and other times resisting such classifications, moving beyond speech and place. It is precisely this slipperiness that my thesis finds productive: with its ability to move between the diegesis and the non-diegesis, the film’s storyworld and the world of the spectator, music provides a means of girlhood expression that moves beyond the verbal and brings us into contact with the world of the girl figure, while nevertheless retaining her privacy.

The Constraints of Visibility in Girl Studies

Indeed, such attention to the question of voice, music, and language is unusual in girls’ media studies. Anita Harris writes that, in recent years, girls “suddenly seem to be everywhere. They are the new heroes of popular culture, the dominant faces on college campuses and the spokespeople of public education campaigns” (xvii). In contemporary media, it seems, the figure of the girl is as, if not more, prevalent than at any other time. With this apparent prevalence, however, is an emphasis on *visibility*. Girls are “seen” everywhere: in magazines, on advertising boards, on TV and in film. The girl figure, where

once she was confined to the domestic sphere, is now out in the public domain for all to see. Yet, as Angela McRobbie writes, this increased visibility comes at the cost of audibility (*Aftermath* 18). Girls are seen, but not heard: they are hyper-visible, but are not permitted freedom of expression. While girls have entered into the visible public sphere, their voices must remain unheard in order to count as a “true” girl.¹ Lyn Mikel Brown discusses the ramifications of this requirement to remain silent, noting the impact it has on adolescence in particular:

What begins as boldness and an ability to express a plurality of feeling and thoughts in young girls seems to narrow over time as girls become increasingly pressured at the edge of adolescence to fall in line with the dominant [...] social construction of reality. At this edge, girls’ childhood experiences strain against words and categories that stubbornly resist their appropriation. In other words, girls’ experiences, strong feelings, and opinions come up against a relational impasse that constrains possibilities and shuts down their loud voices, a wall of “shoulds” in which approval is associated with silence, love with selflessness, relationship with subordination and lack of conflict, and anger or strong feelings with danger or disruption. (109)

Here, Brown not only identifies the dominant social constraints that demand girls’ silence, but also demonstrates the importance of “feeling” to the girlhood experience. The process of girlhood is marked by a “plurality of feeling and thoughts,” an excess of emotions and sensations that, as a girl approaches adolescence, are repressed by the need to conform to patriarchal constructions of femininity. The feelings of girlhood, then, are contained within the young feminine body, internalised and closed off to the outside. This thesis asks, therefore, how it is possible to represent these experiences and feelings in film, while retaining the required privacy and verbal silence of the girl figure. How is it possible to access the internalised girlhood experience as a spectator, and, if the feelings that define the experience of girlhood are non-verbal, how can they be expressed? In bringing together two seemingly distinct areas of study—film music and girlhood studies, both of which are concerned with issues of representation and identification, this thesis puts forward a theory of girlhood audibility to run alongside the current emphasis on girlhood visibility. The French specificity provides a rich context for this theorisation. As I discussed in the introduction to

¹ This is something that is tackled by the “Ban Bossy” campaign, started in 2014 by LeanIn.org, which aims to address the vocabulary used to describe girls and boys who “assert themselves” verbally, arguing that “when a little boy asserts himself, he’s called a ‘leader.’ Yet when a little girl does the same, she risks being branded ‘bossy’” (*BanBossy.com*).

this thesis, there has been a recent focus in the French media on the appearance of young girls, who are required to remain secular, through the banning of religious attire, whilst also remaining “decent” as determined by—largely male-led—institutions and authorities. This focus on the visible and the control of the girl figure within the visible realm, however, is also applicable to girls elsewhere in the world. The ramifications of this visibility, as well as the potential impact of the audible, in other national contexts, could provide rich discussions for future research.

Music and Emotion: Between the General and the Specific

The main concern of this thesis is *how* music achieves its level of identification with the girl subject. As music functions in a number of ways, both within and outside of the on-screen film-space, questions of specificity and genericity have permeated this discussion. It is music’s ability to move between the general and the specific that makes it adept at opening up the girl character, while nevertheless allowing her to retain autonomy. Music, with its ability to be both verbal and non-verbal, diegetic and non-diegetic, embodied and disembodied, slips between spaces and encourages identification, yet it also retains enough distance to allow the girl subject a certain opacity and agency. Music is able to signify both generally and specifically: it can evoke general emotions and feelings while also referring specifically to moments, sensations, or memories. As such, music has the power to move from the general into the specific, through the elicitation of general sensations or emotions, to bring us closer to the specificities of experience represented on screen. This was seen in Chapter 1 where the inclusion of Supergrass’s “Alright” in *LOL* creates a general feeling of youthfulness that subsequently helps to align us with Lola as a character and thereby facilitates the navigation of her adolescent experience. Similarly, the use of popular music associated with youth, such as the inclusion of contemporary pop in *Respire* (Chapter 1), or the use of electronic music in *Naissance des pieuvres* (Chapter 3), retains a certain verisimilitude. By including music that the protagonists themselves would listen to, it is possible to create an affectively youthful film-space, which subsequently brings the spectator closer to the world of those protagonists.

Pre-existing songs are particularly useful for examining this transition from the general to the specific, as their use in film is often reliant on prior listening

experience, which can itself be both general/“universal” or located in a specific environment or context. In Chapter 1, I argued that English-language music has particular resonance with French audiences (and indeed with those outside of the Anglophone world more generally), whereby it is more generally associated with youthful audiences. As such, the inclusion of English-language songs in French cinema, such as in Mélanie Laurent’s *Respire* and Lisa Azuelos’ *LOL*, helps to create this general evocation of youthfulness, which then subsequently layers with other meanings. The use of “You Can’t Always Get What You Want” in *LOL*, for example, brings Lola closer to both her mother and the spectator. Similarly, Chapter 3 discussed the French specificity of the electronic genre, exploring how the genre not only has general youthful connotations worldwide, but is particularly significant for French audiences. This is shown in Hansen-Løve’s *Eden*, which demonstrates the nostalgic significance of the genre in a French context, and in Sciamma’s *Naissance des pieuvres*, where electronica is used to underpin the film’s youthful realism.

In addition to these general feelings, pre-existing songs can also harness the power of specificity, which relies on recognition of particular songs, artists, or moments. This was seen in Sciamma’s *Bande de filles* and Katell Quillévéré’s *Suzanne*, discussed in Chapter 2, where the use of Rihanna, Courtney Love, and Nina Simone contributes a number of meanings to the film-spaces and, through the appeal to existing knowledge of these specific artists, facilitates identification between the spectator and the protagonists. This specificity can therefore layer on to more general meanings, such as the association of English-language music with youth, to open further avenues of identification. This spectrum of general and specific meanings can also function across the internal and external spaces of the film experience, that is to say songs that function generally for the spectator outside of the film diegesis may then be used to elicit specific responses within the film-space. We saw this in Chapter 3’s analysis of Hansen-Løve’s films, where the folk genre’s *general* evocation of nostalgia helps to align us with the girls’ experiences, which are positioned as nostalgic moments. However, the music also functions *specifically* within the films’ narratives, whereby its repetition appeals to our memories of the films themselves. In this way, the music’s specific evocations—of memories of previous sequences in the films—are reinforced by the music’s general signification of the overall feelings of nostalgia.

Overall, the music in the films discussed in the preceding four chapters allows us to access a girl specificity. As such, gender and its relation to music is a key concern of this thesis as a whole. It is through the creation of “girl(y)” sounds that the music is able to bring us into contact with the girl(y) world of the film’s protagonists, and thereby aid in our navigation of their experiences. Chapter 2 discovered that where male-voiced songs retain a certain distance between the spectator and the on-screen characters, contextualising the girls’ experience within a generic sensation of youth, it is the female-voiced songs that permit greater proximity to the specificities of girlhood feelings. This difference can be attributed to, at least in part, dominant social stereotypes that attach the female voice to the female body, meaning that when these voices are heard in film, they are all too easily attached to the female bodies visible on screen. However, the closeness encouraged by the use of female voices is nevertheless an important means of providing greater access to the girls’ feminine subjectivity. Thus, the female-voiced song is instrumental in creating a girl(y) film-space, with which the spectator is brought into contact in order to facilitate identification. There is a play between difference and identification, immateriality and embodiment as we see and hear different female bodies that are nevertheless held in the same filmic space. This is especially apparent in the scene in *Bande de filles* where Lady lip-syns Rihanna’s Diamonds, so that one character seems to be being vocalised through another. A girl(y) space is thus created as a result of the “excess” of feminine representation generated by the pairing of a feminine body with a (different) female voice. This excess resonates with Mary Ann Doane’s argument concerning the “masquerade” of femininity. For Doane, more important than Laura Mulvey’s discussion of the binary between activity and passivity in relation to the gaze, is the question of distance and proximity. The act of spectatorship, positioned within a masculine subjectivity, relies on a certain distance and control. The female spectator, however, is denied this distance. As woman *is* the image, she is subjected to an “overpresence of the image” that does not allow her to see herself (22). What was voyeurism for the man, therefore, becomes narcissism for the woman, and female specificity is theorised in terms of spatial proximity. The female spectator, fluctuating between the masculine and feminine position, is offered two choices: to either narcissistically become the object of her own desire, or to masochistically over-identify with it. The masquerade, however, generates a gap that liberates the woman from this bind. In “flaunting” femininity, the

masquerade “holds it at a distance,” which allows the woman to see herself (25). Just as Doane theorises a masquerade as an effective way to resist and overcome patriarchal viewing dichotomies, so too does the play between differing female bodies and voices offer a “gap” that challenges binaries. Thus music is both near and far, retaining a distance from femininity that enables a woman to see herself, while simultaneously inviting us into the intimate spaces of girl experience. This creation of a space that permits girl expression was also seen in Chapter 3’s discussion of *Naissance des pieuvres*, which demonstrated how the electronic genre, with its lack of (potentially judgemental) lyrics, provides the girls with a space for self-expression that escapes bodily confines and resists objectification.

Originally-composed music adds a potential tension to this discussion of general and specific meanings, as there is no prior listening experience: spectators have not previously heard the music, and therefore do not have access to the same memories and associations as with pre-existing songs. However, Chapter 3’s study of ParaOne’s compositions in *Naissance des pieuvres* shows that it is possible, through existing musical codes, for original music to mean referentially. By using features of certain genres, for example, the music can appeal to existing expectations of that classification. These referential meanings often function sub-consciously, without direct acknowledgement from listeners. These sub-conscious referentialities were explored in detail in Chapter 4, which concerned itself with how music “feels” in different ways, and what it is about certain music that might make it sound “feminine” or, more specifically, “girl(y).” While gendered musical codes, which characterise certain sounds as masculine or feminine, both musicologically and socio-culturally, have been discussed at length by other scholars, there have been few studies that examine age-defined musical codes, and none that combine age with a gendered specificity. While it is possible, therefore to identify music that sounds “youthful” in some way, little has been written on the specific sounds that contribute to this feeling of youthfulness. The final chapter of this thesis goes some way to identifying a taxonomy of musical youthfulness, by demonstrating the traits shared between film scores related to young characters. As I illustrated in my discussion of Mona Achache’s *Le Hérisson*, while the compositions related to the older and younger female characters are both stereotypically “feminine,” there are clear differences in the way they are composed, suggesting a difference in

the composition conventions that, like “feminine” composition styles, are upheld even though they may not be conscious decisions. These conventions for different characteristics can then be blended in different combinations to reflect the specificities of the particular characters on screen, as was demonstrated by my examination of François Ozon’s *Jeune et jolie*, which features a combination of “young,” “mature,” and “feminine” sounds to create a sense of Isabelle’s liminal, adolescent identity. These gender- and age-defined conventions are seen, not just in “classical”-style scoring, but also in contemporary-style scoring. In Rebecca Zlotowski’s *Belle Épine*, for example, the male- and female-dominated spaces are characterised very differently through the score, which adheres to classical stereotypes; and the score to *Bande de filles*, while not as obvious, combines a number of stereotypical idioms that mark the music as both youthful and feminine. Chapter 4 of this thesis, then, provides a new way of considering the musical characterisation of girlhood, offering the beginnings of an answer to the question “what does girlhood sound like?”

Film Music: Interdisciplinary Methods

In the introduction to this thesis, I discussed how the interdisciplinary nature of film music studies locates it in something of a methodological “no man’s land,” whereby both of its home disciplines, film studies and musicology, tend to ignore one another. The four chapters in this thesis have demonstrated the importance of a combined methodology to fully exploring music’s potential for meaning in film. In Chapter 1, for example, it was demonstrated that songs, despite frequently being reduced to their lyric content, can also mean musically. The use of foreign-language songs helps to draw attention to the musical element of a track, encouraging engagement with the song’s potential musical meanings and providing an avenue for accessing those meanings without the distraction of lyrics. This can be seen in *Respire*, in which the “feel” of the music, created by detached melodies and heavy instrumentation, is more important than the lyrics themselves. Close musicological analysis, therefore, while it is not often employed in studies of film songs, provides a useful tool for illustrating how this “feel” is created by the different musical sounds we hear, and for demonstrating how songs “mean.” These musicological codes, while often operating on a subconscious plane, nevertheless perform a vital role in the layering of meaning in a musical text. Patrik Juslin and John Sloboda separate the processes by which

we engage with music into “representational” processes, involving awareness of specific musical properties, and “evaluative” processes, referring much more generally to the emotional content of a piece of music (4). However, as they go on to argue, these processes often become intertwined, with representational components often triggering evaluative responses (4). It is for this reason that musicological analysis is so important in the study of songs in film: through an examination of the specific sounds and the way they function, it is possible to identify *how* songs elicit certain emotional responses, and draw links between particular sounds and specific emotions or sensations. While these links may sometimes seem self-evident, there is a surprising lack of scholarly intervention that explains these processes. This thesis thus combines musicological analysis with other methodologies to demonstrate the importance of acknowledging the role of specific musical elements in any musical text, providing a comprehensive examination of how film functions, and what it can provide a cinema of girlhood.

Each of the chapters in this thesis can be said to examine a different “mode” of musical experience, through which meaning is created. Chapter 1 concerned itself with modes of listening, exploring what happens to music when it is heard in different contexts, times, or environments, and examining how music can cross these potential divides. Chapter 2 focused on modes of performance, demonstrating how different performance contexts can project meaning on to a film-space. Chapter 3 then moved on to modes of genre, examining the impact of generic classification and genre expectations on music’s signification. Finally, Chapter 4 was concerned with modes of composition, examining both how these “modes” are formed, and how they impart meaning onto a musical text. The detailed case studies in each of the chapters each highlight one of these modes, and demonstrate a specific way that music can mean. These meanings, however, never operate in isolation. Rather, they provide layers of meaning in one single musical text. When a film is viewed, its music is experienced through multiple modes of composition, genre, performance and listening, and each mode offers possibilities of identification. It is for this reason that some of the films discussed in this thesis, if they provide useful examples of more than one mode of engagement, appear in more than one case study. The methods employed in each of the chapters, therefore, could—and should—be applied to the films discussed in other chapters, in order to examine further layers of meaning in

those texts. Indeed, the modes of meaning I highlight here could be used as the basis of an analytic grid for future research into the way music means in film.

Girlhood Audibility

Overall, this thesis shows the need to listen to, as well as watch, the girl figure, and how it is possible for music to “sound” girl(y). That music relates to character is perhaps self-evident, but what this thesis reveals is the number of ways music signifies, sometimes on a subconscious plane, and how it is able to bring the spectator into contact with the internal film storyworld. Music means in many ways, and these different meanings can layer with one another to contribute extra knowledge to the film experience. Through the four chapters in this thesis, I have shown some of these ways that music can mean, using specific case studies to isolate different modes of meaning, and demonstrating how music functions in a film text to facilitate identification with on-screen girl characters, and provide a means of girlhood expression that moves beyond the verbal or visible. In combining musicological research methods with other methodologies from cultural studies, psychology, and film studies, and applying them to both pre-existing and originally-composed music, this thesis offers a holistic approach to the study of film music that is rarely seen in scholarship. The theory of girlhood audibility that this thesis offers moves beyond current studies of girlhood that focus determinedly on the visible, and emphasises the importance of the audible to the expression of girlhood experience. Music’s ability to slip between the verbal and the non-verbal, the visible and the invisible, the embodied and the non-embodied, makes it a vital tool for making accessible the girl experience, while allowing the girl subject to retain opacity and autonomy. Furthermore, through focusing on the French national context, this thesis moves beyond Anglo-centric studies of girlhood representation, highlighting the need to acknowledge cultural, linguistic and locational differences within the field of girl studies. While films continue to explore the variety and diversity of ways in which subjects “become girl” on screen, so it is necessary for us to listen as well as watch. Music offers a potentially radical site where girls’ feelings can be acknowledged in their complexity, and is a key device for allowing spectators to be drawn into a film world in which girls are subjects of sympathetic connection, rather than objects of overt sexualisation or narcissistic over-identification.

Appendix

The below table lists the films referenced in this thesis, and gives information regarding their soundtracks. A “musical occurrence” is defined as any moment where music can be heard, either diegetically or non-diegetically. “Distinct musical occurrence” is used to describe the separate musical occurrences throughout the film, separated either by a noticeable change in track (for example, a change in song), or by a gap where no music is audible. The percentage of music in a film was calculated by noting the length of each musical occurrence and calculating this figure as a percentage of the film’s total runtime, including opening and closing credits.

<u>Director</u>	<u>Film</u>	<u>Number of distinct musical occurrences</u>	<u>% Music in the film</u>	<u>Is there a soundtrack album available?</u>
Mona Achache	<i>Le Hérisson</i> (2011)	31	38.4	Yes
Lisa Azuelos	<i>LOL</i> (2009)	31	29.1	No
François Desagnat and Thomas Sorriaux	<i>15 ans et demi</i> (2007)	49	47.9	No
Mia Hansen-Løve	<i>Tout est pardonné</i> (2007)	10	19.5	No
	<i>Le Père de mes enfants</i> (2009)	10	12.7	No
	<i>Un Amour de jeunesse</i> (2011)	10	16.5	No
Mélanie Laurent	<i>Respire</i> (2014)	14	33.4	No ¹
Julien Neel	<i>Lou! Journal infime</i> (2014)	48	60.2	Yes
Géraldine Nakache	<i>Tout ce qui brille</i> (2010)	30	45.5	Yes
Guillaume Nicloux	<i>La Religieuse</i> (2013)	12	9.6	No

¹ Although a whole soundtrack is not available for *Respire*, the film’s composer Marc Chouarain has released a six-minute single entitled “*Respire* (Extrait de la bande originale).”

François Ozon	<i>Jeune et jolie</i> (2013)	24	27.2	Yes
Katell Quillévéré	<i>Suzanne</i> (2013)	21	37.2	No
Céline Sciamma	<i>Naissance des pieuvres</i> (2007)	14	26.8	Yes
	<i>Tomboy</i> (2011)	4	7	No
	<i>Bande de filles</i> (2014)	21	27.5	Yes
Rebecca Zlotowski	<i>Belle Épine</i> (2010)	20	38.9	Yes

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