Helen Hanson, University of Exeter

LOOKING FOR LELA SIMONE: *Singin' in the Rain* and Microhistories of Women's Sound Work Behind the Scenes and Below-the-Line in Classical Hollywood Cinema

Introduction: Finding Movie Workers in the Shadows

> "The dazzling spotlight which Hollywood turns upon its Personalities throws into shadow the thousands who work in the movie studios – technicians and craftsmen, musicians and sound engineers, painters, carpenters, laboratory workers. These, plus the thousands of extras whose faces are used in an agglomerate mass, are the anonymous people who swarm over the sound stages, the lots and the offices where pictures are fabricated. They are movie workers, as distinguished from what we shall call movie makers." Leo Rosten, 1941.[1]

Amongst the 'anonymous' movie workers, in the 'shadows' of Hollywood history, hundreds, if not thousands, were women. Recent research has begun to recover the significant contribution of women to 'Classical Hollywood' cinema. Erin Hill has established that women worked in many of the key administrative roles in research, production planning, and secretarial roles that were essential to keeping the Hollywood studio system running.[2] In addition, Jennifer Smyth has traced some of the numerous women writers, producers and editors who shaped classical Hollywood films in the period from 1930 to the late 1950s. Editors, such as Jane Loring at RKO Radio Pictures or Barbara ('Bobbie') McLean at Twentieth-Century Fox had an influence upon film style,[3] but we are only at the beginning of mapping the very diverse roles that women played in 'Classical Hollywood' production, and thus our understanding of the contexts of their labour, the textures of their work and how they exercised their agency needs fuller exploration and elaboration.

This article aims to explore and elaborate upon a case study of women's work 'below the line' in the studio system. As Miranda Banks notes, "'Above-the-line' and 'below-the-line'

are industry terms that distinguish between creative and craft professions in production."[4] These areas of work are valued differently; above-the-line labour is "evaluated… in terms of its imagination, artistry, and inventiveness" whereas "below-the-line practitioners are considered… as craftspeople or technicians… who work with their hands."[5] My focus is on a particular sphere of below-the-line labour: the technical areas of both sound and music production and post production during the heyday of the Hollywood studio system. Demanding a great deal of precision, these areas of labour required specialised knowledge which blended an understanding of the technologies relating to sound recording and editing, with a knowledge of musical structure, timing and mood. While it is broadly true that the sound departments and the technical networks of the mid-century Hollywood industry were dominated by men, a number of women established successful careers in this area.[6] This group of women included Audray Granville, a music editor and music supervisor who worked for independent producer David Selznick during the 1940s and 1950s,[7] and Evelyn Rutledge, a sound effects editor who worked at Columbia Pictures, at Warner Bros. and who then set up her own sound post-production company. My case study in this article, Magdalene 'Lela' Simone, was a music editor and assistant scorer for the MGM Music Department, and she was the 'Music Co-ordinator' for the Arthur Freed Unit from 1945 to 1958; the Freed Unit specialised in the production of musicals at MGM studios. All three women reveal that the common assumption that technical labour in Hollywood during the studio system was an exclusively male domain needs to be revised and nuanced.[8]

My approach in this article is qualitative rather than quantitative. The collection of historical data on women's work in British media industries is making a very significant contribution to how gender, labour and creativity are understood.[9] However, we currently lack empirical historical data about the numbers of women who worked in studio-era Hollywood, nevertheless it is possible to elaborate the contexts of women's labour and the textures of their work experiences and relationships by taking a microhistorical approach. In order to more fully establish women's work contexts and experiences 'below-the-line', my strategy is to focus narrowly and deeply on my case study. I situate Simone's work within the production culture of the Arthur Freed Unit at MGM, and try to make visible how she worked to a specific 'task horizon'. What I mean, here, is that I show how her day-to-day work met the diverse demands related to the production of the musical as a genre, as well as how the way she worked might be measured against the standard craft practices in sound and music

production in the period. Thus I aim to bring out, to individualise, the work of a woman technician against the larger, usually anonymous, background of labour below-the-line; I think of this approach as balancing a 'figure' against a wider contextual 'ground' and this mode of analysis permits a picture of below-the-line labour to emerge. To achieve this, I make a strategic choice of scale and I focus in even more narrowly on Simone's contribution to the title song and dance number in *Singin' in the Rain* (Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly, 1952). Using archival sources, such as production memos, sound and music recording logs, editing notes and oral history accounts, to reconstruct work processes, tasks and decisions allows me to bring women's technical work into view, but in addition to weaving a detailed picture of labour, my choice of scale and my case study serve to raise wider questions. Firstly, *Singin' in the Rain*, and the sequence in particular, has a familiar and canonical status as a 'classic' film with a large existing critical history; the sequence has been described as 'the single most memorable dance number of film.'[10] Despite its familiarity there are new insights that can be gleaned about the creative processes behind its production, and in this article I aim to add a new angle to understandings of this famous film. Secondly, *Singin' in the Rain*, categorised by Steve Neale as a 'backscreen' musical, reflexively dramatizes the creative processes of moviemaking and so it offers rich material for a production studies analysis.[11] Screenwriters Betty Comden and Adolph Green spin the film's storyline around a comic retelling of Hollywood's transition from silent to sound production. The chosen sequence plays out the feeling of solving a creative problem: with a flash of inspiration, fictional film star Don Lockwood (played by Gene Kelly) decides to convert the staid and stodgy *The Duelling Cavalier* into a more engaging and fluid film – *The Dancing Cavalier* – by adding music, including song, and so this fictionalised moment imagines an origin story for the Hollywood musical. Finally, the focus of the film's story highlights the hierarchies structuring labour in Hollywood, but while the film playfully takes its audience behind the scenes, what we see there is carefully managed. The struggles of Don Lockwood, and of 'Monumental Pictures' to make a successful movie in the new medium of the sound film offers a mise-en-abîme, i.e. it sets a story within a story that, while seeming to prioritize production, not only prioritises above-the-line 'talent' but also renders invisible the technical labour that underpins the production of the film.[12]

Methodologies of Scale: Microhistories in the Study of Production

Visibility in film history is dependent upon the scale at which the researcher chooses to work. In the recent turn to production studies, a number of researchers have pointed to scale

as an important methodological choice. Amanda Lotz and Horace Newcomb outline a "taxonomy" of scale, defining "five levels of analysis" at which studies of media production might take place: "national and international political economy and policy, specific industrial contexts, particular organizations, individual productions and individual agents."[13] Lotz notes that a microlevel of study – the study of the work of "particular organizations" (studios, production companies or networks), "individual productions" (a single film or television series), and "individual agents" (the body of work of a director, writer or producer)?" - permits researchers to "place much emphasis on understanding the complexity of practices and the varied agency of those who may work in vast media conglomerations."[14]

For Vicki Mayer, studying media production allows a 'grounding' of issues of social power, and also an interrogation of how forms of agency within a 'micro context' can be indicative of larger forces. She writes:

> "Production studies… 'ground' social theories by showing us how specific production sites, actors or activities tell us larger lessons about workers, their practices, and the role of their labors in relation to politics, economics, and culture. It is this connection between the micro contexts and the macro forces, which illuminates the social implications of an otherwise narrow case study and modifies the grand claims that have become commonplace regarding the role of media in society."[15]

Microhistory as a term, and as an historiographical practice, has its own history. It is an approach which privileges 'close up' analyses of historical subjects, and which prioritises attention to their agency. It intersects with traditions of 'history from below', and is often favoured by historians who focus upon historical subjects usually neglected in elite histories of 'great men' or of large scale 'world events'.[16] In her overview of microhistory, Francesca Trivellato notes its ability to interrogate social relations of power: "microhistory has taught us the importance of reconstructing networks of relations in order to understand how meanings are forged and how power is distributed."[17] Tracing the development of microhistory in Italian, French and American historical traditions, she points to the recurrence of "questions about narration and agency" in microhistorical work:

> "…Agency is more than a catch-all word. In our discipline it stands for an emphasis on the individual's ability to resist and shape the larger forces of history and is, almost inevitably, intertwined with a narrative writing style. A narrative style is prized not only for its accessibility to a larger audience but also for its suitability to recover the subjectivity, and even the larger interiority, of individual figures – whether it be the Founding Fathers or the marginal figures (peasants, wet-nurses, captives) whom microhistorians have sought to rescue from oblivion."[18]

Noted microhistorian, Carlo Ginzburg, points to an important methodological strategy in microhistory: converting the problems of writing history into the textures of that history. Reflecting on his own historiographical process, he writes: "The obstacles interfering with the research [are] constituent elements of the documentation and thus [have] to become part of the account … Thus, the hypotheses, the doubts, the uncertainties became part of the narration; the search for truth bec[o]me[s] part of the exposition of the (necessarily incomplete) truth attained."[19] Thus, gaps in archival sources can become strategic aporia to be evoked within the historical narration, and the relations of power, which structure so many of the forms of documentation that historians draw upon, can be exhibited and elaborated by resisting the temptation to fill the silences and hesitations that so often exist around historical protagonists 'from below'.

A microhistorical approach is well suited to historical studies of production cultures in the 'Classical Hollywood' era when the studio system was at its height, and particularly to analysing the agency of workers below-the-line. Scaling our analysis to trace labour in surviving documentation allows us to reconstruct the tasks, processes, and decisions that constitute the work of film production and can make the agency of previously neglected or unknown figures visible. Microhistorical analysis can also bring into relief how the power relations of the workplace are traceable in the very documentation of work processes.

Biography: Introducing Magdalene 'Lela' Simone

I am referring to Lela as 'Simone' throughout this article because this was the professional name that she adopted while working for the MGM Music Department, and later the Freed Unit and consequently it aligns with her assertion of her professional persona and

subjectivity. However, as my outline of her biography shows, she changed her surname a number of times through marriage, and by adopting or deploying professional or performer names appropriate to her work situations. There are also aporia and "silences", in the biographical information that I have been able to access, most particularly gaps in accounts of Simone's life in Berlin in the late 1920s to early 1930s, and the sequence of events leading to her emigration to the USA, and, following Ginzburg, I have tried acknowledge and work with these gaps, rather than to fill or smooth over them.[20]

Lela Simone was born Magdalene Saenger in Berlin, Germany, in 1907, into an upper middle class Jewish family.[21] Highly educated and socially well connected her father, Samuel Saenger, was a diplomat who went on to serve as a German Ambassador in Prague during the Weimar period after World War I.[22] The family returned to Berlin in the early 1920s. Like many young girls of her class and status, Simone was home-schooled by a private tutor. Her parents also encouraged her musical talents to their limit and she developed into a virtuoso pianist and began to establish a reputation for her talent. She reportedly played concerts with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, and she was preparing for a German concert tour, when Hitler came to power in January 1933. He implemented wide spread anti-semitic social policy, and Simone's tour contract was cancelled. Fearing for her future, she made arrangements to emigrate to the USA.[23]

Simone married four times.[24] Her first marriage, in 1924, was to Otto Firle, a German architect (of Jewish descent), and their son, Tomas, was her only child. The couple divorced in 1928, with Otto gaining custody of Tomas, something rare for people of her class and education. During the late 1920s Simone was part of Berlin's extremely rich cultural scene, and was acquainted with a number of the composers, filmmakers and other creative figures who emigrated from Germany to the USA, and elsewhere, during the 1930s to escape from the rise of the National Socialist party and its persecution of Jewish subjects.[25]

Simone emigrated to the USA in 1933, with her second husband Theodore Simon, a banker, leaving her young son, Tomas, with his father, Otto. Simone had adopted the surname 'Simon' on her marriage to Theodore, evidently adding the 'e' when she took up work in the film industry, but for a brief period after her arrival in the USA she continued to use 'Firle' as her performer name. Like many Jewish intellectual emigres, the couple spent a few months in New York on their arrival, where Simone studied piano with the renowned classical pianist, Artur Schnabel. [26] In November 1933 the *Los Angeles Times* reported her arrival in the city,

indicating that she had been 'banished' from Germany because of her Jewish heritage; the article outlined her plans for a career as a concert pianist,[27] and a few months later announced her debut, at the age of 26, with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Otto Klemperer: "Lella Firle, a young pianist with a European reputation will make her American debut auspiciously."[28] A further article waxed lyrical about Simone's youth and her striking appearance.[29] Later that year, she made her debut on American radio when she performed on San Francisco's K.P.O station.[30]

Transition into the Film Industry: Working for the Music Department at MGM

By 1937, Simone was making a transition to the Hollywood film industry, where her musical talent eventually provided the basis for her to begin to earn a more regular living. She started as a "recording pianist" for the MGM Music Department, on a casual or "on-call" basis, playing solo piano for score recordings on films such as *Balalaika* (Reinhold Schünzel, 1939), *Ice Follies of 1939* (Reinhold Schünzel, 1939), *Pride and Prejudice* (Robert Z. Leonard, 1940) and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Albert Lewin, 1945).[31] The casual terms of this employment was quite typical of many of Hollywood's studio musicians and, indeed, of many workers in craft and technical roles, but by 1939 Simone's family responsibilities – the precarious situation of her parents and son in Germany - made it more pressing for her to earn a regular wage.[32] A supportive colleague in the MGM Music Department, Izzy Friedman, advocated for Simone to department head, Nat Finston, but it was not until 1942 that she was put on the regular payroll.[33]

Simone's MGM employment records document her struggles to gain proper recognition and remuneration for her work. Working as a solo recording pianist her on-call rate was $115.00 per week in 1939, rising to $125.00 in 1940.[34] When she moved to the regular pay-roll (in March 1942) she gained greater security, but her pay was far lower, at $60.00 per week. It took her nearly three years to gain back the level of earnings she enjoyed when working on a freelance basis, and she had to take on significant additional workload in order to supplement her basic pay.[35] By October 1943, Simone was routinely taking on extra duties, for which she was paid the union hourly rate for extra time worked. These extra duties comprised a range of tasks, from checking the quality of the music recording on release prints to preparing final scoring cue sheets, and assisting in the administration of legal clearances for music used in MGM pictures.[36] She moved up into the role of Assistant Scorer (on a basic

rate of $90.00 per week), assisting the department's scoring supervisors, working with the Music Department's library of stock music tracks, and assembling temporary scores for film previews and film trailers.[37] In May 1944, Friedman, who was by then Assistant Head of the Music Department, urged Finston to give Simone a pay-rise. Well aware of the gap between Simone's salary and that of her male co-workers, some of whom were her juniors, he stated:

> "As you know, our rates of pay, established for Al Colombo and Irving Aaronson, are far in excess of Miss Simon's [sic] present pay status. Even Gelman, who is an apprentice. receives more than Miss Simon…"[38]

In November 1944 Simone was transferred from the Music Department to the Freed Unit, a production unit led by songwriter, composer and producer Arthur Freed and established to specialise in producing prestige budget musicals for MGM. Simone's transfer was initially on a temporary basis, until 1947 her pay and working conditions continued to be administered from the Music Department, however, and it was not until early 1945 that she gained a pay rise that put her on a basic rate of $115.00 per week.[39]

Research into the working cultures of studio musicians in Hollywood reveals that personal and social connections influenced the treatment of employees in work assignments.[40] This cultural aspect to work is evident in the correspondence cited from Simone's employment files detailing her unequal pay. Under Nat Finston's leadership it seems that personal and social factors of gender and power were in play in working culture of the MGM Music Department. In an Oral History interview Simone rather bitterly recalls working for Finston, for whom she held little respect.[41] Her characterisation of the Music Department under his leadership contrasts markedly with her description of the Freed Unit, a culture that she recalls positively as one in which her deep musical knowledge and background, and her growing technical command were recognised, respected and rewarded. Once she was established in the Freed Unit, Simone's pay increased to $150.00 per week (her role was still, at this point, listed as 'Assistant Scorer' in her employment files, but in reality in her day to day work she was assisting Associate Producer Rogers Edens on a wide range of tasks, as detailed further below),[42] and by 1948 Simone, in the role of 'Music Co-Ordinator', was paid $250.00 per week.[43]

Lela Simone: 'Trouble Shooter' in the Freed Unit

Simone's time in the MGM Music Department provided her with an excellent training for her work on the musicals made by the Freed Unit. Friedman described the considerable purview of her work there as follows:

> "all musical problems that arise are directly handled by Miss Simon [sic] who in turn pulls all loose ends together in seeing that these various musical sequences can be portrayed and photographed to the best purpose of the picture."[44]

The precise synchronisation of image and sound in the musicals' production numbers, and an imperceptible flow between both the action and dialogue of narrative, and dance and song of numbers were baseline requirements in the production of the musical. Much of the work that Simone undertook was to polish away any traces of labour in sound and music production; smoothing out any jarring music and sound edits by ensuring modulations in the final release prints, and adjusting any glitches in synchronisation of song and/or dance performance with the films' images. In other words, the function of Simone's work, like the function of so many technical tasks in 'Classical Hollywood' production – indeed of most commercial filmmaking - was to erase itself, and thus much of the labour undertaken by Simone is 'invisible' to most people other than technical specialists.[45]

This 'invisibility' belies her acknowledged importance to the Unit. In his history of the Freed Unit, Hugh Fordin places Simone at "the nucleus of the Freed Unit" alongside Roger Edens (the Unit's Associate Producer) and Bill Ryan (Assistant to Arthur Freed), this is evidenced by the fact that she, like them, had her own office, shown in Figure 1.[46] Freed himself rated her skills highly, he retrospectively characterised her capacities and skills with sound thus: "Lela can do with a piece of soundtrack what a French chef can do with a piece of beef."[47] Commenting upon her wide-ranging responsibilities, Fordin noted that, "Her specialized area was everything pertaining to sound and music, both artistically and technically. She was the unit's trouble shooter, Eden's right hand and Freed's left, and she had a talent for public relations."[48] The broad-range of her role was confirmed in a feature on women working in Hollywood in the November 1945 issue of *Seventeen*, a magazine aimed at young women, that described her as a "Jill of all trades" pertaining to music.[49]

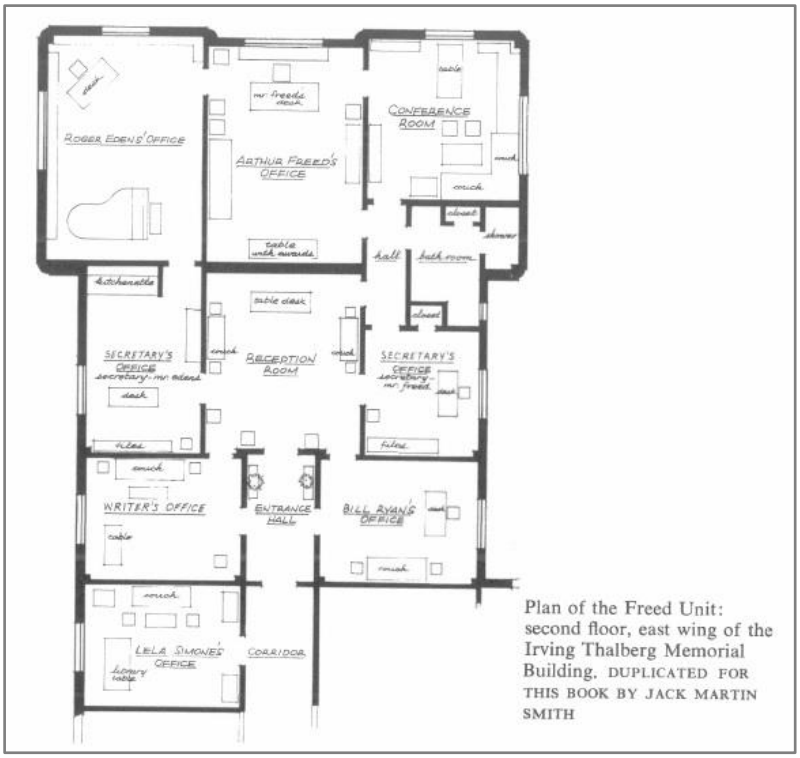

Figure 1: Plan of the Freed Unit including Lela Simone's office: Source of Figure 1: Hugh Fordin The World of Entertainment, p. 120. Permission needed to reproduce.

Simone contributed to the majority of the Freed Unit films that MGM released between 1944 and 1958, often working concurrently on two or three productions. The production roster for the years 1943 to 1952 (shown in Table 1), captures the intensely busy workflow of the Unit, as it illustrates, the Unit typically had several films in production at the same time. As Simone was involved at all stages of the production process, she was frequently working on the planning for one film, while in post-production for another. The periods of May to August each year were particularly busy, as the overlapping lines in the table reveal.

In pre-production she participated in detailed technical planning for the musical numbers, oversaw the pre-recording of the films' musical numbers, co-ordinated the recording schedules for productions between the Freed Unit and the MGM Music and Sound Departments, managed, logged and kept track of recordings, and supervised recording sessions. She worked with Associate Producer Edens to rehearse the talent so that they refined their performances for pre-recording, and she ensured perfect lip-synching with the playback record during shooting.[50] Her 'co-ordination' extended from the specific production numbers to overseeing how the music came together for each film as a whole. This

supervision is evident in her work producing musical breakdowns in which she calculated the precise timings for all elements of the films' music – the production numbers, the sections of scoring, and the incidental 'linking' music.

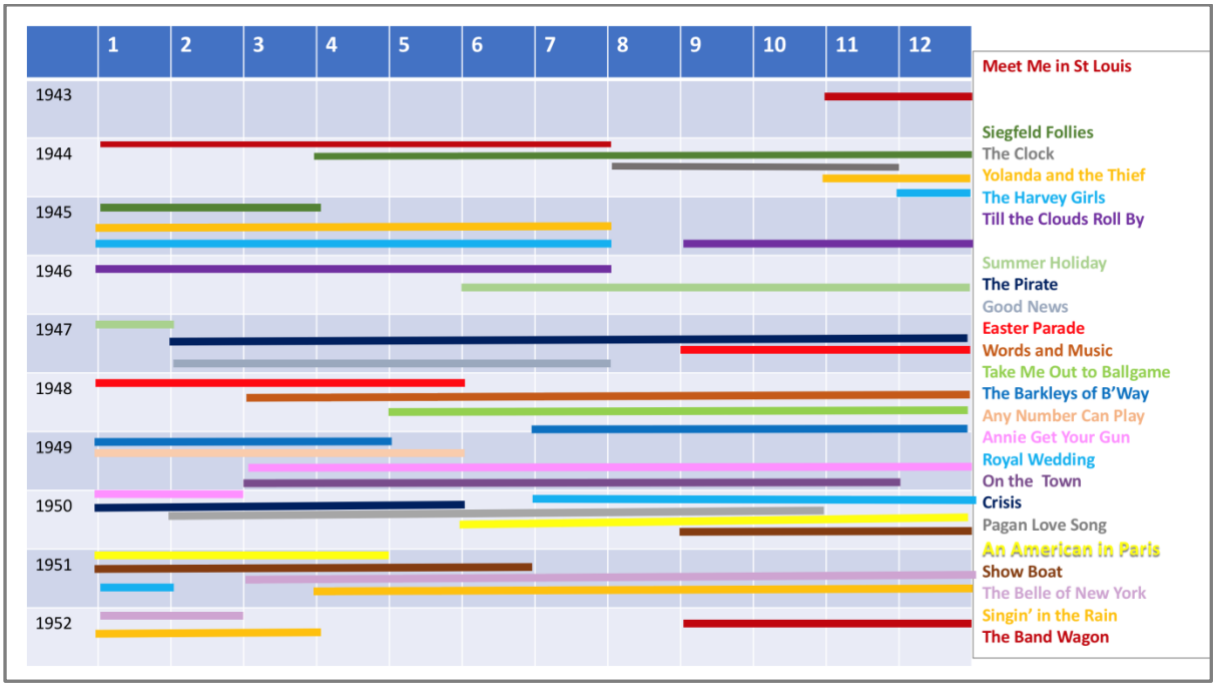

Table 1: Freed Unit Production Roster and Workflow 1943-1952

Documents in Roger Edens' Papers reveal Simone's command of technical details: she set out the music's tempo, the number of bars and the cues on the score where music would 'come in' and 'fade out'.

In order to bring her technical labour of out of the 'shadows', it is necessary to work at a fine-grained, microhistorical scale and to correlate and compare the choices that she made (as detailed in the production records in the Arthur Freed and Roger Edens Papers) against a background set of norms in filmmaking practice. The latter were constituted by the practice conventions of the crafts of sound and music editing, as well as the norms shaping the production of the musical as a genre in this period, and they form the task horizon to which she worked. As I suggested in my introduction, this microhistorical focus allows 'figure' and 'ground' comparisons to be made; the textures of a particular work choice, its aesthetic and creative contribution to a production, and the distinctive difference that the choice makes to the wider film, become evident. Advocating the "reconstruction" of "choice situations" within production histories of filmmaking, David Bordwell argues that:

> "The task facing the student of style… is one of reconstruction. On the basis of surviving films and other documents, the historian reconstructs a choice situation… Central to this task… is the labor of spelling out the reigning norms of a period… The model I propose seeks to [build] from patterns of task-governed decision-making to schemas and thence to norms and their open-ended dynamic over time. This approach does not seal film off from social processes. Tasks, problems, solutions and schemas can issue from any domain in the filmmaker's community."[51]

The 'Singin in the Rain' title sequence offers just such a 'choice situation' for reconstruction. The sequence was just one of the many Freed Unit films for which Simone co-ordinated the sound, music and post-production work, and her input is very clear in the archival sources on the film's production that I have been able to study. These include planning documents, recording schedules, sound and music editing notes, correspondence and oral history interviews with technical workers, including an extensive interview with Lela Simone.

The sequence as it appeared in the film involved input from a number of creative personnel in the Freed Unit. The song, 'Singin' in the Rain' with lyrics by Arthur Freed, and music by Nacio Herb Brown, was written soon after the pair came to Hollywood from Broadway in 1928 to work as contract songwriters for MGM during the studio's transition to sound production. 'Singin' in the Rain' featured in *Hollywood Revue of 1929* (Charles Reisner, 1929), an MGM musical made early in the sound era. After his move to Hollywood, Freed continued to work for MGM as a songwriter until he assumed the role of Associate Producer on the Judy Garland-Micky Rooney musical *Babes in Arms* (Busby Berkeley, 1939), and from 1944 ran his own production unit for MGM. In March 1949 Freed and Brown sold their song catalogue to MGM, and Freed began developing ideas for a 'catalogue' musical picture, along the lines of a composer biopic, that would feature his songs.[52]

As noted above, the narrative setting for the song, and the wider film, was developed by screenwriters Betty Comden and Adolph Green whose job it was to find a way to weave Freed's songs (many of them written in the 1920s and 1930s) into a story world that would best set them off. Comden and Green worked with Edens (Associate Producer at the Unit and a skilled musical arranger) to find that story world. Evidently Edens played the songs for Comden and Green and they eventually determined to set them in the time frame in which they were originally composed and to weave the story around Hollywood's transition to

sound, and to dramatize the birth of the film musical.[53] Edens gave the song a new, and more modern, arrangement, one which was better suited to the 1952 film than the original 1920s iteration. The dance (and camera) choreography was worked out by Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen, who also co-directed the film, including this sequence, but production accounts also point to the import and role played by Carol Haney, one of the choreographers in the Freed Unit, in refining the dance.

Production histories of *Singin' in the Rain* are relatively thorough in covering how the sequence was filmed, for example, when working out the flow of the number, Kelly requested Art Director Randall Duell to arrange for holes to be dug in the set of the street to create the puddles for him to splash in.[54] However, there has been much less detailed discussion, or indeed an understanding, of the sound work demanded by the sequence, most particularly the careful balancing of vocal performance, dance movement, music, and sound effects in crafting its effectiveness.

Pre-production work on *Singin' in the Rain* started in April 1951, and there was a five-week rehearsal period for the numbers. From the end of May to early June Simone oversaw the musical numbers that were pre-recorded onto playback records.[55] Prerecording a musical number before shooting commenced, and then playing it back on the set, was an expedient production practice, and had been a standard practice in the Hollywood studios' production of musicals since the early sound era. With the dry understatement of a technician, George Groves, one of Warner Bros.' senior sound personnel, summarised the production advantages of using playback thus:

> "It was found that many singers did not look particularly photogenic while singing, and the difficulties of obtaining satisfactory performances for both the camera and the microphone were many fold."[56]

As also noted by other sound technicians from the major Hollywood studios, pre-recording and playback permitted the studio to separate two complex aspects of production: the recording of an orchestra and vocalist(s) that required the infrastructure and acoustic control of a music recording studio, and the performance of a musical number for camera, which demanded the free movement of the camera (unimpeded by microphones or booms).[57] It was common practice for the performers (the 'talent') to rehearse to their recorded musical

number, which was then played back on the set as the guide to the timing and dynamics of visualised performance, but final adjustments and refinement in specific parts of the performance, and sound effects were added in the final post-production phase. As described in her oral history deposited at the Margaret Herrick Library, Simone routinely worked with the talent in rehearsing to playback.[58] Figure 2 shows Simone (lower right) during rehearsals helping Marilyn Maxwell to synchronise her lip movements to playback for a number in *Summer Holiday* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1948). The playback machine is in the background.

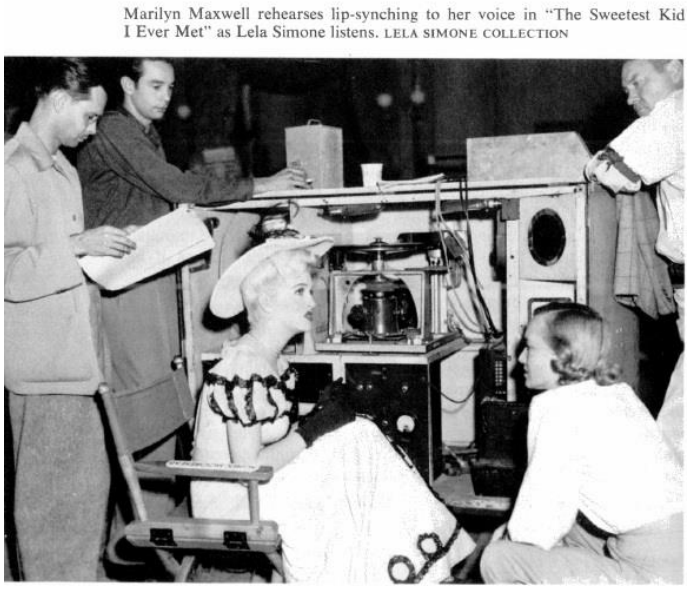

Figure 2: Simone working with Marilyn Maxwell to synchronise her performance with playback. Picture reproduced from Fordin p. 202 permission needed to reproduce.

Source: Hugh Fordin *The World of Entertainment*, p. 202. Permission needed to reproduce.

Singin' in the Rain was shot between June and August 1951, with the 'Singin' in the Rain' number filmed over two days, the 18th and 19th July.[59] However, work on crafting the sounds of the sequence extended into the post-production period of September to December 1951. By October 1951 the film was in the editing phase, and work to correct and balance the vocal parts of the soundtrack was taken care of before the post-production work on the tap dance sounds. In October 1951, Simone wrote to Mac Holly (in the Editorial Department) to report on the status of the sound and music editing for the film, commenting that "this will give you an over-all idea for the first 10 reels" but "in this line up I did not include taps, sound effects etc. only actual vocal re-dos or additional vocal tracks."[60]

It was standard practice for the tap sounds of the dancer's feet in musical numbers to be post-synchronised. Typically, after the performance of the dance number had been filmed,

the dancer would come to the sound department to perform their taps again, listening back to the music through headphone while timing their taps to their screened performance, and with a microphone position arranged to best advantage to record the taps sharply and distinctly. Technical articles, memoirs and oral history accounts for sound work in other studios outline these methods.[61] James G. Stewart, Sound Editor at RKO Radio Pictures during the 1930s and 1940s recalled working with Fred Astaire to post-synchronise his taps, noting that Astaire was very precise in his performance.[62]

Kelly's 'rain' dance presented a particular sound challenge to [Lela] Simone and her team. The sounds of the sequence – memorably described in Bosley Crowther's *New York Times*' review as "a beautiful soggy tap dance performed in the splashing rain" - represented much more complex sounds than 'dry' taps.[63] Simone therefore had to ensure that the impact of the tap, and the following 'splash' of the water sounds were both clearly audible, and synchronised, in order to underpin and punctuate Kelly's dance movements.

Simone recalled the problems she and her team faced, and the solutions that they innovated. The way that she outlined these problems articulates the textures of choice in her sound work. She recalls "eight days I worked on it, sound-wise", remembering that she had to think through the sequence "Preparing, first of all, then the technical thing, where does the rain come from? How much noise is it to make? What is the noise going to sound like <u>once</u> it is recorded? How are his footsteps going to sound <u>within</u> the rain? Etcetera, etcetera. I mean, you cannot imagine the difficulty."[64] During her oral history interview with Rudy Behlmer, she confirmed that to create the appropriate effect she and her team had to work to find the best techniques to record the tap sounds. This problem solving took place without Kelly, and Simone only called him in to record his taps once a satisfactory method of capturing the sounds had been innovated. Simone also recalled that her team had to "add" sounds to the soundtrack: "We had to add. In certain instances we had to add because we didn't get enough sound on the track." And that to achieve, the "right texture" she and her team had to undergo an iterative process of trial and error in recording the taps:

> "we had to record it <u>again</u> and go to the sound stage <u>again</u>, and then come back and try it out <u>again</u>. I can't tell you what this was… Well, it was an almost impossible way of sounding what one wanted to hear. I mean, there was a moment where we either

would have splashing in the sound or we wouldn't hear his feet at all. I mean it was a situation where one wanted to shoot oneself, you know."[65]

Simone's recollections foreground the painstaking processes of problem-solving and the trial-and-error necessary to attaining the optimum technique for recreating and recording the watery tap steps for the sequence. Notes in the film's production files log the experiments with sound recording that Simone co-ordinated, working with MGM sound recordist Conrad Kahn, and with Freed Unit choreographer Carol Haney performing the tap steps, to test how different shoes would sound on different surfaces and with different depths of water.

TRANSCRIPTION:[66]

Water Taps for Singin' in the Rain

Test: 420-9988-11
Recorded on Stage 2

St. 2	2501-2	Bar 9 to tag taps on dry cement – tap shoes
	2502-1	same as 2501 with leather shoes
	2503-1	$\frac{1}{8}$ inch water – leather soles – wet cement
St. 8	2504-1	$\frac{1}{4}$ inch water – leather soles
St. 11	2505-1	$\frac{1}{2}$ inch water – leather shoes
St. 13	2506-1	1 inch water – leather shoes
	2507-1	wild: umbrella on gate: effect

Note: use Rain loop and <u>no</u> taps for first chorus: add rain on Umbrella to rain loop

The notes detail on which surfaces of MGM Sound Stage 2 the taps were recorded (Stages 2, 8, 11, or 13), and the notes log the reference number of each recording (e.g. 2501), they log how many sound takes were recorded, as well as the different depths of water, and the different types of shoes worn to produce the appropriate sound texture. This kind of painstaking and iterative work is often overlooked in production histories as 'routine' or 'simply technical', but it was the essential method by which a larger creative idea was realised and produced onscreen.

In what ways can we understand these sources as shifting accounts of the production of this famous film and how might attention to a case study of work below-the-line lead us to a greater appreciation of women's work in 'Classical Hollywood' production? As noted at the outset, this sequence is placed at a narrative juncture in the film where it takes on a particularly pronounced integration with Kelly's character, Don Lockwood. This placement and integration have encouraged some critics to read the sequence as expressive not only of the creative break-through of Don Lockwood, but as expressive of Kelly's creative control of the film. This is particularly evident in Peter Wollen's account of Kelly's role in production. Wollen makes the argument for the film as a summation of Kelly's film work up to this point, even reaching to the idea of Kelly as an 'auteur':

> "This is not to deny the crucial role played by his collaborators. Auteur structures can be superimposed in the same film, and although Kelly's 'presence' may be the most prominent, this certainly does not mean that we should overlook the contribution of others… but in any one instance, there is an implicit hierarchy among auteurs and, in the end, a threshold below which individual input becomes increasingly difficult to single out.'[67]

Of course, Kelly as choreographer, as co-director and as star is at the centre of this sequence, but his centrality, the 'presence' and status that Wollen accords to him, is dependent on the framework of technical experts involved in the film, including those working in one of the aspects of production most neglected by historians, namely sound. Furthermore, Kelly himself recurrently rejected the idea of an individual 'auteur', and is on record as considering that 'the *auteur* theory did not apply to musicals'.[68] However, acknowledging Kelly's input, in his multiple roles, need not preclude us from attending to the fine grained and craft-led

choices by which technical staff executed the very precise requirements of the sequence. The sound effects play a crucial role in both grounding and amplifying the performance, Kelly's splashy, tapping tempo seems so spontaneous, but as the production records of the film reveal, the sequence is actually carefully and painstakingly crafted. It is the product of collaboration and the interlocking and synchronising of the expertise of Lela Simone and her team.

Conclusion

In this article I have explored the use value of microhistories of production based upon careful archival research, oral histories, and other sources, and I have tried to be reflexive about questions of scale and focus in the historiography of women's work. The very purpose of below-the-line technical labour was to be invisible, and Classical Hollywood's technicians polished away – erased - their labour in the production regimes of the studio system. But the residual traces of their work – its iterations and variations – can be discerned in production documents. Detailed records of women's technical labour in Classical Hollywood production are fragmentary, but where they do exist, as in the case of Lela Simone's work on *Singin' in the Rain*, microhistories of production allow us to make visible the choices and textures of work behind the scenes that are the precipitate of enacted agency. Microhistories of production deanonymize below the line technicians, like Lela Simone, recovering them and restoring women's labour to the history of the studio system, but microhistory's focus on 'history from below' also makes it an enabling methodology in identifying how gender intersects with the hierarchies of power in Classical Hollywood's production cultures. 'Doing women's film history' below-the-line not only writes women back into film history, but micro-scaled histories of Classical Hollywood can widen the narrow notions of creative agency that have held sway in accounts of the studio system, and can shine a light on the vibrant creativity that happened in the shadows.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank: Renée Lucas and John Waxman for sharing memories and family information about Lela Simone; archivists Ned Comstock, at the University of Southern California's Cinematic Arts Collection for his assistance and advice, and Genevieve Maxwell and Jade Takahashi at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Oral History Program for access to Lela Simone's oral history; and Melanie Bell, Mark Glancy, Julie Grossman, Annette Kuhn, Shelley Stamp, Lisa Stead, and Linda Williams for discussions, suggestions and feedback during the development of this article.

Funding: The research for this article was supported by a grant from The British Academy [SG150265]

NOTES

[1] Leo Rosten, *Hollywood: The Movie Colony and the Movie Makers* (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1941), p. 32.

[2] Erin Hill, *Never Done: A History of Women's Work in Media Production* (Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick and London, 2016).

[3] See Jennifer Smyth, 'Organisation Women and Belle Rebels: Hollywood's Working Women in the 1930s' in Iwan Morgan (Ed.) (2016) *Hollywood and the Great Depression*, pp. 66-85 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press); Smyth, 'Female Editors in Studio-Era Hollywood: Rethinking Feminist 'Frontiers' and the Constraints of the Archives', in Patrice Petro, E. Ann Kaplan, Kristin Hole, and Dijana Jelaca (Eds.) (2016), *The Routledge Companion to Cinema and Gender*, 279-88 (London: Routledge); Smyth, 'Barbara McLean: Editing, Authorship, and the Equal Right to Be the Best', *Cineaste* XLII, no. 2 (Spring 2017) and Smyth, *Nobody's Girl Friday: The Women Who Ran Hollywood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[4] Miranda Banks, 'Gender Below-the-Line: Defining Feminist Production Studies,' in Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks and John Thornton Caldwell (Eds.) *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media* Industries (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 89.

[5] Banks, p. 89.

[6] For an overview of sound work in the Hollywood studio system see Helen Hanson *Hollywood Soundscapes: Film Sound Style, Craft and Production in the Classical Era* (London: BFI/Palgrave, 2017).

[7] See Nathan Platte, *Making Music in Selznick's Hollywood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[8] For important research on women's work in music and sound in British film production see Laraine Porter, 'Women Musicians in Silent Cinema Prior to 1930', *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, Vol. 10, no. 3 (2013), pp. 563-583, and Melanie Bell, 'Learning to Listen: Histories of Women's Soundwork in the British Film Industry', *Screen*, Vol. 58, no. 4 (2017), pp. 437-457.

[9] Large scale research projects, such as Melanie Bell and Vicky Ball's 'Women's Work in the British Film and Television Industry 1933-1989' http://bufvc.ac.uk/womenswork and Shelley Cobb and Linda Williams' 'Calling the Shots: Women and Contemporary Film Culture 2000-2015' https://www.southampton.ac.uk/cswf/index.page? are providing crucial empirical data on women's work in British media industries.

[10] Peter Wollen, *Singin' in the Rain* (London: BFI, 1992), p. 9. See also Hugh Fordin (1975) *The World of Entertainment: Hollywood's Greatest Musicals* (New York: Doubleday), pp. 347-370; John Mariani, 'Come on with the Rain', *Film Comment* Vol. 14, no. 3 (1978), pp. 7-12 & 84; Gerald Mast, *Can't Help Singin': The American Musical on Stage and Screen* (Woodstock: Overlook Press, 1987), pp. 234-252; Earl J. Hess and Pratibha A. Dabholker, *Singin' in the Rain: The Making of An American Masterpiece* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2009).

[11] Steve Neale, entry on 'Singin' in the Rain' in Pam Cook and Mieke Bernink (Eds.) *The Cinema Book: 2nd Edition* (London: BFI, 1999) p. 215.

[12] This issue is relevant to craft and technical work as a whole, and to male as well as female craft and technical workers. I explore the issues of status in relation to technical work in *Hollywood Soundscapes*.

[13] Horace Newcomb and Amanda D. Lotz, 'The Production of Media Fiction,' in *A Handbook of Media and Communication Research*, ed. Klaus Bruhn Jensen (New York: Routledge, 2002), 62-77; cited by Lotz in 'Industry-Level Studies and the Contributions of Gitlin's *Prime Time*,' in in *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries*, ed. Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks and John Thornton Caldwell (New York and London: Routledge, 2009), 25-38; 26.

[14] Lotz, 'Industry-Level Studies', 26-27.

[15] Vicki Mayer, 'Bringing the Social Back In: Studies of Production Cultures and Social Theory,' in *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries*, ed. Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks and John Thornton Caldwell (New York and London: Routledge, 2009), 15-24; 15.

[16] See Jim Clarke's overview of 'History from Below' in Peter Burke (Ed.) (2001) *New Perspectives on Historical Writing: Second Edition* (Cambridge: Polity Press) 25-42. The term derives from the Marxist historian E. P. Thompson's article 'History From Below', *Times Literary Supplement* 7 April 1966, 269-280.

[17] Francesca Trivellato, 'Microstoria/Microhistoire/Microhistory', *French Politics, Culture and Society* 33: 1 (Spring 2015), 122-134; p. 127.

[18] Trivellato, 'Microstoria/Microhistoire/Microhistory', p. 127.

[19] Carlo Ginzburg, 'Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know About It', translated by John and Anne C. Tedeschi, Critical Inquiry, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Autumn 1993), 10-35, pp. 23-24.

[20] Ginzburg, 'Microhistory', pp. 23-24.

[21] Simone's mother (Irma Sethe) was born in Belgium, her father (Samuel Saenger) in Lithuania. At the point of becoming a naturalised American citizen in 1939 she opted to change her surname from Simon to 'Sorell'. During the period that she worked for the MGM Music Department and the Freed Unit she used the surname Simone, but in production records and correspondence sometimes her correspondents misspelled her name as 'Simon', where these occur in sources I cite in this article I have indicated the misspelling with '[sic]'.
[22] Tomas Firle, 'Biographical Sketch from Memorial Service for Magdalene 'Lella' Waxman' p. 2. Dated Saturday August 31st, 1991, First Unitarian Church of San Diego, from Lela Simone Core Biography Files, Margaret Herrick Library, Core Collections.
[23] Firle, 'Biographical Sketch', p. 4; 'Banished Pianist Welcomed: Artist from Germany to Live Here', *Los Angeles Times*, 21st November, 1933, p. A8 and Carolyn Anspacer, 'German Pianist Here in Exile: Once-Famous Woman Artist Tells Horrors of Hitler Regime', *San Francisco Chronicle*, 22nd August 1934, p. 3
[24] Simone married Otto Firle in 1924 and they divorced in 1928. She married Theodore Simon (a Jewish banker) in 1932 and they divorced in 1940. She married Albrecht Joseph (an editor at MGM studios) in 1942 (they divorced in 1958), but retained her use of her surname 'Simone' at work. Her fourth and final marriage was to composer Franz Waxman in 1958, by this date she had left the Freed Unit, and she adopted the name 'Magdalene Waxman'.
[25] Firle, 'Biographical Sketch', p. 4 and p. 11.
[26] Firle, 'Biographical Sketch', p. 2.
[27] 'Banished Pianist Welcomed: Artist Expelled from Germany to Live Here', *Los Angeles Times*, 21st November, 1933, p. A8.
[28] Firle, 'Biographical Sketch',p. 2.
[29] Isabel Morse Jones, 'Philharmonic Quiet As Concert Slated Tonight', *Los Angeles Times* 8th February 1934, p. 12.
[30] Anspacer, 'German Pianist Here in Exile' p. 3, and 'Pianist Makes Debut on the Radio', San Francisco Chronicle, 23rd September 1934, p. 15. With thanks to Renée Lucas for sharing these articles with me.
[31] Interoffice-Communication from M. Simon to Mr. I. Friedman, 5th December 1944, Subject: 'M. Simon Activities'. MGM Music Department Collection, Box PR-31A, Folder: 'Simone, Magdalene'. USC Cinematic Arts Library.
[32] For more detail on casual employment terms in Hollywood's studio system see: Denise Hartsough, 'Crime Pays: The Studios' Labor Deals in the 1930s', in Janet Staiger (ed.), *The Studio System* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995), pp. 226-250, p. 230; Gerald Horne, *Class Struggle in Hollywood 1930-1950: Moguls, Mobsters, Stars, Reds and Trade Unionists* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001). For specific discussion of terms of employment for studio musicians see James P. Kraft, 'Musicians in Hollywood: Work and Technological Change in Entertainment Industries, 1926-1940, *Technology and Culture,* Vol. 35. No. 2 (April. 1994), pp. 298-314, and for details on employment terms for sound personnel see Hanson, *Hollywood Soundscapes*, pp. 111-128.
[33] Inter-office Communication Bernie Hyman to Nat Finston, Subject: Lella Simone, 21st July 1939. MGM Music Department Collection, Box PR-31A, Folder 'Simone, Magdelene', USC Cinematic Arts Library.
[34] Pay Roll Notice, 21st August 1939, MGM Music Department Collection, Box PR-28A, USC Cinematic Arts Library and Pay Roll Notice, 12th February 1940, MGM Music Department Collection, Box PR-28A, USC Cinematic Arts Library.
[35] Interoffice-Communication from M. Simon to Mr. I. Friedman, 5th December 1944, Subject: 'M. Simon Activities'. MGM Music Department Collection, Box PR-31A, Folder: 'Simone, Magdalene'. USC Cinematic Arts Library.
[36] 'Resume Discussion 14th May 1943, NWF & Others Concerned in RE: Magdalene Simon' From Nat W. Finston to Messrs Halperin, Schneider, Schoengarth. MGM Music Department Collection, Box PR-31A, Folder 'Simone, Magdalene', USC Cinematic Arts Library. Music Department job roles and pay rates in the Hollywood studios were defined by the American Federation of Musicians' Union, Local 47. For more on Local 47 see James P. Kraft, 'Musicians in Hollywood: Work and Technological Change in Entertainment Industries, 1926-1940, *Technology and Culture,* Vol. 35. No. 2 (April. 1994), pp. 298-314.
[37] Interoffice Communication 'Resume Discussion (Kopp-Halperin-Colombo-NWF) RE: Stock Track', 21st August 1943. MGM Music Department Collection, Box PR-31A, Folder: 'Simone, Magdalene', USC Cinematic Arts Library and Interoffice Communication From Nat W. Finston to Mr. Hendrickson and Mr. Craig, Subject: Magdalene Simon, 12th October, 1943. MGM Music Department Collection, Box PR-31A, Folder 'Simone, Magdalene', USC Cinematic Arts Library.

[38] Interoffice Communication From Izzy Friedman to Nat W. Finston, Subject: 'Magdeline Simon', (sic) 22nd May, 1944. MGM Music Department Collection, Box PR-31A, Folder: 'Simone, Magdalene', USC Cinematic Arts Library.
[39] Inter-Office Communication, from Izzy Friedman to Nat W. Finston and Sam Katz 'Resume of Discussion (11-29-44) Sam Katz-I.F. Re: M. Simon', 29th November 1944. MGM Music Department Collection, Box PR-31A, Folder: 'Simone, Magdalene', USC Cinematic Arts Library. Final approval for a rise in rate is specified in Inter-Office Communication From William Walsh to Messrs. W. K. Craig, J. G. Mayer and D. Chatkin, 7th February, 1945, Subject: 'Salary Adjustment – Magdalene Simon'. MGM Music Department Collection, Box PR-31A, Folder: 'Simone, Magdalene'. USC Cinematic Arts Library.
[40] Kraft, 'Musicians in Hollywood', p. 309.
[41] An Oral History with Lela Simone, interviewed by Rudy Behlmer, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Oral History Program, 1990, Margaret Herrick Library, p. 10.
[42] Change of Rate Notice, 6th February, 1946. MGM Music Department Collection, Box PR-28A, USC Cinematic Arts Library.
[43] Clerical Employee's Payroll Notice, 9th November, 1948. MGM Music Department Collection, Box PR-28A, USC Cinematic Arts Library.
[44] Inter-Office Communication From Izzy Friedman to Mr. Walsh, 20th January 1945, Subject: 'Magadaline [sic] Simon'. MGM Music Department Collection, Box PR-31A, Folder: 'Simone, Magdalene'. USC Cinematic Arts Library.
[45] Several writers have pinpointed the 'invisible' aspects of technical labour in sound. For Mary Ann Doane the 'subservience' of sound to image in classical Hollywood style is matched by the 'effacement of work which characterises bourgeois ideology' in 'Ideology and the Practice of Sound Editing' in Elisabeth Weis and John Belton (Eds.) (1985) *Film Sound: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press), 54-62; 54. In his synthesis of technician's discourses about the sound practices of the early sound era, Rick Altman has noted that clarity and intelligibility in sound emerged as the standard for which technicians were 'rewarded' during the 1930s. Rick Altman 'Sound Space' in Altman (Ed.) (1992) *Sound Theory, Sound Practice* (New York: Routledge), 456-64; 54.
[46] Hugh Fordin (1975) *The World of Entertainment: Hollywood's Greatest Musicals* (New York: Doubleday), pp. 119-121.
[47] Arthur Freed quoted in Hugh Fordin (1975) *The World of Entertainment: Hollywood's Greatest Musicals* (New York: Doubleday), p. 121.
[48] Fordin, *The World of Entertainment*, p. 121.
[49] This article is reproduced in Shelley Stamp's article in this special issue, page INSERT PAGE NUMBER. *Seventeen,* December 1945, pp. 94-95. I am very grateful to Shelley Stamp for bringing this article to my attention.
[50] From September 1946 Arthur Freed made Simone the contact and co-ordination point for arrangements between the Freed Unit and the MGM Music Department.' Interoffice Communication Arthur Freed to David Chatkin [Head of Music], Subject: Lela Simone, 11th September 1946. MGM Music Department Collection, Box PR-31A, Folder: 'Simone, Magdalene'. USC Cinematic Arts Library.
[51] David Bordwell (1997) *On the History of Film Style* (Cambridge, Mass and London: Harvard University Press), pp. 156-157.
[52] Peter Wollen, *Singin' in the Rain* (London: BFI, 1992), p. 31.
[53] Fordin, *The World of Entertainment*, pp. 352-352; John Mariani, 'Come on with the Rain', *Film Comment* Vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 7-12 and 84.
[54] See John Mariani, 'Come on With the Rain', *Film Comment* Vol. 14, no. 3 (1978), pp. 7-12 & 84; Fordin, *The World of Entertainment*, p. 356 and p. 358 and Wollen.
[55] Lela Simone Playback Disc Order, signed by Lela Simone, 8th June 1951; Sound Department Report [detailing playbacks recorded]: June 11th, 1951, Arthur Freed Papers, Box 56, Folder 1, *Singin' in the Rain* Production, USC Cinematic Arts Library.
[56] George Groves – Warner Bros. Assistant Director of Sound – 'Playback Records in Motion Picture Production' *International Sound Technician Journal*, June 1953, p. 2
[57] See, for example, R. H Townsend (Sound Technician at Fox Film Corporation) 'Some Technical Aspects of Recording Music', *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers*, Vol. 25, no. 3, September 1935, pp. 259-268; Bernard B. Brown (Head of the Sound Department at Universal Studios) 'Prescoring for Song Sequences' *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers* Vol. 29, no. 4, October 1937, pp. 356-357; Brown 'Prescoring and Scoring', *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers*, Vol. 39, October 1942, pp. 228-331; Herb

Lightman, 'Staging Musical Routines for the Camera', *American Cinematographer* Vol. 28, no. 1, January 1947, pp. 8-9; 32.

[58] An Oral History with Lela Simone, interviewed by Rudy Behlmer, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Oral History Program, 1990, Margaret Herrick Library.

[59] Earl J. Hess and Pratibha A. Dabholkar, *Singin' in the Rain: The Making of An American Masterpiece* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2009), pp. 131-132.

[60] Interoffice Communication from Lela Simone to Mac Holly [Editorial] Subject: 'Singin' in the Rain' 11th October 1951.
(Arthur Freed Papers, Box 56, Singin' in the Rain Production. USC Cinematic Arts Collection.)

[61] Groves, 'Playback Records in Motion Picture Production' p. 4.

[62] Oral History Interview with James G. Stewart, interviewed by Irene Kahn Atkins for 'Oral History on Development of Sound Techniques', 11 April-20 June 1976. American Film Institute, Louis B. Mayer Library, OH 29, pp. 133-135.

[63] Bosley Crowther, '' Singin' in the Rain,' Starring Gene Kelly, Ushers In Spring at the Music Hall; A Psychologist's Life in Prison, 'My Six Convicts,' With Mitchell, at Astor' *New York Times*, March 28, 1952.

[64] 'An Oral History with Lela Simone', interviewed by Rudy Behlmer, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Oral History Program, 1990, pp. 145-146, I have listened to the tape recording of this portion of Simone's oral history, and added the emphases here to mirror the definite inflections she gives when speaking of her work on the sequence.

[65]'Oral History with Lela Simone, pp. 145-146.

[66] Undated Notebook, with handwritten and typed notes. Arthur Freed Papers, Box 56, Singin' in the Rain Production. USC. Cinematic Arts Collection.

[67] Wollen, p. 29.

[68] Gerald Mast, *Can't Help Singin': The American Musical on Stage and Screen* (Woodstock: Overlook Press, 1987), p. 252. In a footnote, Mast cites Kelly as follows: 'One can read Kelly's claim in Donald Knox (Ed.) *The Magic Factory: How MGM Made An American in Paris* (New York: Praeger, 1973), p. 32. Kelly also made the claim on national television at the 1985 AFI award ceremony to honor him: "The *auteur* theory is a pet peeve since, as a performer, he feels demeaned by it. The theory can, of course, be modified to include performers as auteurs. Although all Hollywood films are artistic collaborations, Kelly knows that filmusicals are particularly collaborative." (Mast, footnote 7, *American Musical on Stage and Screen*, pp. 359-360).