BILLY THE KID WAS A PUNK

“Dirty Little Billy” is a different kind of movie.
It's not about the Billy The Kid you've known and loved. It's about the real William H. Bonney.
And the real William H. Bonney was a loser.
“Dirty Little Billy” is the end of his legend.

COLUMBIA PICTURES Presents

“DIRTY LITTLE BILLY”

starring

MICHAEL J. POLLARD

LEE PURCELL  RICHARD EVANS  CHARLES ADKINS

DRAW HAMILTON AND WILLARD SAGE

A JACK L. WARNER and WRG/DRAGOTI, INC. Production
Story and Screenplay by CHARLES MOSS and STAN DRAGOTI
Music composed and conducted by SASCHA BURLAND
Produced by JACK L. WARNER
Directed by STAN DRAGOTI
Film music as a specific topic of cinema studies was neglected by researchers for numerous years. Although music has always been a fundamental element of filmic praxis which handles cinema as a form of both artistic and cultural discourse, traditional magazine criticism and scholarly papers long disregarded music, whether as a result of ignorance, a lack of special training or for other reasons. However, the relevant academic literature has intensely expanded since the late 1980s and, thereafter, as the attention of the academics and the audiences on cinema and its music has grown during the last decades, many books on film music have been released, creating a dynamic arena for deeper analyses and public debates.

Despite the increased number of works on film music, much remains to be said about this important theme of film scholarship. At present, most of the available books and articles on film music involve theories, methods and epistemologies of music in Western cinema, that is, mainly Hollywood but also some non-peripheral European films. There have been a few influential endeavours to surpass these geopolitical limitations and open up the study to a wider range of cinematic/music areas through diverse ethnocultural approaches. *Global Soundtracks: Worlds of Film Music* and ‘Screened Music: Global Perspectives’ represent two notable attempts...
derived from contemporary anthropological and ethnomusicological insights, which provided innovative emphases and gave alternative starting points for additional film music interpretations.\textsuperscript{1} Besides these volumes, several titles on Australian, Indian/Hindi and Soviet/Russian film music as well as on other national/ethnic film music cultures have been issued since the late 1990s.\textsuperscript{2} Nevertheless, there is still quite a long way to go.

*Film Music in ‘Minor’ National Cinemas*, edited by Germán Gil-Curiel – a research affiliate at University College Cork, Republic of Ireland – and included in Bloomsbury’s series of ‘Topics and Issues in National Cinema’ has emerged to fill this gap to a certain degree by focusing on music beyond the American and European film scoring traditions. Drawing upon Gilles Deleuze’s notion of ‘minor cinema’,\textsuperscript{3} Gil-Curiel’s collected tome examines the distinctive film music practices of indigenous productions around the world – such as Australasian, African, Latino and European cinema – that have been ‘silenced’ until now. Hence, ‘minor cinema’ becomes a useful concept of novel revisionist readings of non-conventional film soundtracks. In this case, the adjective ‘minor’ does not indicate a less significant or motivating film system but a ‘cinema-of-becoming’ – a postmodern cinema that is persistently (yet ambiguously) moving at the edges of the classical hegemonic film industry of the West and taking part in the large-scale political project of postcolonial ‘nation-building’ or ‘(re)making the nation’ and the creation of new identities.

The contributors to the book critically investigate the social as well as the performative aspects of the phenomenon in both its local and global perspectives, thus placing these original film music cultures in the ambivalent context of present globalisation processes, while Jonathan P. J. Stock’s inspired introduction sets the theoretical framework of the book in a very compelling manner. How can film music effectively highlight and express a series of various ethnic/national ‘identities-under-formation’ through current cinematic discourse? Actually, these cultural identities – as vividly presented in the chapters of this edition (either Cuban, Mexican, Brazilian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Kurdish, Iranian, Australian, New Zealand, Nigerian, Benin or Guinean) – are multifaceted and are shaped from fragmented facets of present-day individualities and communalities.

Deleuze’s symbolic issue of ‘minority’ turns out to be a key term and conceptual framework for all texts, even when they do not thematically or methodologically connect directly. For establishing their argumentation, most chapters use critical discourse analysis of films’ audio-visual content as well as a systematic exploration of their composers’ perceptions and their audiences’ responses. The authors do not employ specialised musicological or cinematic jargon; the results are thus comprehensible to anyone who is interested in a combined scrutiny of film music together with up-to-date ethnic/national narratives. In sum, Gil-Curiel’s volume could serve as a convenient addition to the existing (but still scant) literature on the subject of film music of ‘minor cinema’ or, as Deleuze himself puts it, the political cinema that ‘was hidden by the mechanisms of power and the systems of majority’.\textsuperscript{4}

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Notes


