

Interdiscipline and the Place of Classical Music in Film Studies

AS VIEWED FROM WITHOUT, the disciplines of music can appear to be very resistant to external and interdisciplinary influence, and occasionally even hostile to it. These outsider's perceptions can be ascribed to a couple of conditions that exist within the musical community, though they by no means account for the whole.

One of these perceptions is that, semiotics, *carnaval*, and post-modernism notwithstanding, "serious" music is still in many ways an elite, elitist field, held above and held to be above the fray by a good number of its adherents. While faithful to out-moded though not entirely illegitimate notions of mastery and at least partial imperviousness to social and historical influence, and while properly preoccupied with formal properties and expressive purities, musical practitioners can forget that they are inevitably, in some way, affected by their material existence. As they are affected, so is their work, if only indirectly.

Even when attitudes are not quite elitist, it is still true that music, and musicology in particular, is a specialized field. The microscopic examination of any object can obscure that object's setting and the circumstances external to it. Musical insularity proceeds from here, and indeed like conditions can be found within any specialization. There is a tension between the specific and the fairly generalized knowledge typical of popular discourses. Broad surveys can miss the details and contradictions that make academic scholarship so important and, sometimes, so enjoyable. But scholarship can also resist the contextualization that the general can provide, thereby blocking possible connections with lay constituencies.