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**Constructing His Own
Soundtrack's Records**
Film Music In The Mature Years Of
Almodóvar's Creation. Analyzing
*Frauen am Rande des
Nervenzusammenbruchs* (1988)

Dr. Matilde Olarte-Martínez
University of Salamanca Spain
mom@usal.es



Summary

- A Music Composer For A Film
- A Soundtrack Maker And Designer
- Is Almodovar Creating A New Concept Of Soundtrack?
- Analysing His Soundtracks
- Conclusions



A Music Composer For A Film

- 2 Ways of Appearing
 - Diegetic
 - No Diegetic
- 2 Ways of Creating
 - Using music already done
 - Composing a unique music for each sequence



A Soundtrack Maker And Designer



(About **Ryuichi Sakamoto**) “I didn’t like it. It is very difficult for a composer to do all the music and for it to be good for the whole film. Unfortunately there is no time to re-record, because the composer has three weeks to do it when you have finished the montage and have to mix”.

“I am never content with the whole of the music when they compose it for me and, indeed, I took out half of **Ennio Morricone’s** work for *Tie me up! Tie me down!* because his music was more conventional than the narration of the film. It is a risk when I call a musician. When I heard other themes from films composed by Morricone I realized that all that he has done is copy himself. The main theme of *Frantic* [Roman Polanski, 1988], except for two notes, is the same as that of *Tie me up! Tie me down!*”





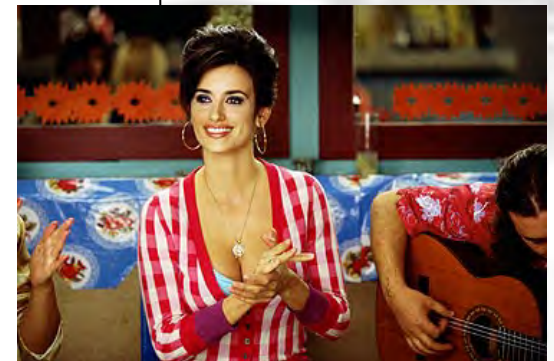
Is Almodovar Creating A New Concept Of Soundtrack?

- Own and personal idea
- Lack of experimentation
- Self-sufficient
- Diegetic music as a documentary program
- Metaphorical use of texts



Pepi, Luci, Bom... (1980)

Volver (2006)





Analysing His Soundtracks

“In my films the songs are an active part of the script, they form part of the dialogue and tell us a lot about the characters. They are not songs that are sung just because they are pretty. (...) I choose the music straight from the heart. I use these songs because I like them and also because they speak of the characters, they are distilled or filtered according to the needs of the films”



Dark Habits (1983)



High Heels (1991)



Bad Education (1991)



Analysing His Soundtracks

Re-used and Expressive music

- *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (1988)



- Lola Beltrán:
“Soy infeliz”
(I’m unhappy)
- La Lupe:
“Puro teatro”
(Pure acting)

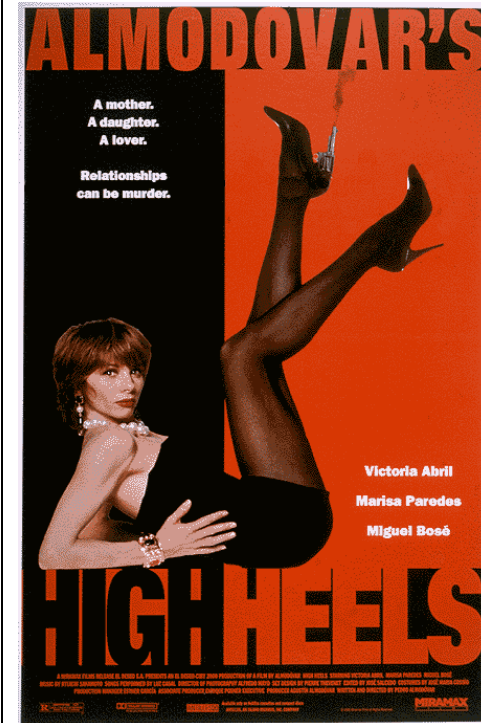




Analysing His Soundtracks

Re-used and Expressive music

- *High Heels* (1991)



- “Piensa en mí”
(Think of me)

-“Un año de amor” (A year of love)





Analysing His Soundtracks

Re-used and Expressive music

- *The Flower of My Secret* (1995)

- “En el último trago”
- “Ay amor”
- “Tonada de Luna Llena”





Analysing His Soundtracks

classical composers or loans from other soundtracks

- Rimsky-Korsakov's *Capriccio Espagnol* in *Women on the verge...*
- Miles Davis: "Saeta" in *High Heels*
- George Fenton in *High Heels*
- Carlos Gardel: "Volver" in *To Return*





Analysing His Soundtracks

FUNCTIONS

- Expressive Music
- Structural Music



“Music has an enormous narrative importance in Kika, as in all my films. The character of Kika has one kind of music, Andrea has another, they all have a very specific type of music, a music which suits them well”.



Examples for discussing

- MacNamara
- “Resistiré”, *Átame*
- *Matador*
- *Todo sobre mi madre*
- *La mala educación*
- *La piel que habito*



All About... Alberto Iglesias



- Born: San Sebastián, 1955
- First short film soundtrack: *Ikusmena (Landscape, Montxo Armendáriz, 1980)*
- First feature film: *La conquista de Albania* (Alfonso Ungría, 1983)
- First film with Almodóvar: *The Flower of My Secret* (1995)





Conclusions

- Almodovar has found his own complementary composer in Alberto Iglesias
 - No intrusive
 - Lets Almodovar form an importante quotation of musical creation
- His music for Almodovar is more structural than expressive (being the opposite side with directors as Medem, Foster o Meirelles)
- Almodovar reflexes his own personality over the music of his films
- An open question... Is Almodovar a musician in his films? And what is his own style?



*Frauen am Rande des
Nervenzusammenbruchs (1988)*

Matilde Olarte

(Universidad de Salamanca)

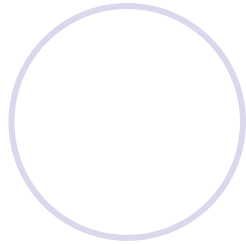
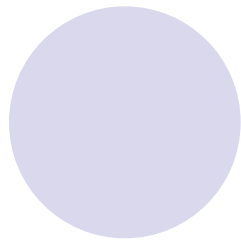
Universität Wien, 20/06/2012

FILMOGRAPHY

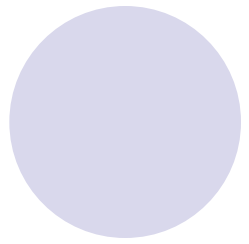
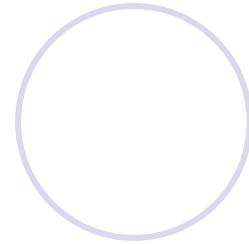
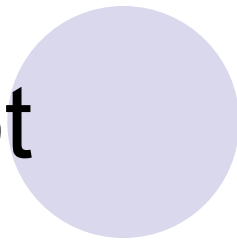
- -1980: *Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón*. anonymous soundtrack; songs "Tu loca juventud" and "Estaba escrito".
- -1982: *Laberinto de pasiones*. As musicians Ana "Pegamoide", Eduardo "Pegamoide" and Nacho "Pegamoide". As songs, Almodóvar's own pop music "Suck it to me" (Bonezzi-MacNamara-Almodóvar) and "Gran Ganga".
- -1983: *Entre tinieblas*. As songs "Salí porque salí" by Cúrel Alonso, "Dime" by Morris Albert" and "Encadenados" by Carlos Arturo Erita/ Lucho Gatica. Also mixing by Miguel Morales on "Salí porque salí" and "Dime".
- -1984: *Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto*. The first music composer is Bernardo Bonezzi. As songs, "La bien pagá" by Perelló y Mostazo, and "Nur nicht aus Lieben Weinen" by Mackeben/Beckmann/Boheme.
- -1986: *Matador*. 2nd soundtrack by Bonezzi, although the orchestration is by Manuel Santisteban. The only song is "Espérame en el cielo, corazón", sang by Mina.
- -1987: *La ley del deseo*. No music composer on credits. Pre-existent music quite irregular as "Symphony n° 10" by Shostakovich, "Tango" by Strawinsky, "Ne me quitte pas" by Jacques Brel, "Guarda che luna" by Fred Bongusto, "Lo dudo" by Navarro, "Déjame recordar" by Bola de Nieve, "La despedida" by Bernardo Bonezzi, and Almodovar's pop group "Susan get down"/"Voy a ser mamá"/"SatanaSA".

- -1988: *Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios*. The 3rd soundtrack by Bernardo Bonezzi. Songs: "Soy infeliz" by Ventura Rodríguez, and "Puro teatro" by Curet Alonso.
- -1989: *Átame*. The first and last by Ennio Morricone. Songs: "Canción del alma" by Rafael Hernández, "Resistiré" by Dúo Dinámico, "Celos" by Jacob Gade, and the already used in *La ley del deseo* "SatanaSA" by P. Almodóvar/Fabio de Miguel/ B. Bonezzi.
- -1991: *Tacones lejanos*. Again the first and the last collaboration by a composer, in this case Riuichy Sakamoto. Songs: "Pecadora", "Piensa en mí" by Agustín Lara, "Un año de amor" by Ferrer-Verlor, "Soleá" and "Saeta" by Gil Evans, "Beyond my control" and "A final request" by George Fenton.
- -1993: *Kika*. Only preexistent music, as "Danza española nº 5" by Granados, "Se nos rompió el amor" by Manuel Alejandro, "Concierto para bongo" by Dámaso Pérez Prado, "Guaglione" by Nisa-Fanciulli, "Mamá yo quiero" by Jararaca and Vicente Paiva, "Luz de luna" by Alvaro Carrillo, "The car lot the package" by Bernard Herrmann, "Youkali tango Habanera" by Kurt Weill, and "La Cumparsita" by Mateos Rodríguez.
- -1995: *La flor de mi secreto*. The first soundtrack by the oscarize Alberto Iglesias. Songs: "Soleá" by Gil Evans (already used for *Tacones lejanos*), "En el último trago" by Jiménez Sandoval, "Ay amor" by Bola de Nieve, and "Tonada de Luna Llena" by Sharon Díaz.

- -1997: *Carne trémula*. The second soundtrack by Alberto Iglesias. Songs: "Ay mi perro" by Valle Domínguez/Gordillo/Algueró, "Sufre como yo" by Pla Alvarez, "El rosario de mi madre" by Cavagnaro Lerena, "Somos" by Mario Claveli, and "Whirl-Y-Reel 2" by Emerson/Spillane
- -1999: *Todo sobre mi madre*. The third soundtrack by Alberto Iglesias. Songs: "Gorrión" and "Coral para mi pequeño y lejano pueblo" by Dino Saluzzi, and "Tajabone" by Ismael Lô.
- -2002: *Hable con ella*. The fourth soundtrack by Alberto Iglesias. Songs: "Por toda a minha vida" by Antonio Carlos Jobim/Vinicius by Moraes, "Raquel" by Rufino Almeida, "Cucurrucucú Paloma" by Tomás Méndez Sosa, "O let me weep, for ever weep" by *The Fairy Queen* by Henry Purcell,
- -2004: *La mala educación*. The fifth soundtrack by Alberto Iglesias. Songs: "Quizás, Quizás, Quizás" by Osvaldo Farrés, "Maniquí Parisien" by Arcadio Roses Berdiel/Manuel Aniesa, "Moon River" by Henry Mancini, "Torna a Surriento" by G. B. and E. De Curtis, "Kyrie" from the *Petite Messe Solennelle* de G. Rossini, "Cuore Matto" by Toto Savio/Ambrosino,
- -2006: *Volver*, the sixth soundtrack by Alberto Iglesias. Songs: "Las espigadoras" from *La rosa del azafrán* by Francisco Romero, and "Volver", by Carlos Gardel.
- -2009: *Los abrazos rotos*, the seventh soundtrack by Alberto Iglesias. Songs: "A ciegas" by Quintero/León/Quiroga, "Werewolf" and "Robot Oeuf" by Uffie and Feadz
- -2011: *La piel que habito*, just now the last soundtrack by Alberto Iglesias. Songs: "Por el amor de amar" by Buika (as Concha Buika) and Iván González Lewis (as Iván 'Melón' Lewis), "Por el amor de amar" (versión brasileña) performed by Ana Mena, "Petite fleur" by Sidney Bechet, "Se me hizo fácil" (written by Agustín Lara and produced by Javier Limón) by Buika (as Concha Buika), "Shades of Marble" (written and performed by Anders Trentemøller) by Davide Rossi, "Between the Bars" by Chris Garneau



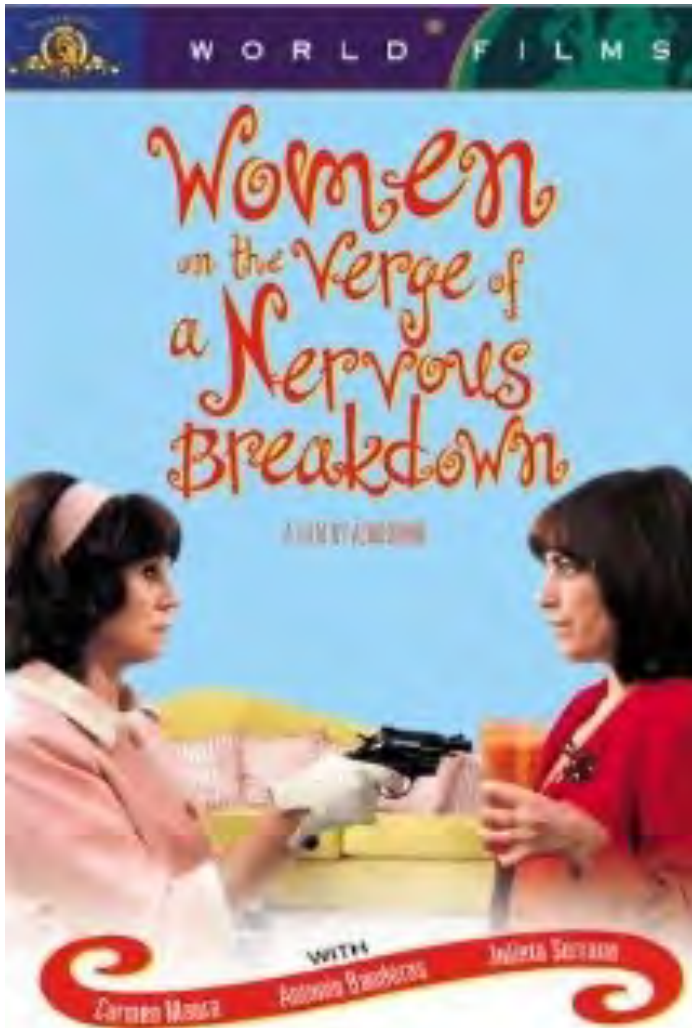
Plot



A woman's lover leaves her, and she tries to contact him to find out why he's left.

She confronts his wife and son, who are as clueless as she. Meanwhile her girlfriend is afraid the police are looking for her because of her boyfriend's criminal activities. They talk to a female lawyer, who turns out to be the lover's new lover, and everyone's path keeps crossing each other's in a very complicated and confusing manner [cfr. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0095675/>]

Film Original title: **Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios**



- Darsteller: Carmen Maura, Antonio Banderas, Julieta Serrano, Maria Barranco, Rossy de Palma, Guillermo Montesinos, Yayo Calvo, Juan Lombardero, José Antonio Navarro
- Regisseur: Pedro Almodóvar
- Studio: Universum Laufzeit
- DVD: 1 Std. 24 Min.
- Erschienen Produktionsjahr: 1988
- Verleih: DVD: 21. Aug 2009

Music in the film: all pre-existing

- "Soy infeliz": Written by Ventura Romero (as Ventura Rodríguez). Performed by Lola Beltrán
- "Puro teatro": Written by C. Curet Alonso. Performed by La Lupe
- "Capricho Español": By Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (as Rimsky - Korsakow). Performed by La Orquesta Sinfonica de la Radio de Moscú. Conducted by Gennadi Rozhdestvensky (as G. Rozhdestvensky)
- "Scherezade": By Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (as Rimsky - Korsakow). Performed by La Orquesta Sinfonica de la Radio de Moscú. Conducted by Gennadi Rozhdestvensky (as G. Rozhdestvensky)

4 points for analysing the music of this film:

- 1) the importance that Almodóvar gives to the music in his films
- 2) What type of music does Almodóvar use in his films?
- 3) Which are the functions that Almodóvar gives to diegetic and incidental music?
- 4) Has he a good relationship between director- composer?

The importance that Almodóvar gives to the music in his film in his own words:

- “In my films the songs are an active part of the script, they form part of the dialogue and tell us a lot about the characters. They are not songs that are sung just because they are pretty. (...) I choose the music straight from the heart. I use these songs because I like them and also because they speak of the characters, they are distilled or filtered according to the needs of the films”.

Does Almodovar consciously play with the effect of music in his scripts?

Music for him has a metatextual purpose, because for him the songs the audience hears form part of the dialogue and therefore he counts on these texts when bringing his characters to life in the script. That is why we all remember songs that have become famous in Almodóvar's films, such as "Piensa en mí", "Soy infeliz", or "Un año de amor".

- for Almodóvar, music counts when it has a text that says something, which is why he needs songs –to help us to know what the characters are feeling.



Examples:

- During the credit titles of *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* we hear the song of the Mexican singer Lola Beltrán, “Soy infeliz” (I’m unhappy), which fits perfectly with those recomposed glossy paper images which are like a feast of appearances and artifice, and in Almodóvar’s word, “have, in the most classic sense, the same effect as an overture, because we have the voice of Lola Beltrán saying “I’m unhappy” as if it were the voice of all the women in the film”

At end of the film...

During the credit titles another female voice –the Mexican singer La Lupe- singing “Puro teatro” (Pure acting) explains why a woman insults her lover with these words, reproaching him that everything he says is a lie, that it is pure acting; thus the film comes to an end and we find that the words of La Lupe could be applied to the life of many Spanish women...

2) What type of music does Almodóvar use in his films?

- As regards spectator-characters, we have diageitic or background music which the character interprets or listens to and the spectator perceives,, where the song is metatext; it goes beyond the dialogue and speaks for itself.
- As regards the spectators, we can see examples of incidental or featured music which the characters do not perceive and which is only heard by the spectators. This type of music is not frequent in Almodóvar since there is no play with the text of the song and recourse has to be had to the intuition and feelings of the spectators on hearing works by classical composers or loans from other soundtracks

Non diegetic and classical music example:

- One of the most surprising for the listeners is to hear suddenly and with no advance warning Rimsky Korsakov's *Caprissio Espagnol* in *Women on the verge...* while Carmen Maura contemplates the fire that has started on her bed and tries to put it out with the hose from her terrace – a recurring element in Almodóvar and Nino Moretti

3) Which are the functions that Almodóvar gives to diegetic and incidental music?

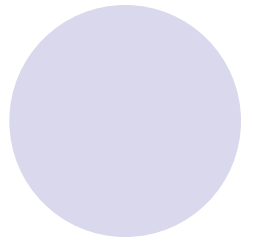
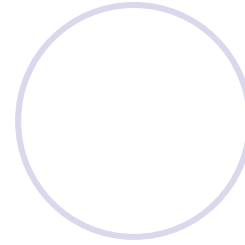
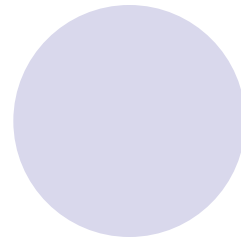
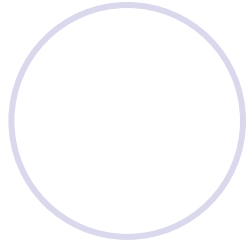
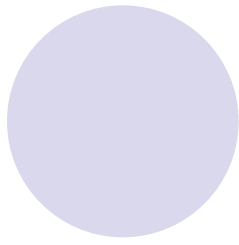
- By reviewing the concepts of expressive and structural music by which the soundtrack of a film is defined, in many analytical trends, a division has been established between:
 - the soundtrack of a film expressing a feeling or emotional state, that is, **expressive music**, and
 - music which limits itself to “being there”, as a mere background which doesn’t express anything – **structural music**

Mostly, he used in this film **expressive music**

- it refers both to the feelings of the characters and to those of the spectators
- of the characters because his or her feelings change when listening to this music, playing or singing it or when imagining it,
- Of the spectators as passive protagonists of the music we are perceiving

4) Has he a good relationship between director- composer?

- Almodóvar has been oscillated between diverse musicians until he has found the film composer Alberto Iglesias:
- Q/ “In the soundtrack of *High Heels*, the other musical works are all by **Ryuichi Sakamoto** but, really, they are not heard very much in the film. Why didn't you use all that music composed specially for *High Heels*?”
- A/ “I didn't like it. It is very difficult for a composer to do all the music and for it to be good for the whole film. Unfortunately there is no time to re-record, because the composer has three weeks to do it when you have finished the montage and have to mix”.



- “I am never content with the whole of the music when they compose it for me and, indeed, I took out half of Ennio Morricone’s work for *Tie me up! Tie me down!* because his music was more conventional than the narration of the film. It is a risk when I call a musician. When I heard other themes from films composed by Morricone I realized that all that he has done is copy himself. The main theme of *Frantic* [Roman Polanski, 1988], except for two notes, is the same as that of *Tie me up! Tie me down!*”

For finishing...

- “Almodóvar, then, has known from the beginning the importance of the music element in motion pictures. He himself is a music lover and interprets his own texts, creating unique moments where image and music form an inseparable whole. On many occasions he has made the audience forget a “borrowed” melody, which in his hands has acquired a totally catalytic value. (...) Throughout his work a musical triumvirate can be seen: popular-avant-garde-classical”.
- This, however, is a highly idealized posture. In my opinion he has yet to discover classical music, especially that of contemporary composers, both Spanish and from other countries; and thus he would be able to increase the value of his story

Thank you very much

