

EXPERIMENTS IN DRAMATIC MUSIC: THE FILM MUSIC AND CRITICISM OF GEORGES AURIC, 1919-1946

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Based on current musicological scholarship, Georges Auric seems to have led two completely different careers. During and after World War I, he emerged as an *enfant terrible* of the Parisian avant-garde – a disciple of Erik Satie's, a member of the famed Groupe des Six, the dedicatee of Jean Cocteau's *Le Coq et l'Arlequin*, and the only composer to have ballets premiered in three consecutive seasons of Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. Following World War II, however, Auric appears as the very personification of the French musical establishment – president of various composers' unions, Administrator of the Paris Opéra and Opéra-Comique, Grand Officier of the Légion d'Honneur, member (and for one term, the President) of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, and the eleven-term President of the Société des Auteurs, Compositeurs, et Editeurs de Musique. This dual portrayal of Auric suggests the paradoxes that defined this artist's career: the *paysan* of Paris, the populist who composed music with the highest artistic aspirations, and the concert-hall composer whose career is defined by his commercial films. Historically, this dissertation explores the paradoxes of Auric's life while filling in some of the thirty-year gap that exists in current scholarship. It also addresses issues of multimedia collaboration and methods of audiovisual analysis. Following the model of Auric's own memoirs, it will be a composer-centered history that is more a web of micro-histories than a grand narrative.

Auric's place in music historiography has been defined by his film music. Forty years ago, this excluded him from the canon of Western music. Today, with the broader acceptance of film music scholarship, Auric's music is ripe for study. Between 1930 and 1969, Auric collaborated in Paris, Nice, London, and Hollywood on approximately 130 films. He worked with many of the directors who defined the classical styles of these filmmaking centers: Marc Allégret, René Clair, Henri-Georges Clouzot, Jean Cocteau, Jean Delannoy, John Huston, Max Ophüls, and William Wyler, just to mention those best represented in academic literature. The success of his work is attested to, on the one hand, by awards that the film and music industries bestowed on Auric: the Music Prize at the first Cannes International Film Festival in 1946 (for Delannoy's *Symphonie pastorale*), the Music Prize at the 1950 Venice Film Festival (for Cocteau's *Orphée*), a 1964 nomination for an Emmy Award (for *The Kremlin*, Peter Jarvis, 1963), and a gold record for "The Waltz from *Moulin Rouge*". On the other hand, his success was signaled in a 1990 interview by Royal S. Brown with Maurice Jarre, a French composer currently active in both Paris and Hollywood. According to Jarre, there were only two composers who did any significant work for the classical French cinema – Maurice Jaubert (who composed only twenty-two film scores before falling in the Battle of France) and Georges Auric.

In four chapters, this dissertation examines Auric's writings on film music and the first seventeen years of his film career, from Cocteau's *Sang d'un poète* (1930) to Delannoy's *Symphonie*

pastorale. The first chapter focuses on Auric's path into the cinema, focusing in large part on his engagement with the aesthetics of Guillaume Apollinaire's *esprit nouveau* and Cocteau's *Le Coq et l'Arlequin*. A discussion of the transition from silent to sound cinema leads to analyses of the audiovisual interaction and collaborative processes of *Sang d'un poète* and Clair's *A Nous, la Liberté!* (1931). The second chapter turns to the increasingly evident political stances embodied in Auric's music as the French left gained political power. While writing for the communist papers *Marianne* and *Paris-Soir*, Auric advocated a populist style that both had high artistic aspirations and was affectively plain and direct. As a member of the executive committee of the Fédération Musicale Populaire, he also helped support himself and like-minded composers through publishing and performing opportunities. Auric's collaborations with director Marc Allégret and screenwriter Marcel Achard during this period combine populist music with plots celebrating the cult of youth and reflecting an aesthetic that has been described as "social realism". The third chapter focuses on Auric's activities during the German Occupation of France, particularly his resistance efforts as a member of the executive committee of the Front National de la Musique. During these dark years, Auric sought to define a nationalist style for French composers, a style that is most evident in films like Jean Delannoy's *L'Eternel Retour* (1943) and *Le Bossu* (1944). The final chapter addresses Auric's first two post-Liberation French films, Cocteau's *La Belle et la Bête* (1946) and Delannoy's *Symphonie pastorale*, as well as his acceptance into the musical establishment. Both scores exhibit what might be called Auric's "mature" style of film music, which would serve as a model for other composers of the classical French cinema. Even as Auric began accepting film work overseas, these films suggest that the post-war rebirth of French cinema would be the result of nationalistic films drawing on French literary traditions. Throughout all four chapters, but particularly in the analysis of *Symphonie pastorale*, I develop an audiovisual score that indicates the relationships between music, images, dialogue, and editing. This form of descriptive notation aims to recognize that films and film scores are products of collaborative efforts involving director, screenwriter, cameraman, editor, composer, and orchestrator.

As in Auric's memoirs (*Quand j'étais là*, 1978), this dissertation is not exactly about Auric himself. Instead, he is used as the connective tissue uniting the four self-contained chapters, each of which focuses primarily on one collaborative team that existed in a specific milieu. (The one exception is Auric's forty-plus-year collaboration with Cocteau, which will permeate three of the chapters). Each chapter thus becomes a case study exploring Auric's biography and writings, the history of French cinema, modes of multimedia collaboration, and the place of Auric and film in specific moments of French history.