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DOSSIÊ - FRENCH CINEMATOGRAPHY: FROM THE LUMIÈRES & MÉLIÈS TO VR & AI

## Pre-existing classical music in French auteur cinema in the 2010s: Baroque predominance and processes of choices in a digital world

*La música clásica preexistente en el cine de autor francés en la década de 2010: predominio barroco y procesos de elección en un mundo digital*

*Música clássica pré-existente no cinema de autor francês nos anos 2010: predominância barroca e processos de escolhas em um mundo digital*

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**Abstract:** In the Nouvelle Vague, there was a relevant use of music of classical repertoire (Alvim, 2017), usually aligned to the director's taste ("auteur music", according to Gorbman, 2007), such as Beethoven's pieces in Godard's films. In contemporary French films, there is a recurrence of works by Bach and Vivaldi, which could partly be explained by their omnipresence in digital platforms. In a chosen corpus from films selected by the Cannes Film Festivals in the 2010s, we analyze the aesthetic use of this baroque repertoire and the motivations for the choice.

**Keywords:** french cinema; contemporary cinema; pre-existing music; baroque.

**Resumen:** En la Nouvelle Vague, hubo un uso relevante de la música de repertorio clásico (Alvim, 2017), generalmente alineada al gusto del director ("música de autor", según Gorbman, 2007), como las piezas de Beethoven en las películas de Godard. En las películas francesas contemporáneas, hay una recurrencia de obras de Bach y Vivaldi, que podría explicarse en parte por su omnipresencia en las plataformas digitales. En un corpus elegido de películas seleccionadas por los Festivales de Cannes en la década de 2010, analizamos el uso estético de este repertorio barroco y las motivaciones para la elección.

**Palabras clave:** cine francés; cine contemporáneo; música preexistente; Barroco.

**Resumo:** Na Nouvelle Vague, houve um uso relevante de músicas de repertório clássico (Alvim, 2017), geralmente alinhadas ao gosto do diretor ("auteur music", segundo Gorbman, 2007), como as peças de Beethoven nos filmes de Godard. Nos filmes franceses contemporâneos, há uma recorrência de obras de Bach e Vivaldi, o que poderia ser explicado, em parte, por sua onipresença nas plataformas digitais. Através de um *corpus* composto por filmes selecionados pelo Festival de Cannes na década de 2010, analisamos a utilização estética desse repertório barroco e as motivações por trás dessa escolha.

**Palavras-chave:** cinema francês; cinema contemporâneo; música pré-existente; barroco.



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## Introduction

During the French Nouvelle Vague, the use of pre-existing classical<sup>2</sup> music was relevant, both in quantitative terms and in the recurrence of certain musical works, such as Beethoven's string quartets in Jean-Luc Godard's films (Alvim, 2017). He used Beethoven's music all over his career and, since the 1990s, he turned himself predominantly to works from the ECM label catalog (Jullier, 2004).

Godard is one of the directors considered by Claudia Gorbman (2007) as a *mélomane*, responsible for "auteur music". For Gorbman, such *mélomane* directors are characterized by understanding music as a central part of their cinematic style and by controlling their musical choices, not leaving them solely to the composer or the music supervisor. More than fifteen years after Gorbman's article and focusing specifically on French cinema of the second decade of the 21st century and on a specific genre of pre-existing music – namely, Western classical music – we again observe a recurring presence of this repertoire.

As Séverine Abhervé noted, there is a practical aspect to the amount of pre-existing music in French cinema, as the budget allocated to music is tiny and decreasing, in addition to the great development of music libraries. Music supervisor Thomas Jamois, meanwhile, evoked the influence of Tarantino's "neo-Jukebox method" on the new generations of French filmmakers (Abhervé *et al.*, 2014).

Moreover, in recent years, the way of consuming music has changed a lot with the use of platforms and algorithmic recommendations. The recurrence of certain musical works in contemporary movies seems to replicate, in some cases, what Adorno (1999) had already observed in the 20th century Cultural Industry, i.e., what is most played, is continuously repeated, in a vicious circle. Now, what is most found, is most recommended.

In the specific case of the classical repertoire, its socio-cultural connotations towards a distinction, as studied by Bourdieu (1984), must be considered, as well as its use as a ratification of a supposed European cultural heritage

(Halfyard, 2006). The connotation of distinction, whether in the diegetic or nondiegetic use of music, is employed in some films to associate certain characters to upper social class or to an intellectual *milieu*.

On the other hand, Julie Hubbert (2014) observed, unlike the big uniformity regarding genres and musical works in 1960s films, a greater musical variety in contemporary films. This was also a characteristic observed in most of the films in our research.

To select the corpus analyzed here, we did an exploratory mapping of films by French directors who took part in the two main competitions of the Cannes Film Festival (the main one and *Un certain regard*) from 2011 to 2020, with inclusion of some films from 2021. We did not consider French co-productions by directors of another nationality, even if the film story took place on French territory. The choice for Cannes festival was due to the fact that, being one of the biggest international festivals (the "A" festivals, which also include Berlin and Venice) and hosted in France, there is a tendency to a greater selection of French films, because, as Ikeda (2022) observed, film festivals respond to geopolitical demands. Once the mapping of films was done, their soundtracks were searched in IMDB and Cinezik (a French site specialized in film music).

In this mapping, we observed a large presence of the baroque composers Vivaldi and Bach (besides Mozart, but, due to the limits of this article, we will privilege the two baroque ones), in particular the work *The Four Seasons* by Vivaldi. We then assembled a *corpus* based on the following characteristics: 1) repetition of musical pieces or recurrence of the use of classical repertoire in films by the same director – sometimes considering films by these directors that took also part in Berlin and Venice Festivals, because, as Ikeda (2022) notes, such festivals form an interconnected network with Cannes; 2) the presence of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* or the use of Baroque music in the climax of the film. We excluded the films by Jean-Luc Godard, because we understand that the musical score of his films

<sup>2</sup> This word is here employed as a synonym of "art music" as a whole, not only referring to the classical period in Western art music.

of the 2010s connects with those of the previous two decades and because the director would deserve a separate article. In the first group are, for the most part, directors already established as an *auteur* or on the way to it, such as Robert Guédiguian (1953-), Olivier Assayas (1955-), François Ozon (1967-), Bertrand Bonello (1968-) and Mia Hansen-Løve (1981-). In the second, there are directors at different moments in their careers, with many newcomers to Cannes Festival.

As for the film analysis, we employed methods used by Michel Marie (2006), which involve intertextual references, as well as methods of film music analysis (Alvim, 2017). Some analyses will be more developed than others due to the limits of this article and the breadth of the *corpus*. When found, interviews with the directors' motivations for the music choices were taken into account.<sup>3</sup>

### Baroque music, cultural industry and digital world

A milestone in the rediscovery of Baroque music by the public was Mendelssohn's performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in 1829. In the 20th century, the recording industry had a major contribution to what Sophie Maisonneuve (2014) called the "patrimonialization" of the music from the past, with the oldest being sold as novelty and continuously participating in the consumed repertoire. Particularly in Europe, recordings of classical repertoire corresponded to a great part of the whole, and Maisonneuve also points out that in the 1950 His Master's Voice catalog first places were the composers Beethoven, Bach, and Mozart. Specifically in France, Tournès (2008) points out the key role of small record labels in the rediscovery of Baroque music since the late 1940s. As a matter of fact, the first longplay record (LP) in France, released in 1949 on the L'Oiseau Lyre label, featured works by the French Baroque composer François Couperin.

Particularly striking for the results of this research is the fact, stated by Tournès (2008), that

the Baroque composer Antonio Vivaldi was little recorded before World War II and began to be explored after 1947. Greig (2021) reviews Vivaldi's "revival", highlighting the importance of the new LP format and a recording of *The Four Seasons* that received the Grand Prix du Disque in 1950. From then on, Vivaldi was definitely "adopted" by the Cultural Industry. In Brazil, for example, it was the soundtrack of commercials for Vinólia cosmetics.

In recent years, with the emergence and intensification of algorithmic influence in the digital world, the choice for a certain musical repertoire for a film also goes through them. As Arielli (2018) states, aesthetic choices are interrelated with the detection performed by algorithms, influencing the formation of taste and consumption, leading to a standardization of the aesthetic phenomenon by this external mechanism, and, at the same time, there is a customization of the user preferences. In this filtering, both individual preferences and collective behaviors and playlists act, which may explain (although it is not the only factor) the repetitions of certain musical pieces in our *corpus*. For, in the world of algorithmic taste, there is a "propensity to repeat already established formulas, maximizing the audience for established artists and genres and reducing the space for innovation." (De Marchi *et al.*, 2021, p. 24, our translation).

### Repetition of musical pieces and/or recurrence of classical music in films by the same director

Among the group of directors of our mapping is Robert Guédiguian, born in Marseille and of Armenian origin, whose filmography could be characterized as a social realism, quite common in contemporary French cinema, with a clear Marxist point of view. Such aspects are present in *Les Neiges du Kilimandjaro*,<sup>4</sup> nominated for the 2011 Cannes Film Festival.

The film has an eclectic soundtrack, as observed by Hubbert (2014) in contemporary films, but

<sup>3</sup> As Rudolph (2023) shows, although there is a tendency to center the responsibility for the music on the film director, as noted by Gorman, there are usually other collaborators, even if the final decision lies with the director. Since we are dealing with a large *corpus*, we will not be able, in the scope of this article, to do a detailed investigation of each one like Rudolph's.

<sup>4</sup> The films are mentioned by their original French title.

with a greater presence of popular songs, such as the French *Kilimandjaro* (by Pascal Daniel, 1966, in obvious relation to the film title), North American rock songs, and others. The classical repertoire includes Maurice Ravel's *Pavane pour une infante défunte* in three moments in the final third of the film, and the "Kyrie" from Mozart's *Mass in C minor*, as well as Mendelssohn's *Wedding March*, diegetic and illustrative of the main characters' wedding anniversary celebration.

The *Pavane pour une infante défunte* does not seem to have a greater relationship with the narrative or imagetic elements at the moments it is placed, however, we can associate it temporally with the part of the film in which the couple Michel and Marie-Claire decides to forgive the young man who assaulted them, and care for his young brothers. Guédiguian employed the *Pavane* in a similar way in a film eight years later, with the same actors and also with a social thematic, although much less optimistic, *Gloria Mundi*, a film that took part in the 2019 Venice Film Festival. In an even more recent film, *Mali Twist* (2022), Guédiguian uses Chopin's *Nocturno n. 20* in a single scene<sup>5</sup>, in a film that, as its title indicates, is set in the African country Mali and is filled with music of the twist genre.

In a radio program about the music in his films, comparing the classical and popular music used in *Les Neiges du Kilimandjaro*, Guédiguian stated that the former "universalizes the film", while the latter dates it (*Les Musiques...*, 2018). In an interview<sup>6</sup>, the director also evoked us the Brechtian distancing effect in the placement of these songs, as they contribute to the spectator sensation that they are, at the same time, "inside" and "outside" the film, as well intriguing him for social or geographical reasons (the popular milieu and the Mali, respectively).

The choice of Ravel's *Pavane* in 2011 probably did not come from algorithms, since at the time they were not so developed<sup>7</sup>, and Guédiguian reported in our interview a particular taste for the

composer. We can say that processes of "auteur music" also happened with the use of other pieces from the classical repertoire in the first two films mentioned: in *Gloria Mundi*, the "Offertory" from Verdi's *Requiem*, is a very explicit homage to short film *Life* (1993) by Armenian filmmaker Artavazd Pelechian; in *Les Neiges du Kilimandjaro*, the "Kyrie" from Mozart's *Mass in C minor* is heard as the soundtrack of French animated feature film, *Les Triplettes de Belleville* (Sylvain Chomet, 2003), which the female protagonist watches on television, together with the robber's two little brothers. The music evokes us its presence as the only soundtrack in *Un condamné à mort s'est échappé* (1956), by the famous French filmmaker Robert Bresson, a film in whose story, as in *Les Neiges du Kilimandjaro*, there is a strong relationship with the possibility of redemption, something already suggested by the music's sacred character.

In the case of director Olivier Assayas' filmography, though there is no particular predominance of classical music repertoire, this stands out in *Sils Maria* (2014) and *Personal Shopper* (2016). In these two films, there is a recurrence of medieval and Renaissance pieces performed by the renowned ensemble Hesperion XXI, directed by Catalan musician based in France, Jordi Savall (the pieces come from two CDs of the group). Another common point is the character played by Kristen Stewart, who in both films is a personal secretary to successful women.

A third common aspect is the way in which the music pieces are structurally placed at specific points, together with something (shots or movements of characters) that repeats<sup>8</sup>. In *Sils Maria*, there is always pre-existing classical music over the images of the Swiss mountains, which are recurrent and create like chapters marks in the film: In addition to the Renaissance *Pavin of Albarti* (by Innocentio Alberti, performed by Hesperion), we hear, at other such moments, the Baroque "Largo" from Handel's opera *Xerxes*

<sup>5</sup> The *Nocturne* is heard when the male protagonist declares his love for Lara.

<sup>6</sup> Via email, in February 2023.

<sup>7</sup> De Marchi *et al.* (2021) identify the launching of Last.fm in 2003 as the initial landmark of algorithmic music recommendations.

<sup>8</sup> This is also an aspect that evokes Robert Bresson's cinematography, a director much admired by Assayas.

(in an instrumental version), Handel's *Sonata n. 2 in D minor*, and Pachelbel's *Canon*. In *Personal Shopper*, there are three musical pieces from the Hesperion CDs at moments of displacements by Stewart's character's<sup>9</sup>, which are also linked to her relationships with the antagonist or with her dead brother, with whom she is constantly trying to communicate.

In Bertrand Bonello's films, the use of classical repertoire is frequent, though sharing space with other musical genres even outside the diegetic time of the film, such as American popular songs of the 1960s/1970s in the period drama *Apollo-nide* (2011). In *Saint-Laurent* (2014), a biopic of the famous fashion designer, songs are also present. In common to both films, Mozart's piano concertos (K488 and K466, respectively) and opera arias; however, in *Apollonide*, the "Adagio" of the Concerto K488 is in a dreamlike sequence from the thoughts of the deformed-faced prostitute, whereas, in *Saint-Laurent*, both the concerto K466 and arias from 19th century Italian operas by Giordano and Puccini, all performed by the famous soprano Maria Callas, are diegetic music and commented by the characters. They function to present us the protagonist's taste, to which we can add the finale of the opera *Tristan und Isolde*, by Wagner, and Schubert's *Ave Maria*. On the other hand, the Baroque works (a chorus from Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*; Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, or the version of an aria from Henry Purcell's opera *King Arthur*) generally take place nondiegetically or not dependent on the control of the character Yves Saint-Laurent. It is important to say that Bonello composed the original music for both films, being an unusual case of director-composer.

As for François Ozon, his cinematography is quite prolific, but very irregular in terms of themes and aesthetics, such as the musical choices. In the case of the films of our mapping, in *Jeune & Jolie* (2013), which is about a middle-class teenager who goes into prostitution, there are works by Baroque composers Vivaldi and Purcell and a

piece by Mozart; in *L'Amant Double* (2017), among a wide variety of genres and works, there is one of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*; in *Tout s'est bien passé* (2021), a film about an elderly sick and rich man who decides to die by means of assisted suicide in Switzerland, the music selection is based mainly on works by Brahms, Schubert, and Beethoven. We could include the film *Franz* (2016) – this one having taken part into Venice Film Festival – a period drama between wars, in which, at a given moment, the protagonists perform a version for piano and violin of the same Chopin's *Nocturno n. 20* present in Guédiguian's *Mali Twist* (2022). We can conjecture whether the presence of the same work in recent films by these two directors is a mere chance or a finding by algorithmic recommendation.

Among these films by Ozon, in *Tout s'est bien passé* the musical choices contribute to presenting characters of an intellectualized upper bourgeoisie: Brahms' *Piano Sonata n. 3* is heard diegetically on a CD and the composer is evoked by the characters; moreover, one of the protagonist's daughters works with the organization of classical music festivals.

This relationship of classical music – and, in this case, of the period of German Romanticism rather than Baroque – with the socio-cultural class of the characters is also in Mia Hansen – Løve's films. In the most recent *Bergman's island* (2021), in the Swedish director's house, the protagonist talks to a film student who is listening on a record to the "Adagio" of the *Ninth Symphony* by Gustav Mahler, a post-Romantic composer.

In a previous film, *L'avenir* (2016), which took part in the Berlinale, and whose protagonist is a philosophy professor facing problems in various spheres of her personal life, we hear an excerpt from Schubert's *Lied*<sup>10</sup> *Auf dem Wasser zusingen D.774* ("To sing on the water", in literal translation) after her husband's abrupt announcement of their divorce, when the two are together at the seaside vacation house for the last time, and she also receives news that her mother is ill. As in *Les*

<sup>9</sup> This specifically brings us back to the way baroque music is used in Robert Bresson's *Pickpocket* (1959), as we analyzed in previous research.

<sup>10</sup> *Lied* is a German song genre, whose lyrics come from poems and whose themes are usually connected with nature and melancholy. The main composers are Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms.

*Neiges du Kilimandjaro* or *Personal Shopper*, the music functions to connect spaces, being heard from the time the couple leave the house in Brittany, until the protagonist arrive in her mother's room. However, there is in *L'avenir* a more organic relationship music/image than in the other two films, as the lyrics refer to water and melancholy.

There are other moments in the film like this one, as the character travels by car hearing music – though of other musical genres –, but the presence of a German *Lied* is significant in that single moment in which we see the ex-couple, both professors of philosophy, a field in which the German theorists excelled. At a later moment, the protagonist talks to her former student about the American country music on the car radio, saying that she only listened to Brahms and Schumann with her husband – again, marking the class relationship and German preference. The *Lied* is also heard in the film end titles.

### Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* in the cinema of the digital world and Baroque music at the film climax

Vivaldi, Bach and Mozart are the most prevalent composers in our *corpus*. It is particularly relevant the rare presence of 20th century classical music, something that already happened in the *corpus* of the Nouvelle Vague of the 1950s and 1960s, in which the three most prevalent composers were Beethoven, Mozart and Bach (Alvim, 2017). The easier access to musical pieces by the streamings, without the need to purchase an entire disc, has therefore not had an effect on expanding the repertoire or to a greater use of 20th and 21st century classical music. Algorithms follow the Adornian formula of proposing what is best known (Arielli, 2018), maintaining the vicious circle that the philosopher had already warned about in the mid-twentieth century.

Among Vivaldi's works, *The Four Seasons*<sup>11</sup> is by far the most prevalent: in *Marguerite et Julien* (Valérie Donzelli, 2015), the "Adagio Molto" of *Autumn*; in Stéphanie Di Giusto's *La danseuse*

(2016), it is in Max Richter's version; in Christophe Honoré's *Chambre 212* (2019), *Winter* is also in Max Richter's version; in *Portrait de la jeune fille en feu* (Céline Sciamma, 2019), *Summer* is in diegetic performance; *Summer* is also present in *Sibyl* (Justine Triet, 2019) – in a piano arrangement –, and in *Slalom* (2020), a film by newcomer director Charlène Favier, at the 2020 edition of Cannes Film Festival.<sup>12</sup>

Among these films, there are two that are period or almost period dramas. One of them, *Marguerite et Julien* is based on a screenplay that Jean Gruault had written for François Truffaut, inspired by the story of two brothers who loved each other, and contained in the 1619 collection *Les Histoires mémorables et tragiques de ce temps*, by François de Rosset. As Truffaut was not comfortable with the 17th century (Gruault, 2015), the project was abandoned and taken up by Donzelli, who took many liberties, transporting the story to an undefined time, but the period of the film, if we consider the costumes and apparatuses (camera, record player), seems closer to the middle of the 20th century. In any case, the 17th century enters the film through Vivaldi, although his compositions (besides *Autumn*, there is the *Concerto in C minor*) are from the 18th century. The whole ambience is in the aristocracy, constantly associated with classical music. Moreover, in the film original score, aspects of the 17th century are present, such as the use of the harpsichord.

Director Valérie Donzelli had already used Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* in her 2011 film, *La guerre est déclarée*, in a very striking sequence in which the adults talk about the child's tumor. In an interview at the time of the film's release, the director said she was "very inspired by some of Vivaldi's compositions" (Vassé, 2012).

*Portrait de la jeune fille en feu*, on the other hand, is a film more anchored to the time in which it takes place, the end of the 18th century. It is the story of a female painter who is hired to make a portrait of Héloïse, so that it can be sent to her suitor. However, Héloïse does not want to

<sup>11</sup> *The Four Seasons* contain four concertos, each one with three movements and named after a season.

<sup>12</sup> Due to Covid-19 pandemic, it was an edition without awards.

marry, and painter and model fall in love with each other. The film also features original music, including anachronistic diegetic music. Another anachronism refers to the use of Vivaldi's *Summer* as diegetic music played in a theatre performance attended by Heloïse at the end of the film. *Summer* was composed in 1723 and its performance in a theater at the end of the 18th century would be quite unlikely, as it was only since 19th century that the "patrimonialization" of music began to happen. Before that, the music played in theaters was the music of the present. Céline Sciamma has said that she chose Vivaldi for this scene "because I wanted music that everybody knew, I wanted a hit, so that the audience connects and will listen to it again" (Taubin, 2019). Vivaldi's music ubiquity in the 21st century is confirmed by this choice.

Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* have become so pop that they have served to diverse arrangements by contemporary composers, such as Max Richter<sup>13</sup> on an album released in 2012. The effect is of strangeness, like hearing a "New Age baroque", as is the case in *La danseuse* (2016), a biopic of dancer Loïe Fuller (1862-1928). In *Chambre 212* (2019), a film that deals with the choices of a couple in crisis, the two passages – *Winter 3* and *2*, respectively – corroborate the dreamlike and surreal atmosphere of the film, the first being the triggering moment of everything, when protagonist Maria crosses the street to the hotel, to the room of the title in which the whole dream-delirium occurs. In fact, in this film, another Baroque musical piece, the *Sonata in F minor* by Domenico Scarlatti, is constantly played diegetically and relates to one of the main aspects of the plot: the protagonist Richard's youthful passion for his piano teacher.

Christophe Honoré<sup>14</sup> had already used a Baroque piece in his *Plaire, aimer et courir vite* (2018), but it appears at a key moment in a film full of popular songs: the aria "Scherza Infida" from Handel's Baroque opera *Ariodante* is heard almost in its entirety after protagonist Jacques is

diagnosed with AIDS. As with the popular songs of the film, the diegetic origin (the CD player) is highlighted, and then, in the sequence, Jacques looks back on many moments of his life. The fact that it is a baroque aria stands out from all the music chosen by Jacques and other characters in the film to listen to and symbolizes the gravity of the moment.

*Sybil* (2019) also has a version of Vivaldi's *Summer*, but it is a piano arrangement (performed by Benoît Daniel of Studio La Fugitive, the company responsible for versions and recordings of other pieces of the film), just as the arrangement of another hit, "Lacrimosa" from Mozart's *Requiem*. In the case of *Summer*, it is heard as background music when the protagonist sees a screening of the film she participated in. The diegetic origin of the music is not sure, and the piece confers gravity to the moment, as we see the protagonist crying. Otherwise, the soundtrack is quite diverse, as pointed out by Hubbert (2014) in contemporary films.

With Vivaldi's original *Summer*, the film *Slalom* (2020), is from the same time of production and exhibition as *Portrait de la jeune fille en feu*, and we conjecture the role of algorithms and playlists recommendations in these choices. Its soundtrack is more uniform (the original music was composed by the trio gathered under the rubric Low Entertainment) and parsimonious, and the film itself could be categorized as "French new realism".<sup>15</sup>

Its young protagonist Lyz, an aspiring professional skier, has a routine of strenuous training and competition wins, but her success is hindered by psychological confusion stemming from sexual abuse by her coach. Fifteen minutes before the end of the film, when Lyz is almost at the peak of psychological distress, she hitches a ride in a car, the old male chauffeur turns on the radio, and we hear Vivaldi's *Summer*. It is already striking to think of the title in the middle of the snowy landscape; at the same time, it is not unusual to hear classical music from the radio, and it is also something that the director took from her own

<sup>13</sup> Richter is a composer of diverse influences, such as Minimalism, electronic music, and rock. He has also composed music for films.

<sup>14</sup> He is included here, rather than in the previous group, due to the use of the *Four Seasons*, and because, in the 2018 film, Vivaldi's music is in a climax.

<sup>15</sup> Critic Fabrício Duque refers so in his review for the site Vertentes do Cinema.

childhood memories (Passeron, 2021)<sup>16</sup>. More than that, the man accompanies the music with his hand, calls attention to it ("That's beautiful!"), and makes Lyz smile. From that moment on, little by little, Lyz will face her "surrogate father" (the coach) and take the reins of her destiny. Vivaldi functions there as a trigger for the beginning of a change, as also said by the director in an interview (Passeron, 2021).

Other films have works by Bach and Vivaldi at their emotional climax. This is the case, for example, of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in the birth sequence of the half-human half-machine in *Titane* by Julia Ducourmau, the winner of 2021 Cannes Film Festival. Besides being a climax sequence, the fact that the film soundtrack is quite varied and does not contain other classical pieces contributes to the distinctive aspect of this moment. According to the director, she placed Bach because there is a growing movement in the film of her protagonist's search for the Light in the Darkness and this musical piece represents, at the moment of birth, "the sacred in humanity" (Bogutskaya, 2021).

In Jacques Audiard's *Dheepan* (2015), the part "Cum dederit dilectis suis", from Vivaldi's cantata *Nisi Dominus RV 608*, is heard over the film's title, just after the moment of change that triggers the story, namely the arrival of the Sri Lankan immigrants in Paris.<sup>17</sup> After that, still to the sound of Vivaldi, we see the first images of the protagonist in the French capital.

### Final considerations

Although Robert Guédiguian has talked about his guidelines in the use of music and declares his affection for Ravel, musical taste and individual choices are hardly disconnected from the collectivity, either by the massification of the Cultural Industry, or in the current algorithmic world, in which the prevalence of some hits, such as Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, continues to occur, even if the algorithms may also present novelties to its users.

In this article, we cannot conclude peremptorily

that the musical recurrences were or were not due to the taste molded by algorithms, nor that they were exclusively choices made by the directors, even when they affirm it, without the participation of others (for example, music supervisors). In any case, the fixation on a certain repertoire, predominantly baroque, in films of contemporary French *auteur* filmmakers is quite significant. Such predominance, besides the specific connotations proper to each film and to each filmmaker, reveals the intention of connotations of good taste and distinction associated to the Baroque repertoire.

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<sup>16</sup> "An old man drove the bus that took me home, and he used to listen to classical music" (translation from French).

<sup>17</sup> Audiard also uses classical music in a recent film, *Les Olympiades* (2021), but the composer is Schubert and the music is mostly diegetic.



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