

Making a Medley: Genre and Form in Music Arranged for Figure Skating Programs

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ABSTRACT

Making a Medley: Genre and Form in Music Arranged for Figure Skating Programs
Under the direction of Jocelyn R. Neal

Whether it be the abbreviated version of Aaron Copland's *Rodeo* on an episode of *Dancing With The Stars* or when Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* is played in television commercials, music arranged to meet externally-imposed time constraints and narratives challenges extant understandings of genre and musical form. While pervasive in popular culture, analysis of such multimedia products does not address how this music is arranged with respect to source materials. Taking figure skating music as a case study, this thesis analyzes the relationship between musical form, musical narrative, skating narrative, and genre. For three distinct musical genres used in ice skating—popular music medleys, abridged film scores, and condensed classical works—this thesis analyzes the treatment of musical form, revealing distinct genre-specific models and explaining the traditions and fan reception that have given rise to these different treatments of form within a common context.

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INTRODUCTION

“Interesting choice to do the medley — it's a little disjointed because of its construction. Clever edit point on the music, but...” remarks a Eurosport commentator in response to Alena Leonova’s free skate program during the 2015 Skate Canada competition. Russian figure skater Leonova performs to a medley of “Summertime,” “Jailhouse Rock,” “In Other Words,” and “Sing, Sing, Sing.” The abrupt transitions from track to track in her medley are emphasized not only by the disparity between the musical excerpts, but also by the addition of sound effects to mark transitions between songs. Leonova’s program—the term used by the International Skating Union to refer to a skater’s performance, comprising the skater’s physical routine and its accompanying music— draws attention to the fact that she is skating to multiple, contrasting songs. Moving from “Jailhouse Rock” into “In Other Words,” the recording loops a single word from “Jailhouse’s” chorus: as if on a scratched LP, we hear “Everybody— “ (teasing the phrase: “Everybody in the whole cell block/ was dancin’ to the Jailhouse Rock”) over and over again, more sonically distorted with each repetition. This is interrupted by a prototypical record-scratch sound effect that interrupts the anticipated narrative and musical conclusion provided by the end of a chorus. Leonova abruptly stops skating, and then moves sharply in a new direction with the change of music. As Leonova awaits her scores, the commentators review her program in slow-motion, concluding that, “The medley possibly takes away some of the flow that could run through the overall routine.”

Leonova is one of several figure skaters who have begun taking advantage of the International Skating Union's (ISU) change in music policy to allow for lyrics in their program music. The International Skating Union (ISU), the sport's governing organization, had voted down several previous proposals to change ISU music policy to allow for lyrics. In 2012, however, the ISU ruled by a two-thirds majority that lyrics would thereupon be permitted in competitive figure skating programs. ISU official Fabio Bianchetti said that the change was in part motivated by the desire to attract more participants and viewers to the sport, attesting that "the young people requested to have vocal music with lyrics because it is more connected to the music of today, and they like to skate to the music they are hearing."¹

Now that lyrics are allowed, skaters are skating to pop music in versions that audiences actually recognize. Music is foregrounded in the push to find a larger and younger audience for figure skating, and a new surge in pop music use raises the stakes in the politics of musical genre within the competitive skating world. Differences in how commentators, critics, skaters, and coaches discuss genres reveal genre-informed value systems that influence programs' receptions and expectations. Popular music is discussed in terms of energy and character, film music in terms of character and story, and classical music in terms of its contributions to the skater's kinesthetics and pedigree.

This thesis shows how musical form and genre contribute to how audiences and experts receive and understand character, continuity, and artistic seriousness. Figure skating provides a fertile arena for case studies because of the depth of data samples, very public arena through the

¹ Christopher Clarey, "Rhapsody in Blue' or Rap? Skating Will Add Vocals," The New York Times, February 18, 2014, accessed March 06, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/19/sports/olympics/rhapsody-in-blue-or-rap-skating-will-add-vocals.html>.

Olympics, and the rules governing the musical parameters are very specific. Genre-specific formal conventions have emerged for arranging multiple tracks of music, cultivating a different set of practices for adapting popular music, film soundtracks, and large-scale classical works to ISU time constraints and performance specifications.² A culmination of these practices has resulted in an emerging genre of music: works that are newly composed for figure skating programs. This has implications for broader interpretations of how genre and form are adapted to spaces in which music is not the primary art.

This thesis argues that form is manipulated differently depending on genre to best communicate narrative and character with relationship to the source materials. It is through this strategic soundtracking that skaters are able to secure the rewards afforded by the ISU to programs that successfully reflect the character of the chosen source material. In figure skating, musical form and genre are deployed to control, express, and negotiate a character, which might be prescribed by the music, or—in the case of newly-composed music—understood to be the skaters themselves. While popular music, film music, and programmatic classical music call for the portrayal of specific characters, newly-composed music can be used by a skater to re-assert their position as the main character of their program.

Literature Review

This thesis concerns itself primarily with the interaction between form and genre, taking choreographed athletics as a case study, a focus that extends beyond sports scholarship. Scholarship on athletics and music informs how this thesis analyzes skaters' physical performances in relation to their programs' music. This thesis also makes use of primary sources

² The 56th ISU Ordinary Congress, International Skating Union Special Regulations and Technical Rules: Single & Pair Skating and Ice Dance 2016, vol. 56 (Dubrovnik, 2016), 74-75.

such as footage of competitions with commentary as originally aired on sports television networks, and newspaper and magazine interviews with skaters, coaches, and ISU officials. These sources offer an ample amount of useful information and context about the role of music in this particular space. This thesis contributes to scholarship on the treatment of music in contexts in which it is not the primary art, such as film music and theatrical scores, and, more specifically, those that take choreographed movement as the primary art, such as dance and gymnastics.

With respect to how performers' musical understanding affects performance, Loo Fung Chiat and Loo Fung Ying find that a lack of congruence between music and movement in rhythmic gymnastic performances evidences the performers' intellectual disconnect from the music and how it is edited.³ Though applied to a different discipline, this work helps in identifying skaters' connection (or lack thereof) to their program's music. Tangentially-related literature on music and athletics primarily addresses the effect of music on athletes' stamina and emotion. While this literature provides an impression of one of the larger fields in which this thesis is situated, it does not play a significant role in the analyses included in this thesis.

More pertinent to this thesis's address of skaters' physicality is scholarship on congruence in music and dance. Carol L. Krumhansl and Diana Lynn Schenck's perceptual experiment regarding the relationship between structure and expression in music and dance reveals that there are non-accidental relationships between bodily movement and musical form.⁴

³ Loo Fung Chiat and Loo Fung Ying, "Importance of Music Learning and Musicality in Rhythmic Gymnastics," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 46 (2012): , doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.037.

⁴ Carol L. Krumhansl and Diana Lynn Schenk, "Can Dance Reflect the Structural and Expressive Qualities of Music? A Perceptual Experiment on Balanchine's Choreography of Mozart's Divertimento No. 15," *Musica Scientiae* 1, no. 1 (March 1, 1997).

Additionally, the authors assert that music and dance can work together to represent emotions. With respect to the working relationship between music and dance, experiments performed by Robert W. Mitchell and Matthew C. Gallaher establish that participants could match a piece of music with a correlated dance via visual, auditory, temporal, kinesthetic, and emotional factors.⁵ They explicate how these factors are used by spectators to identify congruent music-dance relationships. This work informs my analysis of commentators' remarks on (dis)continuity between the skater's performance and the music to which they are skating.

While on a larger scale than the analytic work pursued in this thesis, study of the emergence of the pop-compilation soundtrack in film contributes to greater understandings of popular music's complicated role in contexts where the primary art is a visual narrative. Anthony May's writing on Phil Spector's influence on pop music in film reveals that Spector popularized a new sound in pop music that deemphasized lyrical content, an innovation that prompted the film industry to re-conceptualize the storytelling potential of pop songs.⁶ May's consideration of how lyrics in pop music affects its perceived storytelling capacity speaks to comparisons made between skating programs before and after the 2012 ISU rule change permitting lyrics.

Harry Ryan's writing on the *(500) Days of Summer* soundtrack proposes that the use of pop-culture and mass-media references is a productive method by which films that would otherwise be considered "niche" can ensure a broad commercial appeal.⁷ Ryan's conclusions

⁵ Robert W. Mitchell and Matthew C. Gallaher, "Embodying Music: Matching Music and Dance in Memory," *Music Perception* 19, no. 1 (2001): doi:10.1525/mp.2001.19.1.65.

⁶ Anthony May, "Phil Spector and the New Movie Soundtrack," *Media International Australia* 148, no. 1 (2013): doi:10.1177/1329878x1314800114.

⁷ Harry Ryan, "This Is Not a Love Story: (500) Days of Summer (USA, 2009, dir. Marc Webb)," *Film Matters* 2, no. 3 (2012): doi:10.1386/fm.2.3.41_1.

speak to changes to figure skating programs' music selections beginning in 2012, where, in efforts to diversify and expand viewership and participation, the ISU allowed the use of lyrics in figure skating programs, which prompted an increase in programs set to pop music.

Scott Murphy discusses how popular music in films and film trailers aligns with narrative, identifying chord progressions that correspond with different points of a film's narrative arc.⁸ Most pertinent to how this thesis addresses pop and film music arranged for figure skating programs, Murphy's findings support the assertion that the source materials for these programs contain established associations between music, character, and narrative, which the arrangements analyzed in this thesis seek to reiterate.

While this thesis addresses figure skating as a case study, it also addresses greater questions regarding the treatment of music in situations in which it is not the primary art. The aforementioned scholarship falls short of addressing genre-specific formal conventions that emerge from practices of arranging musical excerpts into one contiguous track of music. This phenomenon has not been addressed by musicological scholarship, though it pervades such diverse spaces as choreographed athletics, commercial advertising, and televised talent competitions such as *So You Think You Can Dance* and *Dancing With The Stars*. This thesis draws primarily on original analysis to explain the differentiated treatment of form along genre lines, taking competitive figure skating programs as case studies.

⁸ Scott Murphy, "A Pop Music Progression in Recent Popular Movies and Movie Trailers," *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* 8, no. 2 (2014): doi:10.3828/msmi.2014.9.

Background

For this study, I draw on medaling programs from ISU Grand Prix competitions from 2007 through 2017. The ISU Grand Prix is a group of invitational competitions at the highest level of competitive skating, including the disciplines of men's singles, ladies' singles, pair skating, and ice dancing. I define "medaling programs" as programs performed at a competition where the skater placed first, second, or third. For each year, I identified all singles men and singles ladies competitors who medaled at the Grand Prix level, and compiled a list of the music used in their medaling programs, organizing this data by genre and arrangement type. This resulted in a number of categories, the three most prominent being those that involve arranging three or more tracks into one: popular music medleys, film music, and reductions of large-scale classical works. Analysis of these categories of music provides insight into how form is both handled and constructed according to genre. Within these categories, I analyze and compare free skating programs, which are 4.5 minutes for men and 4 minutes for women, plus or minus 10 seconds. This is in preference over short programs, which are 2 minutes and 40 seconds for all skaters. The longer free skating programs provide more musical material for analysis, and also hold expectations that skaters will communicate character and narrative.

Using YouTube-posted videos of officially televised ISU Grand Prix event coverage, I coded each program for musical form, attending specifically to where and how the music was cut and arranged. Where possible, I used material from official NBC broadcasts aired in the U.S. or broadcasts aired in Canada or the U.K., so as to include broadcaster commentary as an interpretive tool for how musical form and genre are received by discipline experts. By analyzing figure skating programs of various genres over the course of ten years, this thesis seeks to identify the prescriptive factors that influence how music is arranged for figure skating programs.

Applying academic literature addressing genre and form to original analysis of skaters' performances, this thesis names genre as the decisive factor according to which such music arrangements are structured.

Chapter 1: The Popular Music Medley

“Now, we boogie.” –Johnny Weir

In the 2010s, the International Skating Union (ISU) was facing a waning, and aging, audience. In response to this, they enacted changes, the most relevant of which was the 2012 decision to allow music with lyrics in skating program music. This change—part of a bigger movement to appeal to a wider and younger audience—triggered an influx of programs featuring popular music. Yet even these changes failed to win over a bigger audience: two years after lyrics were allowed in figure skating programs, the 2014 Winter Olympics qualifying competition, which was the U.S. Figure Skating Championships, “saw a 20-percent decline in viewership from the previous Olympic year [2010]. And according to the United States Figure Skating Association, 52 percent of American figure skating fans [were] over the age of 45 [in 2015].”⁹ The 20-percent decline in viewership between Olympic seasons represents the problem that the ISU had already identified and were trying to address with their 2012 change in music requirements. Top 40 popular music is a youth-oriented genre, and its increased presence in figure skating programs occurred in tandem with efforts to rejuvenate the sport, specifically with the goal of attracting a younger audience and, accordingly, increased viewership and participation. Media outlets identified potential motivations for this change, with *Rolling Stone*

⁹ Tracy O'Neill, “Can Michael Jackson Save Figure Skating?,” *Rolling Stone*, January 23, 2015, accessed March 06, 2017, <http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/features/can-michael-jackson-save-figure-skating-20150123>.

revealing that “Insiders say that the lyrical free-for-all is an attempt to boost television ratings and lure younger viewers.”¹⁰

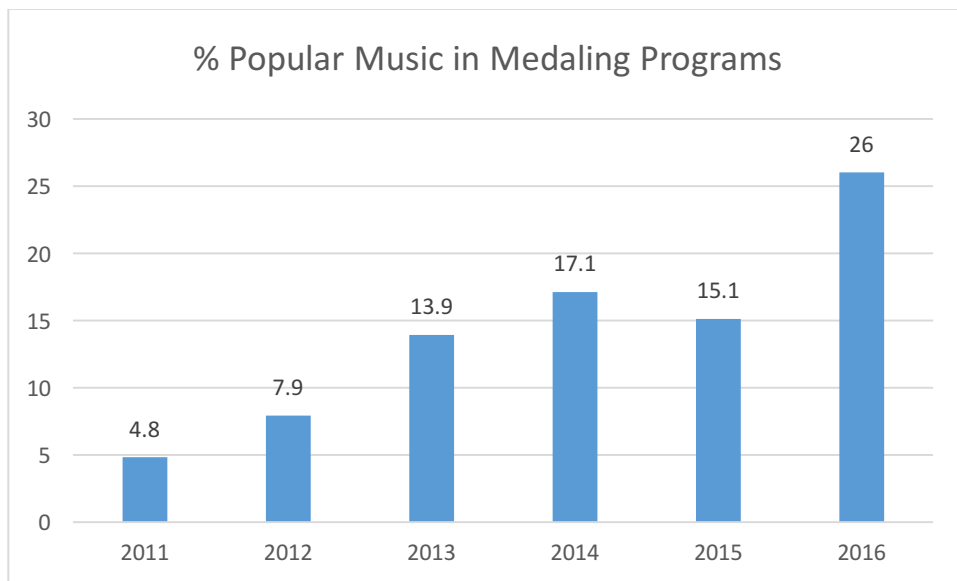


Figure 1.1 Popular Music (% of Medaling Programs 2011–2016)

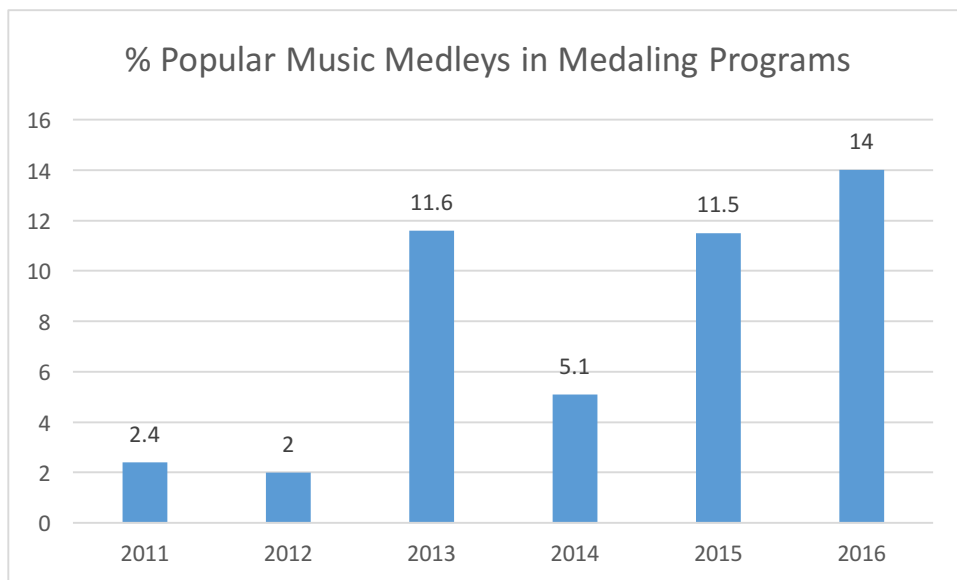


Figure 1.2 Popular Music Medleys (% of Medaling Programs 2011–2016)

¹⁰ Ibid.

Figures 1.1 – 1.4 show that the ISU’s 2012 ruling on lyrics in figure skating music had a direct impact on the presence of popular music in medaling figure skating programs. Popular music grew in popularity, at the cost of folk music and Latin dance music. Popular music without lyrics could, and was, used in figure skating programs pre-2012, but the 2012 rule change catalyzed a surge of popular music in this same context, with or without lyrics.

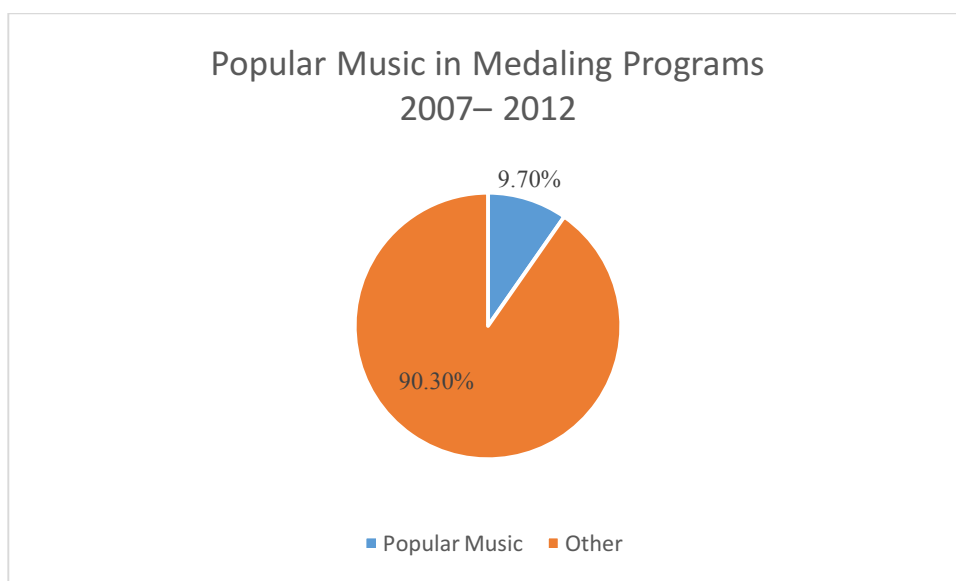


Figure 1.3 Popular Music Representation 2007–2012

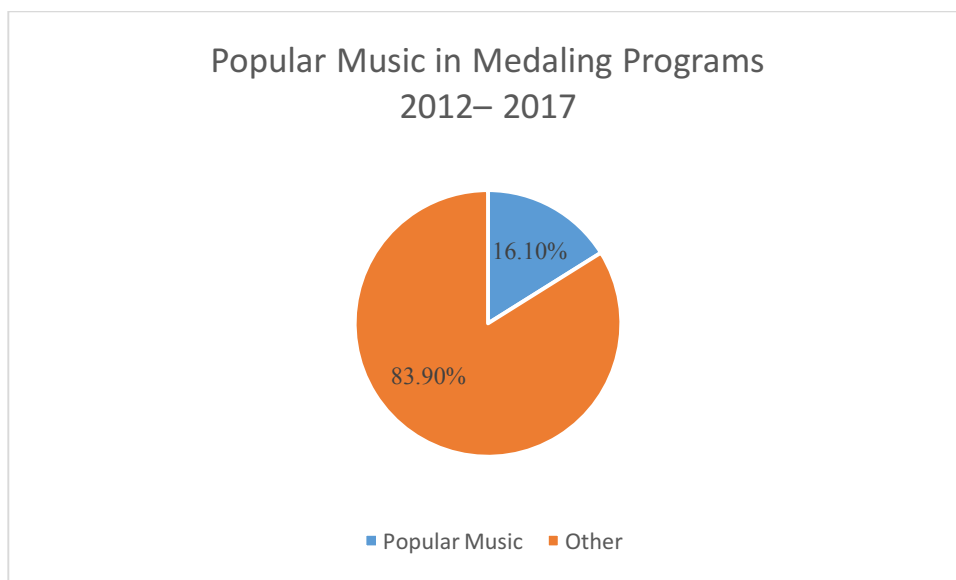


Figure 1.4 Popular Music Representation 2012–2017

The surge in popular music use that occurred in response to the 2012 rule change increased the number of instances where popular music was being arranged, brought to light trends in how popular music is arranged for figure skating programs. The approach to pop music medleys is one of “assembled collage” with no formal attempts at a through-arc of the final product. This method of arrangement emphasizes clearly-drawn lines and contrast between excerpts—excerpts that typically comprise intros, outros, and hooks. The resultant collage lends itself to one form of coherence—a clear allusion to artist catalog and/or genre. This approach is met with other methods of coherence outside of musical form, such as costuming, dance, and other indicators that align a skater with the artist to whose music they are skating. Some arrangers also set these arrangements to classical music, providing the medley with a coherence rooted in tradition and a long standing precedent of classical music.

Popular Music and Analysis

Pop and rock music from the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has been subjected to formal analyses rooted in characteristics such as meter, form, and key. The types of theories that have emerged from this work concern how to account for deviations from the norm of harmonic and melodic coherence and rhythmic and temporal regularity.

Many theorists have operated on the assumption of harmonic and melodic coherence within a musical track, and have constructed models of the few situations in which this does not happen. Osborn 2011 identifies formal structures that defy verse/chorus conventions of top 40 popular music, understanding the relationship between genre and form via a genre-specific taxonomic approach. Osborn's formal models are identified by analyzing the presence and/or absence of "traditional" formal parameters such as hierarchical grouping structure and thematic unification.¹¹ Similarly, Graham 2014 identifies formal units, their functions, and overall song structure in popular music by analyzing "foreground" continuity and contrast rather than large-scale, goal-directed structure.¹² With attention to relative key relationships within a given song, Griffiths 2015 interrogates the elevating modulation in popular music, concluding that modulations can be taken as markers of musical form. There is an underlying understanding in this discourse that harmonic and melodic continuity are the norm, with special attention paid to the anomalous cases. Indeed, extant theories of song form propagate this belief.

¹¹ Brad Osborn, "Understanding Through-Composition in Post-Rock, Math-Metal, and other Post-Millennial Rock Genres," *Music Theory Online* 17, no. 3 (October 2011): accessed March 6, 2017, <http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.11.17.3/mto.11.17.3.osborn.html>.

¹² Stephen Graham, "Justin Timberlake's Two-Part Complementary Forms: Groove, Extension, and Maturity in Twenty-First-Century Popular Music," *American Music* 32, no. 4 (2014): doi:10.5406/americanmusic.32.4.0448.

Much scholarship on popular music relies on formal structure that has coherence across the recording, based on elements of motive, key, and consistency of instrumentation. Within popular music scholarship, attention to formal structure and coherence has focused on harmony, melody, and meter. Audiences are used to hearing a recording as a unit of music united by these elements of consistency and coherence. What happens, then, when a track of music is composed by isolating units of several different songs and stringing them together? This is precisely what happens in the case of the popular music medley, in which these medleys are presented as a single work.

The formal model I propose for popular music medleys in figure skating programs prioritizes narrative theme and artist over harmony and melody; its coherence relies on very different aspects such as method of arrangement, construction of a character, and evocation of audience memory. This model is not compatible with models of formal analysis that privilege harmony and melody. A model of pop music medleys arranged for figure skating must take two aspects of this genre into account: First, the music is received as inextricably combined with physical movements—the routine of the skater. Second, the conventional elements that contribute to a coherent and cohesive recording are no longer at play, and the formal models that rely on internal contrast and repetition in predictable patterns are no longer present. Thus, I propose a new approach to understanding form in popular music medleys that deemphasizes comparative relationships within a song, and brings attention instead to the methods by which songs are excerpted, re-ordered, and connected.

Formal Model: Popular Music Medley

The popular music medley achieves coherence from reference to character or body of work rather than harmonic and melodic cohesion. Relying on mainly hooks, intros, and outros, these medleys trigger associative memories of an artist or a catalog of songs for the audiences. This approach to arrangement results in harmonic and melodic discontinuities between excerpts, which are often embraced by the skater and reflected in the physicality of the skater's movements. Furthermore, the particular model that I propose here includes other aspects of the musical arrangements, most significantly the common practice of setting popular music medleys within classical-sounding instrumentation. This treatment appeals to the ice skating traditions that value artistic seriousness and the past links to classical music. In total, these popular music medleys comprise catchy excerpts with clearly drawn boundaries that result in harmonic and melodic discontinuities and a dependence on factors other than musical form to draw attention to ideas of artist and catalog, from which these medleys achieve their sense of continuity.

In popular music medleys, short snippets are woven together to invoke artist, character, and body of work. This is enabled by extra-musical performance elements such as costuming and choreography. Character, catalog, and/or genre are indexed¹³ by both aural and visual stimuli. Compared to harmony and melody, the sources of the popular music medley's cohesion are those that take advantage of the sport's opportunities for visual and aural indexing.

¹³ Within the field of Peircean semiotics, "indexing" is the process by which the presence of a sign (music, costume, dance moves) brings to mind an object (artist, catalog, genre) associated with it, an association established by having repeatedly experienced the sign and object together (Turino 2008).

MM:SS ¹⁴	Song	Formal Unit
00:00	Trouble	Hook
01:54	Fever	Hook
3:20	Jailhouse Rock	Hook
3:50	Jailhouse Rock	Instrumental Interlude
4:00	Jailhouse Rock	Hook
End @ 4:39		

Figure 1.5 Javier Fernandez FS 2016-2017, Elvis Medley¹⁵

Javier Fernandez’s 2016-2017 program to an Elvis Presley medley hinges on the audience, judges, and commentators’ recognition of character, and recollection of body of work. Fernandez skates to a chain of hooks from some of Presley’s well-known songs. The transitions between songs are abrupt, as if someone were to suddenly move the needle on a record player to a different track. These marked borders between songs emphasize the idea of artist catalog, an important component to how these medleys achieve cohesion. In addition to catalog reference, Fernandez, who is described by commentators Johnny Weir and Tara Lipinski as known for “getting into character,” is dressed like a 1950s Elvis Presley, in a casual, short-sleeve, pink button-down shirt. With slicked-back hair and mimicry of Presley’s famous hip-shaking, Fernandez’s performance strives to engage with an assumed shared musical memory reference point. Going so far as to snap along with “Fever,” even in the back crossovers right before a difficult jump, Fernandez’s performance reveals the high stakes that come with skating to popular music — so much depends on successfully employing character and body of work to achieve overall coherence.

¹⁴ All charts take 00:00 as the starting point of the program’s music, not the beginning of the cited YouTube video.

¹⁵ “2016 GPF - Javier Fernandez FS NBC HD,” YouTube video, 6:15, “sabinfire,” December 11, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKiOvwhzWIM>.

The popular music medley to which Sergei Voronov's skated in 2014 is a slight departure from Fernandez's program, presenting a mix of artists and genres. However, Voronov and Fernandez's programs share an approach that is consistent with what continues to guide popular music medleys. Even with lyrics, key musical memory triggers make up the majority of musical content.

MM:SS	Song	Artist	Formal Unit
00:00	This is a Man's World	James Brown	Intro
00:24			Hook (Refrain)
00:52			Hook (Verse)
01:28			Hook (Refrain)
01:47	<i>Silence</i>		—
01:49	Come Together	The Beatles	Hook (Intro)
02:02			Hook (Verse)
02:27			Hook (Refrain)
02:33	At Last	Etta James	Hook (Verse)
03:26	<i>Beat-boxing</i>		—
03:48	Big Time Boppin'	Big Bad Voodoo Daddy	Intro
04:04			Instrumental Interlude
04:33			Tag
End @ 5:08			

Figure 1.6 Sergei Voronov FS 2014-2015, Medley¹⁶

Whereas conventional formal attention is on the chorus in a popular song, the focus of Voronov's program shifts to intros, outros, and hooks. These hooks are often couched in intros and outros, but can also be found in the contexts of other formal units, in which cases, non-intro/outro material is included. The recollection of or reference to a known song comes through the hooks, intros, and outros, rather than the chorus. First this was the case out of necessity, but then this became a standard practice that, even after restrictions on music selection changed, persists in post-2012 popular music medleys. This technique achieves coherence across a medley

¹⁶ "2015 Europeans - Sergei Voronov FS NBC," YouTube video, 6:45, "sabinfire," February 7, 2015," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FT44FTbskiM>.

by indexing songs that evoke artist catalog (as seen in Fernandez’s program using music by Elvis Presley) or genre (as seen in Voronov’s program that pulls primarily from 60s rock and R&B).

The popular music medley that omits lyrics still depends on the audience’s assumed ability to recall familiar, iconic lyrics to pop and rock songs. In this situation, coherence is also often created by the presence of the “character” in the form of the skater. This dependence also holds true for the skaters, as Tatsuki Machida reported to the New York Times in 2014, “he heard lyrics even where there were none. ‘I try to feel what the composer wanted to express without the words,’ he said. ‘I still feel there are lyrics there.’”¹⁷ Relying on recognizable moments from excerpted songs, this practice does not create a musical “narrative” per-se, but jogs the audience’s cultural memory. Before the 2012 ISU rule change, medleys relied on intros, outros, and hooks as the most memorable parts of songs, to encourage audience recall, establishing a reliance on these formal units that remains—and dominates—popular music medleys in a space that now permits lyrics. This approach creates a series of distinct moments that are connected by musical/cultural memory and visual cues instead of the unfolding of harmony and melody.

¹⁷ Christopher Clarey, “Famous First Words: New Rules Give Grand Prix Season a Lyrical Air,” *The New York Times*, October 25, 2014, accessed March 06, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/26/sports/opening-a-season-with-a-new-lyricism-skating-to-music-with-words.html>.

MM:SS	Song	Formal Unit
00:00	Earth Song	Intro
00:19	Billie Jean	Intro
00:56	Bad	Hook
01:50	Thriller	Door Creak
01:52	Smile	Intro
02:05	Smile	Outro
03:07	Smooth Criminal	Intro (Heartbeat)
03:15	They Don't Really Care About Us	Outro (Hook)
04:08	Thriller	Laugh and scream
04:15	Black or White	Intro (Hook)
	Black or White	Outro (Hook)
End @ 04:39		

Figure 1.7 Tomas Verner FS 2010-2011, Michael Jackson Medley¹⁸

Verner's 2010 Michael Jackson medley demonstrates how the popular music medley privileges memorable content over harmonic and melodic continuity. Not only does this medley mainly comprise hooks embedded in intros, outros, and verses, but it also incorporates non-musical sounds (e.g. the door creak, laugh, and scream from "Thriller" and the heartbeat from "Smooth Criminal") that interrupt what is otherwise a series of contiguous musical excerpts. Lasting only a few seconds each, these moments exemplify how short, yet recognizable, excerpts are used throughout this model with little consideration for their harmonic or melodic functions.

While the Michael Jackson medley has no lyrics, having been designed prior to the 2012 ISU rule change, and the Elvis medley to which Javier Fernandez skated in 2016 has lyrics, both performances take a similar approach to employing character and body of work to achieve coherence. Both performances use costumes and choreography to index time period and performer, and facilitate recollection of an artist's body of work by arranging intros, outros, and hooks in such a way that alludes to a catalog of individual songs. The audience's narrative

¹⁸ "Tomas VERNER EC - 2011 FP," YouTube video, 5:02, "zenitrulit2," January 29, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHw-9qh5JVU>.

experience features the recognition of the “character” and the recollection of a body of work. This formal model shifts the control of musical narrative to domains of character and the experience of musical memories.

In a way that is representative of many popular music medleys in this context, both Tomas Verner’s 2010 Michael Jackson medley and Javier Fernandez’s 2016 Elvis medley tap into character and catalog in order to maintain coherence throughout each arrangement. While the Michael Jackson medley with which Tomas Verner won a gold medal at the 2010 Rostelecom Cup was conceived of and arranged prior to the 2012 ISU rule change, the construction of this medley is indicative of the emerging trends that would soon become standard practices in arranging popular music medleys in this context.

Rather than constructing an overarching narrative via musical form and structure, these arrangements seek to tap into artist identity and genre. Without lyrics, moments that are recognizable regardless of lyrics are crucial to encouraging audience recall of popular songs. The Michael Jackson medley previously discussed exemplifies this approach, which permeated other popular music medleys of the time such as the Metallica medley to which Brian Joubert skated in 2007 that included material from “The Unforgiven,” “Creeping Death,” and “Nothing Else Matters” and the Rolling Stones medley to which Alban Preaubert skated in 2009 that featured hooks, intros, and outros from “Paint it Black,” “Angie,” “Mannish Boy,” and “Start Me Up.” With lyrics, this same effect can be efficiently accomplished by including the part of the song that contains song’s title. The approach of indexing memories and narratives via catchy excerpts is a result of pre-2012 music restrictions, producing a formal model that persists even after such restrictions have changed.

One step beyond the non-musical song excerpts employed in the Michael Jackson medley is the incorporation of silence and sound effects that are not from the original source material. Sound effects and silence are used as connectors—or, one might argue, dividers—between songs. This helps negotiate harmonic and melodic discontinuity between excerpts. Indeed, this practice excuses the popular music medley from aural expectations of harmonic and melodic cohesion.

MM:SS	Song	Formal Unit
00:00	Broken by Lisa Gerard	Intro
00:25	Apologize by One Republic	Intro
00:43	Apologize by One Republic	Hook (Chorus)
0:59	Imma Be by The Black Eyed Peas	Intro
01:04	Imma Be by The Black Eyed Peas	Hook
01:53	Imma Be by The Black Eyed Peas	Outro
02:03	Smooth Criminal by Michael Jackson	Intro
02:05	Smooth Criminal by Michael Jackson	Hook
03:25	Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough by Michael Jackson	Hook
04:04	Wanna Be Startin' Somethin' by Michael Jackson	Hook
04:18	Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough by Michael Jackson	Hook
End @ 04:34		

Figure 1.8 Florent Amodip LP 2010-2011, Medley¹⁹

Florent Amodio's 2010 popular music medley is demonstrative of how sound effects and silence are used to call attention to song-changes within a medley. Rather than attempt discrete harmonic transitions, the popular music medley foregoes transition material that would have to

¹⁹ "Florent AMODIO Trophée Eric Bompard FS 2010," YouTube video, 9:18, "aricozzz," November 27, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZ2hm6JrzvY>.

have been uniquely composed for the medley and, instead, uses silence and sound effects to set a clean slate for each excerpt. In cases where silence and sound effects are not used, transitions are abrupt, and embraced as such via the skater's performance.

The popular music medley shifts the control of the “work” as a whole from aspects of harmonic and melodic coherence to the skaters' movement, which indicates beginning, connection, and finality in the medley. Skaters' embodiment of musical discontinuity proves that neither they nor their coaches or choreographers are under any illusion that these musical excerpts amount to a cohesive whole.

MM:SS	Song	Formal Unit
00:00	Summertime	Intro
00:13	Summertime	Hook (Verse)
01:12	Summertime	Outro
01:24	Jailhouse Rock	Hook
01:33	Jailhouse Rock	Interlude
02:05	Jailhouse Rock	Hook
02:26	In Other Words	Hook (Verse)
03:05	In Other Words	Instrumental
03:21	In Other Words	Tag
03:33	Sing, Sing, Sing	Hook
04:04	Sing, Sing, Sing	Tag
End @ 04:09		

Figure 1.9 Alena Leonova LP 2015-2016, Medley²⁰

In Alena Leonova's 2015 program, described in the introduction to this thesis, the music changes from one excerpt to the next and sound effects punctuate gestures that overtly communicate discontinuity, such as changes in direction, abrupt stops, and exaggerated transformations in facial expression. Leonova literally makes a 180-degree turn to mark the

²⁰ “Alena Leonova. 2015 Skate Canada. FS,” YouTube video, 7:35, “GustuFan,” November 8, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VWuFg1lplEl>.

change of songs. These gestures jolt the audience into the new song with new aural and visual content contained within borders fashioned by sound effects and silence.

Rooted in tradition, the use of classical elements in new arrangements of popular music in figure skating grants the skaters a level of artistic seriousness. Classical-sounding arrangements of popular music, such as violinist David Garrett's covers of Michael Jackson songs, are readily-accessible source materials that present an appealing compromise between relevance and tradition. This codifies what musical transformations are strategically beneficial to navigating transgressions of genre. Ultimately, despite the weighty ties to tradition associated with medleys using classical-sounding instrumentation, popular music medleys are still pushing the envelope into new territories of genre, encouraging an exploration away from classical music's socio-cultural implications of exclusivity and inaccessibility. The influence of the long-standing history of classical music being the predominant choice for figure skating programs is still apparent in how pop songs are adapted for this environment, establishing the primacy of canonical western art music as standard and referential in terms of expectations and regulations of musical form.

Summary

The 2012 ISU rule change was a concrete change in policy that both reflected and catalyzed an already developing shift to include more popular music in figure skating programs. The ISU rule change had a slightly different impact than predicted—an increase in popular music even without lyrics. Yet popular music stripped of lyrics in figure skating programs still brings lyrics into the performance indirectly, in the way that audiences listen to the music. Popular

music excerpts index the original recordings, including their lyrical content, even if the reference itself is invoked by an instrumental-only part of the song.

The popular music medley is being used as soundtrack for a visual presentation—the primary art is the skating. The soundtrack is subservient to the visual, and what the audience is perceiving is character and reference (e.g. visual cues in which the skater invokes traits of the artist). Even with the sonic cohesion offered by classical-sounding arrangements, the pop music medley maintains its structure as an assembled collage. Regardless of instrumentation, the audience experiences the music as bits of a collage that are assembled to reflect character. This goal-oriented assembly is motivated by how the ISU rewards music’s contribution to figure skating programs.

These medleys rely on clearly delineated lines drawn between songs, demarcating memorable moments of popular tracks. Outside of the medley context, excerpts from different songs exist independently from each other, as functional formal units in their original contexts. The intentional avoidance of continuity between sections of a medley preserves this independence of the original individual recordings, facilitating the listener’s recognition of excerpts as gestures to familiar songs rather than building blocks to a cohesive whole. Instead of a large-scale musical narrative characterized by a clear beginning, middle, and end, we see the construction of a series of aural (and visual) memory triggers in the form of hooks and identifiable themes.

Chapter 2: The Film Soundtrack Medley

“A swan he is not.” –Johnny Weir

“Ashley Wagner as Satine, skating to *Moulin Rouge*” narrates Johnny Weir as Ashley Wagner’s program begins. This skater-character comparison typifies the way in which film music is understood as the secondary art to figure skating in these performances. Using film music, competitive figure skating programs excerpt and combine musical elements in order to communicate character above all. While these musical elements differ from those used in the pop medleys, both of these models of musical arrangement are motivated by similar goals.

In 2000, 35.3% of medaling figure skating programs featured film music. In 2007, 12.5% of medaling figure skating programs featured film music. In 2016, 30% of medaling figure skating programs featured film music. The waves in film music’s popularity in this context are not to be attributed to the (un)popularity of the genre in this space but, rather, reflections of the output and popularity of various film soundtracks in greater cultural contexts at a given time. In an environment in which the portrayal of character is prioritized due to how it is rewarded in ISU competitions, tracks of music arranged for skating programs that encompass film soundtracks are arranged with character—rather than script and story—in mind. Rather than naming individual songs, commentators often identify skaters to be performing to “the film,” as a whole—most often these programs are musically fashioned to support a skater-protagonist association.

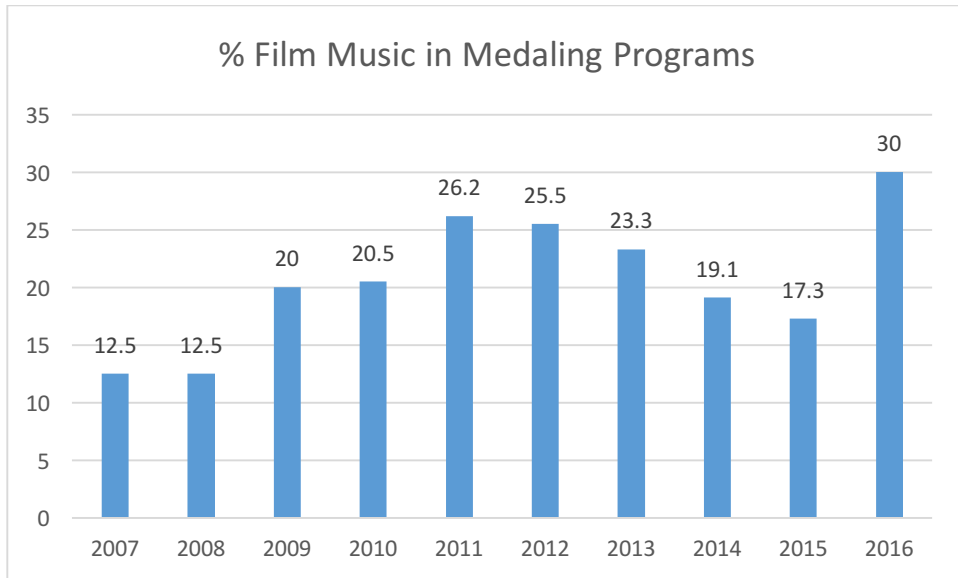


Figure 2.1 Film Music (% of Medaling Programs 2007-2016)

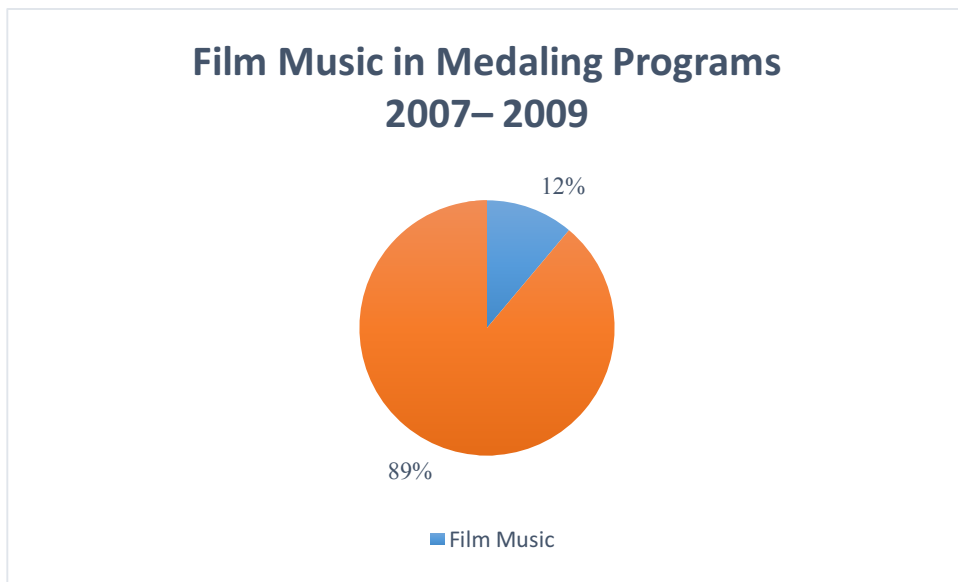


Figure 2.2 Film Music (% of Medaling Programs 2007-2009)

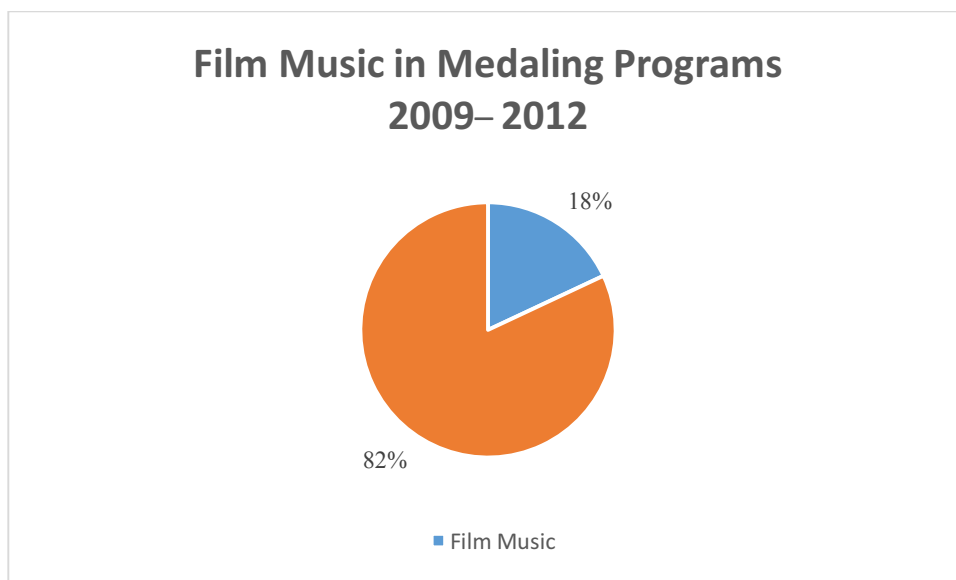


Figure 2.3 Film Music (% of Medaling Programs 2009–2012)

Figure 2.1 illustrates the fluctuating representation of film music in medaling figure skating programs between the 2007-2008 and 2016-2017 seasons. In the summer of 2009, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced that the number of films to be nominated for “Best Picture” at the Academy Awards would increase from five to ten, beginning that year. Figure 2.1 indicates a correlating increase in film music’s presence in medaling figure skating programs, increasing from 12.5% to 20% in just one year. Generally, most figure skating programs set to film music pull from popular films that have garnered critical acclaim and a “Best Picture” *Oscar* nomination. It is worth noting that these same films are not as reliably nominees for the Academy’s award for “Best Soundtrack.” This situation suggests that film music chosen for figure skating programs is not selected based on its “musical value,” (whatever that may be in the soundtrack awards sphere) but rather its ability to tap into memory, evoke character, and be readily recognizable by the audience.

Like those set to popular music, figure skating programs set to film music rely heavily on expectations that the audience will recognize a film and its characters. A film nominated for “Best Picture” can be recognized and, accordingly, tapped for compiling a soundtrack for figure skating programs. The increase in “Best Picture”-eligible films in 2009 increased the amount of film music that skaters and their coaches may consider suitable to pair with competitive programs. Figures 2.2 and 2.3 show the lasting change occurring in 2009 that increased the degree to which film music is used in figure skating programs. The decrease in film music use from 2014-2015 may be attributed to skaters’ music choices made with the 2014 Olympic season in mind. Like with popular music, skaters and their coaches favored tradition that competitive year, selecting non-medley music tracks and leaning towards classical music to appeal to more conservative Olympic judges.

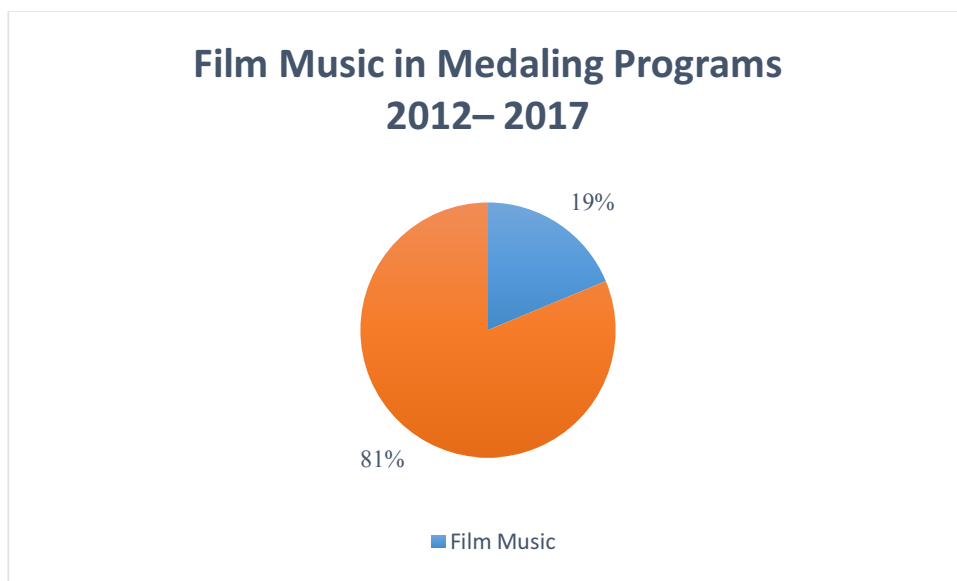


Figure 2.4 Film Music (% of Medaling Programs 2012–2017)

A comparison of Figures 2.3 and 2.4 show that the ISU's 2012 ruling on lyrics in figure skating did not have a significant impact on the presence of film music in medaling figure skating programs. The greatest difference in the use of film music in figure skating programs was that music from film musicals, such as *Moulin Rouge*, or film adaptations of stage shows, such as *Phantom of the Opera*, began being used with vocals included. Vocal music from films was used in figure skating programs pre-2012, with the vocal line either removed or replaced by an instrumental performance of the melody. For example, the arrangement of "Tango de Roxanne" from *Moulin Rouge* for Artem Borodulin's 2010 free skate program covered the vocal line with a violin. Thus, the permission of lyrics in film music did not have a significant impact on how frequently film music was being used in this context.

In this chapter, I present a model for analyzing musical arrangements that condense an entire film's soundtrack and character arc into one contiguous track of music. Not only does this model help illustrate how form is manipulated differently depending on genre to best communicate character, but it also lends itself to other contexts in which this model of arranging film music appears, such as film trailers, parodies, and such other choreographed activities as dance, acrobatics, and gymnastics. While I identify the treatment and construction of the condensed film soundtrack model as different from that of the popular music medley, I maintain that both models of arranging multiple songs into one time-limited track are motivated by the same value of creating a framework with which the audience and judges may best understand the skater as a character. Based on this shared goal, I understand the musical units excerpted from source material for use in these arrangements to be representative of what is understood as the most salient features in communicating character. This congruency in motivations and results

indicates that, among different genres, different musical elements are identified as most effective at conveying character.

Film Music and Analysis

Film music arranged for figure skating programs challenges the application of extant methods of film music formal analysis. These formal models attend mainly to the function of soundtracks in relation to on-screen action. The types of theories that have emerged from this work concern how to account for musical affect in storytelling, facilitated by harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic content. Film music arranged for figure skating programs necessitates a method of formal analysis that accounts for what happens when film music is used outside of, but in reference to, its original context.

Regarding the relationship between music and storyline in film, Frank Lehman attributes agency to cadences in film scores, identifying their ability to manipulate listener/viewer expectations and shape emotional arcs.²¹ Lehman identifies “cadential genres” in film music, and posits that these cadences perform punctuating functions in the film, shifting score practices and film expectations. Lehman also proposes analyzing film music through a Neo-Riemannian lens, to account for how the genre favors dramatic exigency over functional tonal logic.²² Also addressing musical function in film music, Scott Murphy posits a method of analysis that

²¹ Frank Lehman, “Hollywood Cadences: Music and the Structure of Cinematic Expectation,” *Music Theory Online* 19, no. 4 (December 2013): <http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.13.19.4/mto.13.19.4.lehman.html>.

²² Frank Lehman, “Transformational Analysis and the Representation of Genius in Film Music,” *Music Theory Spectrum* 35, no. 1 (2013): doi:10.1525/mts.2013.35.1.1.

understands film music's function as depending on the successful use of symbols whose associations are informed by cultural conversations in other contemporaneous or earlier multimedia genres.²³ While both of these approaches offer valuable insights regarding how music can support the reception of other media, the examples discussed in this chapter use film music to reference the media for which it was originally composed to accompany, complicating the direct audio-visual correspondence at the center of these film music analyses.

The popular understanding of form in the analysis of film music is in relationship to the visual art for which the music was originally composed. In the case of the film soundtrack medley, the visual performance (meaning the skating program) references, but does not replicate, the visual media for which the music was originally composed. In many cases, such as in Ashley Wagner's performance addressed at the beginning of this chapter, the film soundtrack does not unfold in the same time or order as in its original application. I propose here a formal model for the use of soundtrack medleys in figure skating that accounts for how film music is repurposed to communicate a film character's persona and story in a limited amount of time without being limited by the ordering of the music in the film.

Formal Model: Film Soundtrack Medley

The film soundtrack medley is arranged as a condensed version of the original film score, supporting the skater's performance in the same ways that the soundtrack supports the film. The film soundtrack medley achieves coherence by maintaining continuity of character with the original visual media for which the source music was composed. Similar to the pop music medley, film soundtrack medleys prioritize character, facilitated by a skater-as-protagonist set-up

²³ Scott Murphy, "Scoring Loss in Some Recent Popular Film and Television," *Music Theory Spectrum* 36, no. 2 (December 1, 2014): doi:10.1093/mts/mtu014.

in which song excerpts stand in for scenes that define a character's development in a familiar film's story. In this context, a skater is often perceived to be skating to "the film" as a whole media unit, versus multiple songs from a film's soundtrack.

Film soundtrack medleys are oriented around the same goal of "character" as are pop arrangements, but this goal is accomplished slightly differently. Communication of character is achieved by aligning the skater with the film's protagonist, which is achieved both visually and musically. This model employs "visual cues" like in the popular music medleys, but also communicates character through the music excerpted from the film's soundtrack.

Max Aaron's contrasting performances in 2014 to Hans Zimmer's *Gladiator* soundtrack and 2015 to Clint Mansell's *Black Swan* soundtrack exemplify the skater-as-protagonist portrayal achieved by the film soundtrack medley, and how this connection can be leveraged to a skater's advantage. In his *Gladiator* performance, Aaron channels Russel Crowe as Maximus Decimus Meridus, a war hero-turned gladiator who battles and defeats corrupt leader Commodus, only to die soon after from his own wounds. Aaron takes the ice with a shirt that has drawn-on bloodied gashes. In the film, just before the battle, Commodus stabs Maximus to give himself an advantage in the arena. This costume marks Max Aaron as Maximus Meridus, and sets the scene as Maximus's final battle in the coliseum. In the film, Maximus is taught by his trainer that a good gladiator is one who can win over the crowd, which is precisely what the fighter does over the course of several battles, gaining popularity and leverage over Commodus. In Aaron's performance, the skating rink has become the coliseum, and Aaron's choreography includes taking a moment to stop skating, turn towards the crowd, and pump his arms in the air to solicit their applause. Aaron's program borrows not only musical content from the film, but also costuming and plot. The following is a transcript of commentary on Aaron's performance

by NBC commentators Terry Gannon, Tara Lipinski, and Johnny Weir, showing the significance of the skater-as-protagonist portrayal to the reception and critique of a skater's performance.²⁴

Terry Gannon: [Aaron is] continually having to prove that he has some artistry to his skating — perhaps getting tired of being asked about that. Because you know he's got the power, you know he's an explosive skater and technically has it together.

Johnny Weir: This music from the *Gladiator* soundtrack definitely works in Max's favor, it's a bit heavy, it gives you immediate character because it comes from a film. I think it was a wise choice for his style of skating and his brand of skating.

Tara Lipinski: It suits him. Terry, you were saying earlier that a lot of people were trying to push him to be more of an artist. And last year, he had that in his head, and he skated to *Carmen* and he felt that it just didn't make sense for him. So this year, he's thrown it all out the window and went back to gladiator music and it's much more him.

TG: In this free skate, it's much more 'him' than the short program. Much different tone, much different music.

TL: He's so powerful. Sometimes he has to be careful because he loses control with all that speed going into these quads and triples.

JW: And this is where Max has to bring it home with the artistry. You can see his shoulders kind of slunch in exhaustion perhaps, but he has to sell this part. It's the last impression the judges and the audience have.

[Aaron finishes his program and falls to the ice with relief.]

TL: Oh, he died.

TG: Half acting, half exhausted.

JW: That was a manly, burly performance.

TG: Made you believe he was a gladiator in the end. Fallen gladiator back up on his feet on his skates, twenty-two-year-old Max Aaron.

Terry Gannon, Tara Lipinski, and Johnny Weir's commentary illuminates the complexities and rewards of the skater-as-protagonist relationship. In his 2014 program, Aaron uses his own

²⁴ "2015 US Nationals Max AARON – Free Skate," YouTube video, 6:36, "Brau Avitia," January 25, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YXza5xvOY4Q>.

persona as a “powerful,” “explosive,” “manly” ex-hockey player to gain credibility in his portrayal of a gladiator. In 2015, Aaron, in efforts to distance himself from that very type of character, solicits the characteristics that can be mapped onto him by performing to *Black Swan*, in which the protagonist is a prima ballerina (Natalie Portman) who loses herself to a mental break as a result from pursuing absolute perfection as a dancer. Aaron included choreography that mimicked pirouettes, and references to iconic ballet choreography from *Swan Lake*, to strengthen this connection, which ultimately benefited his performance. The following is a transcription of the commentary highlighting their discussion Max Aaron’s 2016 free skate program to music by Clint Mansell from *Black Swan*.²⁵

TG: Somehow, somehow, Max Aaron, who is the athlete — he’s worked on that artistic side so hard the last few years, he’s talked about it with everybody who will ask him about it, and he keeps getting asked about it.

JW: There of course has been a lot made of Max’s... inefficiencies as far as artistry is concerned, but Tara and I were talking about it earlier — we would put up any of the men’s skating skills and abilities against Max’s and Max would have it all over them. Beautiful edge work and speed. And this program is packaged well, because it’s music that that may not suit him, but this audience knows. And if he’s skating well and they feel that, they’ll get behind this performance and the music. It was a smart choice in that way.

TL: Technically, not as strong [as competitor Nathan Chen’s program]. But, overall, he’s a stronger skater. His jumps have more power, they’re explosive. He did make a mistake on the sequence, I wonder how this will all add up.

JW: What’s funny is that he could beat Nathan Chen, but on the artistic side.

TG: A bit of irony.

JW: Super irony! I mean, to be beaten at your own game, which is the technical side, which is what everyone talks about with Max Aaron, and to beat a 4 quad free program for Nathan Chen on the artistic side of things... it... *[laughs]*

TL: Especially for Max! Who’s been trying to change that perception for so long. Like you said, Johnny, I think he is so brave for skating to *Black Swan*. He’s like a Plushenko,

²⁵ “2016 U.S. Nationals - Max Aaron FS NBC,” YouTube Video, 7:52, “sabinfire,” January 24, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcvIt3ldyt0>

or an Elvis Stojko, where they were always criticized for their style, but they made it work. And I think Max is in that process – making it work.

JW: This was a very smart choice, but a swan, he is not. A great technical athlete, yes.

TG: Former hockey player trying to prove he’s an artist. Comes down to those program components in a five-and-a-half-point lead in the short over Nathan Chen. We’ll see if he can overcome that.

Musically, song excerpts stand in for scenes and script, providing an abridged version of the film’s narrative arc. Transitions are used with drama, rather than harmony or melody, in mind. This is also reflected in the choreography. Unlike the popular music medley, there is no insertion of external sound effects/material in the film soundtrack medley. This resistance to incorporating outside material keeps the audiences squarely situated in the film’s fictional world, further supporting the believability of the skater as character.

MM:SS	MM:SS	Song
00:00	0:33	<i>Progeny</i>
00:33	1:55	<i>The Battle</i>
1:55	03:09	<i>Maximus</i>
3:09	3:53	<i>Barbarian Horde</i>
3:53	End 4:40	<i>Barbarian Horde</i>

Figure 2.5 Max Aaron FS 2014-2015, Music from the *Gladiator* soundtrack by Hans Zimmer and Lisa Gerrard

MM:SS	MM:SS	Song
00:00	1:25	<i>Nina’s Dream</i>
1:25	4:24	<i>Perfection</i>

Figure 2.6 Max Aaron FS 2015-2016, Music from *Black Swan* by Clint Mansell

In both arrangements to which Max Aaron skated, the soundtrack excerpts are organized in the order prescribed by their appearance in the source film. Also, each excerpt summarizes its source material—instead of an uncut one minute and twenty-five seconds from the originally two minutes and fifty seconds “Nina’s Dream” in the *Black Swan* arrangement, the excerpt included

in this medley is one minute and twenty-five seconds of material from various points in the original track, representing an abbreviated version of the entire full-length piece of music. This technique is used throughout the film soundtrack medley, with special attention to including the beginnings and ends of each referenced track, representing contained dramatic scenes in a series of events. Because of this aesthetic, the transitions between songs is like that between scenes in a film: there is an identifiable moment when one ends and the next begins.

With the support of visual and musical storytelling, skaters are considered to be skating to “the film” versus specific songs from a film. Sometimes, skaters are considered to be skating as “the character.” It is not acknowledged by commentators, judges, or official ISU documentation that, when a skater is performing to a film soundtrack medley, they are skating to a variety of songs. Instead, the skaters are perceived as skating to “the film” as a single aesthetic unit. With this in mind, otherwise disparate musical excerpts get grouped together (not unlike in some pop medleys). Because the film soundtrack medley aligns with the source film’s narrative, soundtrack excerpts provide as much contrast as there are dramatic shifts in the film’s story. To this end, tracks that pose a stark contrast to one another are grouped together, as prescribed by the film’s story. While this medley model might sound disjointed on its own, the music is ultimately secondary to character and story, and can be accepted as a unified musical unit in this context.

Summary

Film music is used in figure skating programs to portray character by aligning the skater with the film’s protagonist. To do so, arrangements of film music in this context reference the film’s story by borrowing from its soundtrack, taking excerpts from various tracks used

throughout the film. Increasing in popularity with the 2009 amendment to the Academy Awards nomination quota for “Best Picture,” skaters and their coaches rely on soundtracks being recognizable to the audience. Showing little change in response to the 2012 ISU ruling allowing lyrics to be used in figure skating programs, the use of film music in figure skating programs is not dependent on text in the same ways as popular music.

A figure skating program set to a film’s soundtrack is perceived as the skater performing to the film, rather than selected excerpts from its soundtrack. This being the case, the film soundtrack compilation is a condensed version of the film’s score, lending itself to the skater’s portrayal of character and story as does the complete score to the film being referenced. Prioritizing character over smooth musical transitions, excerpts in the film soundtrack compilation are ordered according to story, rather than harmonic or melodic compatibility. In addition, excerpts used in this model of arranging film music distinguish references to the film’s scenes from each other by bounding the excerpts with the beginning and end of the original track from which they are taken.

The formal model of film music arrangement presented by how film music is adapted to figure skating programs is an example of how film music is used to reference to the visual media for which it was composed. The processes of excerpting and arranging music from a film’s soundtrack for figure skating programs highlights what musical elements are understood to be the most integral to referencing a character and their story in a limited amount of time.

Chapter 3: The Reduced Large-Scale Classical Work

“It’s crazy town out here in figure skating land.” – Johnny Weir

“YAAAS!” exclaims Johnny Weir in response to Gracie Gold’s “ferocious” 2015 program to an arrangement of Stravinsky’s Firebird Suite, adding, “You better ‘werk,’ U.S. ladies!” Gold’s performance was indeed fierce—a well-skated program supported by methods of music editing specific to large-scale works of music from the Western canon. The works in this category fall under four sub-categories: operatic works (with and/or without lyrics), ballets, programmatic instrumental music, and non-programmatic instrumental music. Analysis of the latter three sub-genres in this context reveals methods of music arranging specific to this type of music. While not necessarily overtly prescriptive, trends in arrangement and reception of large-scale classical works arranged for figure skating programs follow a model of arrangement that values an overall impression of coherence while, contradictorily, overlooking musical chronology and structural integrity with respect to the source material.

Instrumental classical music has a deep history in competitive figure skating. Not unlike other performance disciplines such as dance in which music is the supporting art, instrumental classical music lends a level of perceived sophistication to performances. In line with this expectation for sophistication, unquestionably derived from widely-held stereotypes about classical music writ large, audiences hold aesthetic expectations for how these works should be arranged within the sport’s time constraints.

From 2007 to 2017, large-scale classical works did not show a linear trend in popularity but rather one in flux. Figure 3.1 shows that the popularity of these arrangements peaks around Olympic seasons, then wanes in response the following years until skaters begin preparing for the next Olympic season of Grand Prix competitions.

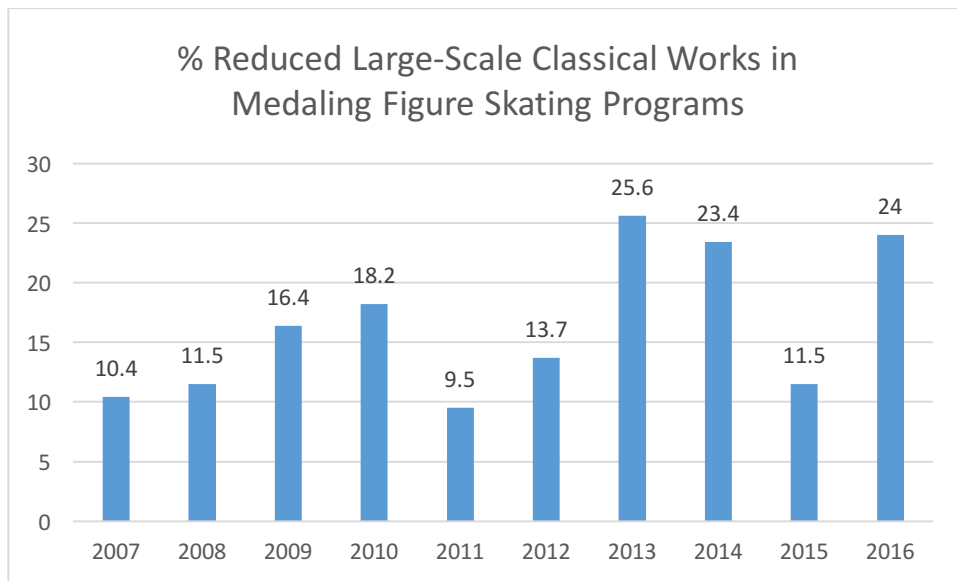


Figure 3.1 Reduced Large-Scale Classical Works (% of Medaling Programs 2007-2016)

From 2007 to 2012, arrangements of large-scale classical works comprised 17.6% of all medaling programs. From 2012 to 2017, that number rose to 19.3%. With unremarkable change, it appears that, although the use of popular music increased following the 2012 ISU rule change, the popularity of classical music as a choice for soundtracking figure skating programs was not affected by the rule change or the overall cultural shifts that occurred during that era.

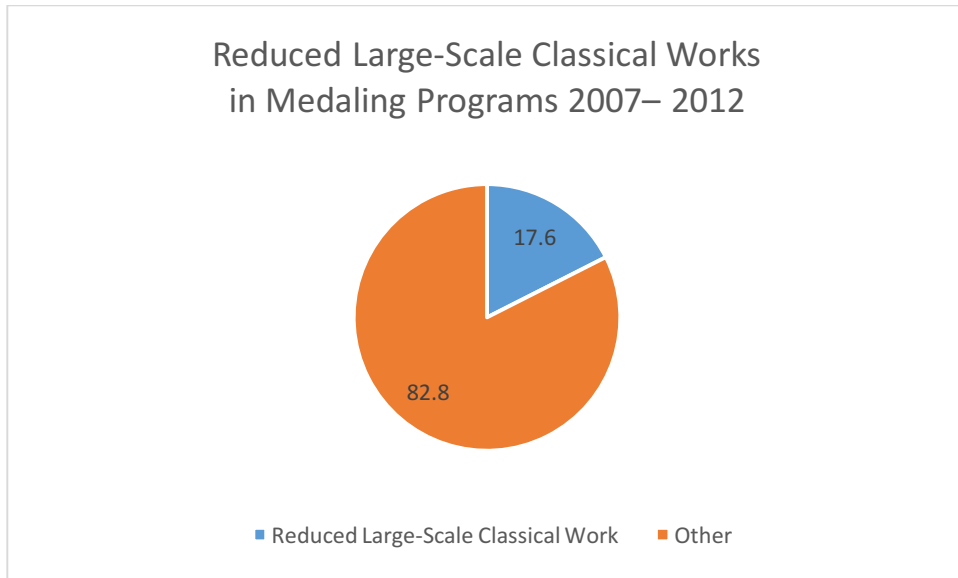


Figure 3.2 Reduced Large-Scale Classical Works (% of Medaling Programs 2007–2012)

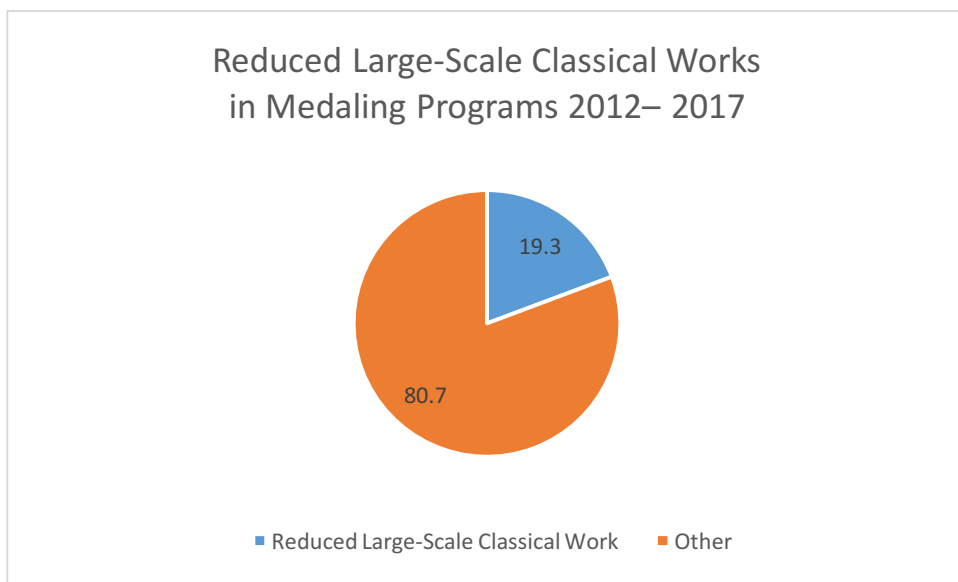


Figure 3.3 Reduced Large-Scale Classical Works (% of Medaling Programs 2012–2017)

Comparison of Figures 3.2 and 3.3 indicates that skaters were not abandoning classical music in their embrace of popular music. However, there is a causal association between the decrease in popular music and the increase in large-scale classical music around Olympic years.

In this case, the decrease in programs set to popular music can be accounted for by the increase of programs set to classical music, a choice rooted in tendencies to present more conservative programs at the Olympic Games.

Outside of figure skating, reductions of large-scale classical works appear in many settings such as advertisements, talent competitions and arrangements for youth orchestras. Stereotypical expectations for classical music motivate the illusion for seamlessness while harmonic discontinuity is accepted in exchange for the inclusion of more themes and/or movements than would be possible were the arrangements to abide by harmonic and melodic conventions of tonal music. In this chapter, I present a model of musical arrangement that identifies how reductions of large-scale classical works project an illusion of seamlessness while, at the same time, overlooking harmonic continuity and overarching musical structure.

Classical Music Arrangements and Analysis

Large-scale classical music reduced to fit the time constraints of figure skating programs challenges extant theories of “collage,” “fragmented,” and “recomposed” musics and their analyses— theories and analyses that assume a style of composition in which music is originally composed with the purpose of achieving a collage aesthetic. Other understandings of recomposition include arrangements that draw from several different works, invoking a collage aesthetic with references to multiple source materials.

Musical collages, such as those written by Charles Ives, are an area of classical music in which theorists have discussed issues such as structural disparity and fragmentation. Analyzing collages via relationships between “disparate elements” and the structural implications thereof, Catherine Losada claims that Ives’s musical collages “explicitly subvert the concept of unity by

juxtaposing various fragmentary quotations from different musical styles within a single composition.”²⁶ This particular understanding of collage in classical music is one that applies to the composition of new works, proposing that there is a distinct collage aesthetic that can be achieved in the composition of completely new musical material, without the use of excerpts. On the same topic, Jennifer Iverson posits that listeners experience musical collages, such as those by Charles Ives, as “spatial” or “pictorial.”²⁷ In this case, “musical collage” in classical music references a specific aesthetic that draws attention to its (manufactured) seams.

Regarding recomposition practices, Matthew L. BaileyShea suggests that existing practices of recomposing music are limiting and suggest that they be extended to include more diverse practices such as grafting together several different settings of the same poem, in which sections are connected via text, score, and performance.²⁸ While there has been some theorizing about this practice of recomposition, there are not many reference points for music that engages in these techniques. This understanding of recomposition depends on a multiplicity of source materials.

This literature suggests a popular understanding of collage and recomposition in classical music theoretical discourse that emphasizes a noticeable collage aesthetic whether that be achieved in the compositions of a new piece or a recomposition drawing from multiple sources. The arrangements discussed in this chapter are new arrangements of found material that seek to

²⁶ Catherine Losada, “The Process of Modulation in Musical Collage,” *Music Analysis* 27, no. 2-3 (2008): doi:10.1111/j.1468-2249.2009.00285.x.

²⁷ Jennifer Iverson, “Creating Space: Perception and Structure in Charles Ives’s Collages,” *Music Theory Online* 17, no. 2 (July 2011): <http://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.11.17.2/mto.11.17.2.iverson.html>.

²⁸ Matthew L. BaileyShea, “Filletted Mignon: A New Recipe for Analysis and Recomposition,” *Music Theory Online* 13, no. 4 (December 2007): <http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.07.13.4/mto.07.13.4.baileyshea.html>.

stand alone as an independent track of music. These arrangements take excerpts from a single large-scale classical work to create reduce the work to a track of only a few minutes. In the case of the reduced large-scale classical work, there is only one source material, and this material is excerpted and arranged with explicit attention to disguising its seams. Studying reductions of large-scale classical works necessitates an approach that addresses arrangements that use found materials from a single source and avoid drawing attention to their seams.

Formal Model: Reduced Large-Scale Classical Work

While not every arrangement of large-scale classical works abides by exactly the same methods, comparative review of large-scale classical works edited for figure skating program time constraints reveals several trends in how these tracks are assembled. Particularly exemplary of these trends is the four-minute and nineteen-second long arrangement of Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade to which Yu-Na Kim skated during the 2008-2009 season. Unlike arrangements of popular and film musics, these tracks do not rely on an assumption that the audience will recognize the source material. Instead, these arrangements rely on an assumption that the audience's aural expectations are in accordance with conventions of western tonal music. In this analysis of a programmatic work, I am specifically calling attention to phenomena that occur across both non-programmatic and programmatic works arranged for figure skating programs.

Classical reductions are accompanied by an expectation for seamlessness, accomplished by satisfying harmonic and melodic expectations of tonal music throughout the track. Harmonic and melodic continuity is maintained within each excerpt, and the track as a whole is unified by a principal key. In large-scale classical works reduced for figure skating time constraints, the key

areas of chosen excerpts comprise a triad that indicates the principal key of the medley, which is sometimes, but not always, the principal key of the source work.

<i>Scheherazade</i>										
mvt. 4 mm. 642-647	mvt. 1 mm. 46-55	mvt. 1 mm. 102-113	mvt. 1 mm. 118-127	mvt. 2 mm. 5-10	mvt. 3 mm. 128-135	mvt. 3 mm. 154-161	mvt. 2 mm. 108-109	mvt. 4 mm. 8-9	mvt. 4 mm. 38-69	mvt. 4 mm. 542-590
E M	E M	G M	E M	B natural m	G M	E m	G M	G melodic m	E natural m	E harmonic m

<i>Yu-Na Kim FS 2008-2009</i>										
0:00	0:41	1:06	1:31	1:44	1:47	2:19	3:02	3:08	3:25	3:45

Figure 3.4 Yu-Na Kim FS 2008-2009, *Scheherazade* by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov²⁹

In Figure 4, the eleven excerpts used in this arrangement are all set in a mode of E, G, or B, outlining an E minor triad. As this arrangement of *Scheherazade* exemplifies, these arrangements often begin and end on the tonic of the principal key of the track, which is established by the key areas of included excerpts.

In this arrangement of *Scheherazade*, each excerpt maintains a sense of melodic and harmonic continuity. The excerpts encompass entire iterations of melodic lines, and avoid key changes. While this does create detectable seams between excerpts, they are no more prominent than those that occur between themes in the source material. Unlike arrangements of popular and film music previously discussed, the reduced classical work does not draw attention to the fact that it is a series of excerpts.

²⁹ “2009 World Yu-Na Kim FS *Scheherazade* (NBC),” YouTube video, 6:55, “dearmine1,” January 12, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSZWqs8lOsg>.

There are, however, exceptions to harmonic and melodic continuity within excerpts. At the end of this arrangement of *Scheherazade*, the large-scale structure of the track contains an apparent harmonic and melodic discontinuity within a given excerpt.

mm. 587

flute 8^{va}

tuba 8th

mm. 590

trombone and tuba

Figure 3.5 mm. 587—93 of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*

In m. 588, the melody in the flute line concludes as the key of C major is presented by the rest of the orchestra. In this moment, there is a sense of closure in the melody line, but the harmony remains inconclusive. The abrupt key change to C major in m. 588 denies the audience harmonic closure. Although the E in the flute line fits in the C major tonic chord, the key is not yet explicitly established. The melody exchange from an E in the flutes to the prominent C in the tuba and trombones in m. 590, over a held C major chord, offers a moment of final harmonic and melodic closure that creates a satisfying end to the arrangement.

However, the C in the tuba and trombones that is integral to ending the arrangement serves an entirely different function in the source piece. In its original context, the tuba and trombones introduce a new theme that contrasts the previous section. Instances like this evidence that, ultimately, it is more important for the track as an independent unit of music to abide by expectations of tonal music than it is for it to remain faithful to the original material. In this same vein, the chronology of excerpts does not reflect the source work's organization of themes and movements.

Summary

Large-scale classical works arranged for figure skating programs pursue an independence from their source material in how excerpts are re-ordered and given new functions in comparison to the original piece. These tracks are unified by a principal key, which is established by the keys of the excerpts used. Each excerpt is unified throughout by a single key and preservation of complete melodic statements. These conventions trend across ballet music, programmatic instrumental music, and non-programmatic instrumental music.

Due to the varied levels of extra-musical reference afforded by these different sub-genres, character is communicated in different ways and to different extents on a case-by-case basis. Character-based works, such as Stravinsky's Firebird Suite tend to elicit obvious reference in costume and affectations. In Gracie Gold's performance introduced at the beginning of this chapter, Gold skates wearing a bright red dress adorned with feathers and intricate beading organized in flam-like patterns. Throughout her performance, Gold sweeps her arms behind her like wings, and strikes poses in a perch-like position on multiple occasions. After the performance, Weir praises Gold's performance for how it was "choreographed down to the

bow,” noting that Gold “was flapping her fluttery, little wings [...] even on the bow!” In non-programmatic music, the skater must rely heavily on prominent themes and motifs, taking those as basis for character and articulating them with their movement.

Similar to the perception of film music arrangements, skaters are described by commentators as skating to the piece as a whole, rather than specific selections of a larger work. However, unlike popular and film musics arranged in this context, the reduced large-scale classical work does not communicate a proud self-awareness of its seams. Assumptions of the audience’s expectations of western tonal music trump assumptions of the audience’s recognition of the source material, thus presenting a method of arrangement that relies more on conventions of tonal music than it does on faithful reference to the original work.

This formal model is an example of how large-scale classical works can be arranged to meet limiting time constraints in ways that use material from across the entire piece to produce a single track that can stand as an independent musical unit. This process highlights expectations of how listeners perceive these works, expectations that carry over into other domains in which these arrangements are used, such as commercial advertising and television.

CONCLUSION

Music arrangements limited by time constraints penetrate daily life. In television commercials, talent competition acts, dance performances, movie trailers, and YouTube vlogs, among a multitude of other contexts, diverse genres of music are arranged to provide snapshots of larger work in a limited period of time. Figure skating has proven to be a fruitful source for case studies of this type of musical arrangement, given the sheer quantity of content and the fact that ISU regulations control for several variables, which facilitates reliable comparative analysis.

Data collection of all medaling routines by single skaters at the highest level of competition evidences disciplinary trends and proclivities. This thesis has focused on popular music, film music, and classical music, as arrangements of these genres enjoy substantial representation beyond the context of figure skating, equipping this work with applications to other multimedia. While there is some tangentially relevant literature on music perception and collage aesthetics, this work introduces new approaches to modeling how medleys, compilations, and abridgements are constructed and perceived.

Methods of arranging source music differ according to genre beyond any other factor. Differences specific to musical elements such as the choice of which formal units to include, the key areas and harmonic relations, and whether to preserve the chronology of the original work are quite pronounced for these three genres. These differences in musical construction participate in a feedback loop with the audience, judges, and commentators that reflects how musical

perceptions and expectations also vary from one genre to the next within the traditions of figure skating.

Arrangements of popular music are constructed in a medley style that excerpts multiple songs by the same or different artists. These arrangements rely heavily on the audiences' (assumed) ability to identify songs by their hooks and artists by their catalog, along with visual cues such as attire and signature dance moves. With this in mind, the quantity of excerpts and the memorability of excerpts are of primary concern, superseding harmonic and melodic continuity as would be prescribed by conventions of tonal music.

Within the skating programs, performers and judges place an emphasis on projecting "character," both of the genre itself and of the artist. With this in mind, sound effects and abrupt transitions mark the medleys as proudly stitched together, emphasizing the quantity of excerpts that work together to reference artist and genre. In many cases, no attempt is made to disguise the way that the musical score is stitched together from discrete excerpts. Such an approach shifts the audience's attention away from the idea of a musical work as coherent according to principles of tonal music and instead toward memory and the experience of recollections of a particular artist or genre.

Taking the 2012 ISU ruling permitting lyrics in figure skating as an influential date with regard to the proliferation of pop music in figure skating, the omission of lyrics even after this rule-change evidences the influence of already-established methods of arranging pop medleys. Without being able to use lyrics, which would permit the inclusion of songs' title lines or memorable texts, the most efficient way of sparking audience memory in a limited amount of time is to use concise yet recognizable musical units such as hooks, intros, and outros. Even with

the permission of lyrics, a formal model heavily influenced by now-obsolete restrictions continues to dominate how pop medleys are arranged.

Genre and original use informs how film soundtracks are arranged for figure skating programs. Film soundtracks are arranged as condensed versions of the original score, relaying the narrative for which the source music was originally composed in its application in a new context. While there substantial research has been done regarding how film music informs the visual media for which it was originally composed, this thesis introduces a new topic of inquiry that addresses how film music, when divorced from the visual media for which it was originally composed, is arranged to tell a condensed version of the film's plot in the new context of the skating program.

“Character” in condensed film scores arranged for figure skating programs is straightforward — the skater is aligned with and portrays the film's protagonist. Accordingly, these arrangements' musical form prioritizes character and story above tonal music conventions. Soundtrack excerpts are ordered according to their original chronology in the film. Additionally, excerpts are bounded by the beginning and end of the original track, creating closed musical units that stand in for a film's scenes. With these arrangement practices, plot and chronology guide how film scores are arranged for figure skating programs, often to the betrayal of tonal music conventions.

Reactions to and expectations of film soundtrack arrangements participate in a feedback cycle with how these arrangements are constructed. Commentary and official ISU records reveal the understanding that skaters are performing to “the film” as a single media unit, versus several identified songs from a given film. Accordingly, skaters are expected to assume the role of the film's protagonist, and are lauded when they do so faithfully. Ultimately, it is the film's story

that prescribes the expectations and practices of arranging film soundtracks for figure skating programs.

Large-scale classical works abridged to meet time constraints have enjoyed substantial representation among competitive figure skating programs. Unlike arrangements of popular and film musics, abridged large-scale classical works do not assume the audience's familiarity with the source material. What is assumed, however, is the audience's expectation for western classical music to abide by conventions of tonal music.

In line with this assumption of audience expectations, abridged versions of large-scale classical works are arranged to assume a harmonic continuity independent from many aspects of the original work. Both chronology and harmonic/melody functions are re-assigned as these works are arranged to meet figure skating program time constraints. In this case, unlike the other genres discussed in this thesis, harmonic and melodic coherence according to tonal conventions is prioritized above memory prompts and fidelity to the source material in these arrangements.

These arrangements often include the source material's main themes, and the skaters' performance and costuming often references the original work, especially in the case of programmatic and ballet music. Ultimately, the seamlessness for which arrangements of classical music strive informs the audience's expectations for the skaters' performances, emphasizing grace and flow which, in turn, influences how subsequent arrangements in the genre are constructed, constituting a feedback loop that repeatedly affirms the significance of tonal conventions in any program that employs western classical music.

The use of medleys in figure skating programs is so thoroughly embedded in the tradition that it has affected the way that composers write new music for the sport. Music that is newly-composed for figure skating programs often employs forms that mimic the arrangement

techniques that have proved effective at portraying narrative and character, specifically the appearance and form of a medley. These newly-composed tracks include such components as noticeable seams between sections, and short, repetitive melodic units with stark contrasts from one to the next.

One final example illustrates how newly composed music imitates the tradition of medleys. Olympic silver-medalist Eric Radford, who holds a Grade 9 Royal Conservatory of Music Certificate, composed the music to which three-time world champion Patrick Chan skated his free skate program in the 2016-2017 season. To compose the track for Chan, Radford went into the studio and merged together two works that he had been working on, composing this new piece from two separate compositional ideas, one of which was a piano solo, and the other of which was written for a string ensemble.³⁰ Radford combined what would have been two unique compositions to create a single piece with many of the same musical elements seen across medley arrangements of other genres. Radford's composition makes use of music from multiple sources and has a focus on conveying character as it was expressly written for Chan. Evidencing the influence of musical narrative on skaters' physicality, Chan commented that "[the composition] almost choreographed itself."³¹ This phenomenon is similarly reflected in Radford's expectation and reception of Chan's performance, explaining, "When I originally

³⁰ Marty Henwood, "Journey of Friendship: Eric Radford composes free program music for friend and fellow world champion Patrick Chan," Skate Canada, July 5, 2016, accessed July 07, 2017, <https://skatecanada.ca/2016/07/journey-of-friendship-eric-radford-composes-free-program-music-for-friend-and-fellow-world-champion-patrick-chan/>.

³¹ Ibid.

watched Patrick skate to the music, what made me smile is how [Chan's choreographer] David [Wilson] captured the more intricate things.”³²

Appropriately titled “A Journey,” Chan credits the work with allowing him to express himself as a skater in “different ways that nobody will ever understand.”³³ In this newly-composed track, narrative and character remain at the forefront, but, in this case, these elements are those of the skater him/herself, rather than references to narratives and characters that exist beyond the context of the skater's performance. This emerging genre presents a new formal model in which newly-composed music takes on a medley aesthetic, created through practices predicated upon methods originally established for genre-specific music arrangement, illustrating the complex relationships between genre and musical form in the making of medleys.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

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