

Music History and Cosmopolitanism / abstract & bio
Vincent, Carl (Leeds College of Music, UK)
Session 1d / Wednesday June 1, 2:30–4 pm

Miklós Rózsa: How the American Film Noir was emotionally illustrated with a distinct Hungarian syntactical language

Hollywood in the Golden Age profited from cosmopolitanism in various ways – from directors, cinematographers, to music departments that consisted of many European trained composers from cosmopolitan backgrounds, thus creating a Eurocentric hub which came to musically define the ‘dream factory’. This paper will address how the Hungarian composer Miklós Rózsa’s Film Noir style is in relation to his assimilation of devices from multiple, stylistically divergent, sources that indicated a composer whose exploration and pursuit of a holistic integration culminated in what could be described as Hungarian cosmopolitanism. The melodic syntax of Hungarian folk song and modernist harmony combined into what became an iconic sound world that encapsulated the ‘pulp fiction’ era of the mid 1940’s to the mid 1950’s in American culture. The paper ascertains the stylistic essence, and the intracultural ideas that Rózsa integrated in films such as *Double Indemnity* (1944), *The Killers* (1946), and *Naked City* (1948) and how this became appropriated semantically as the quintessential ‘American’ sound to mirror the dark side of the ‘American Dream’.

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