

Institution: King's College London
Unit of Assessment: UoA 35b
Title of case study: MUSIC AND FILM: FROM RESEARCH TO SCREEN
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>This case study focuses on the impact that Richard Dyer's research on music, film, and culture has had in the area of cultural life and the presentation of cultural heritage. At the centre of this is his work on the composer Nino Rota, which relates in one direction to his work on the use of song in film and on the other to his work on lesbian and gay culture. This research has been the basis for collaborations with the BFI (leading to major screening seasons) and has led to impact activities elsewhere, both in the UK and internationally. Beneficiaries include cine-enthusiasts, those interested in musical and queer culture, and more generally the broader public which has become better informed about the significance of the subjects of Dyer's research.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>In 2010 and 2011 Dyer, who joined King's as Professor in Film Studies in 2006, published two books focused on music and film. The first, <i>Nino Rota: Music, Film and Feeling</i> (3.1), is the most recent example of Dyer's longstanding specialist engagement with European cinema, especially in its popular forms, and considers Rota's collaborations in major genres (especially melodrama and comedy) and with leading directors (including Visconti and Fellini). It is an original study of soundtracks that resonate across Italian cinema and beyond (e.g. The <i>Godfather</i> films), and which are, for the general public, perhaps among the most memorable in cinema. Dyer's analyses bring out the special quality of 'ironic attachment' (as opposed to detachment) across Rota's work. In 2011, emerging from the same research activity, Dyer also published 'The Ending of <i>8½</i>' in Brown and Walters, eds., <i>Moments in Film</i> (3.3) (not one of his four REF outputs), which discusses Rota's music. In the Rota book, in addition to giving an account of Rota's specific aesthetic, Dyer attends to the issue of gay cultural production and notions of 'gay music', thus tying his most recent work to his other specialist interests in queer culture and film.</p> <p>In the second book, <i>In the Space of a Song</i> (3.2), Dyer considers, through a series of case studies from classical Hollywood musicals to Italian and Hindi cinema, what happens when a song is heard and, importantly, seen in film, the way songs take off from the space-time of the story, the significance of where songs take place and what singers look like singing. The ideological relationships negotiated through song with regard to gender, race, and sexuality in this text continue his research in identity politics. <i>Sight & Sound</i> commissioned an extended article on Minnelli's <i>Meet Me in St. Louis</i> upon the publication of <i>In the Space of a Song</i>, and, as with his scholarship on Rota, this research, in turn, brought Dyer once again to the attention of the BFI.</p> <p>More recently Dyer has published other peer-reviewed articles related to song in film, which extend his aforementioned research interests in music, race, and European cinema: 'White Enough' in Tzioumakis and Lincoln, eds., <i>The Time of Our Lives: Dirty Dancing and Popular Culture</i> (3.5) and 'The Pervasiveness of Song in Italian Cinema' in Bayman and Rigoletto, eds., <i>Popular Italian Cinema</i> (3.6).</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>3.1 Richard Dyer, <i>Nino Rota: Music, Film and Feeling</i> (London: BFI, 2010) ISBN 9781844572106. Monograph written for academic press, peer reviewed (at proposal stage).</p> <p>3.2 Richard Dyer, <i>In the Space of a Song: The Uses of Song in Film</i> (London: Routledge, 2012)</p>

ISBN 9780415223744. Monograph written for academic press, peer reviewed.

3.3 Richard Dyer 'The Ending of 8½' in Tom Brown and James Walters, eds., *Film Moments: Criticism, History, Theory* (London: British Film Institute, 2011) ISBN 9781844573356. Chapter commissioned for edited volume, peer reviewed.

3.4 Richard Dyer, 'The Idea of a Gay Icon' in National Portrait Gallery *Gay Icons* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2009) ISBN 9781855144002. Commissioned by National Portrait Gallery.

3.5 Richard Dyer, 'White Enough' in Yannis Tzioumakis and Sian Lincoln, eds., *The Time of Our Lives: Dirty Dancing and Popular Culture* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2012) ISBN 9780814336243. Chapter commissioned for edited volume, peer reviewed.

3.6 Richard Dyer, 'The Pervasiveness of Song in Italian Cinema' in Louis Bayman and Sergio Rigoletto, eds., *Popular Italian Cinema* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) ISBN 9780230300163. Chapter commissioned for edited volume, peer reviewed.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Dyer had collaborated with the BFI on topics related to Rota before this REF impact cycle. In 2004, he curated the Federico Fellini season at the BFI and in the previous year had given a talk there on Rota and Visconti. He was also commissioned to write a piece on Rota for the magazine, *Sight & Sound* (14:9 NS, 2004), on the occasion of Rota's topping their poll of best film music composers. Dyer published his book on Nino Rota (3.1) with BFI publications in 2010 and his research in this area and his close relationship with the BFI led to his curating the Nino Rota season of films, which took place in September 2010.

The Rota season (attendance 3,272) (5.10) showcased sixteen movies with scores by Rota, including Visconti's *White Nights* (1957), *The Leopard* (1963) and *Rocco and his Brothers* (1960), Fellini's *I vitelloni* (1953), *La Strada* (1954), *Il bidone* (1955), *Nights of Cabiria* (1956), *La dolce vita* (1960), *Eight and a Half* (1963) and *Amarcord* (1973), as well as popular Italian comedies (*È primavera* (1949), *Anni facili* (1953), a queer melodrama (*Amici per la pelle* (1955)), a British (*Obsession* (1949)) and a French (*Plein soleil* (1959)) thriller, Zeffirelli's *The Taming of the Shrew* (1966) and the blockbuster *The Godfather Part II* (1974). Thus well-loved movies were showcased alongside lesser-known movies and audiences had the opportunity to focus on these scores as part of a cinematic experience and understand and appreciate Rota's often famous and familiar music in its original context. One cine-enthusiast who saw *The Leopard* at the BFI blogged enthusiastically about the experience: 'Nino Rota's score, which is elegiac and almost wondrous in its melodramatic but melancholic tones, is superb ... (cinematographer) Rotunno and Rota are the true stars of this picture' (thatonefilmblog (5.1)).

Film music is often not noticed: the brochure and programme notes enabled audiences to 'hear' what often goes unheard, as did a public lecture Dyer gave on 1 September 2010 to introduce the season. This used a wide range of examples, carefully introduced with reference to what is going on in the music in the clip, to illustrate the very special way Rota has with a film score. This was held in NFT1, the largest auditorium at the BFI Southbank, indicating the BFI's confidence in Dyer's appeal to the cinema public. Alongside this high-profile series, Dyer appeared in the media discussing Nino Rota and his importance, participating in a feature on Rota in *Music Matters* on BBC Radio 3 (5.2) in September 2010, which made the case for why Rota's music is important, and then being interviewed about Rota on *In Tune* on BBC Radio 3, 2 October 2013, as part of their 'Sound of Cinema' series. Average audience figures in the quarter of 2010 in which Dyer appeared on *Music Matters* were 95,000. In addition, on 21 September he gave a (different) lecture on Rota to the Italian Society at Heythrop College. He had also earlier given a public lecture on

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Rota as a gay composer as part of the 'Queer Up North' festival in Manchester on 27 May 2010 (120 attendees). A video presentation by Dyer on a closely related topic, 'The Wind in Fellini' (Rota's most celebrated collaborator), has been made by the Internationales Kolleg für Kulturtechnikforschung und Medienphilosophie in Weimar, available on line, which has been commended as 'simply one of the *best* Film Studies lectures currently available on the internet' by 'Film Studies for Free' (5.9). This has had 754 views.

Dyer also curated for the BFI the two-month Vincente Minnelli season in April-May 2012. Again, this arose as a result of Dyer's research. On 17 March 2010, Dyer had lectured on Lena Horne at the BFI (the first in the King's@BFI Key Scholars series), a topic that formed the basis of one of the chapters later published in *In the Space of a Song* (2012) (3.2). As a result of this talk and his research on song, Dyer was asked to publish an article on *Meet Me in St Louis* for *Sight & Sound* (January 2012) to coincide with BFI Southbank's MGM musicals season. The appearance of this article on Minnelli's great musical in turn led to his being invited to curate the Minnelli season at the BFI in April-May 2012. Dyer gave a lecture on 3 April 2012 to open the season – again in NFT1 – on the notion of 'the number' (musical and otherwise) across all Minnelli's work (part of which was posted at <http://www.bfi.org.uk/live/video/950>). Tony Paley, in his Capital Celluloid blog, featured this lecture in his daily guide of cinema life in London: 'Okay, it's not a film but this is guaranteed to be an eye-opener. Richard Dyer, one of our foremost film writers and the curator of the Minnelli season at BFI Southbank, introduces the two-month extravaganza with a look at the great Hollywood director's masterful use of the set piece' (Capital Celluloid). The season gave Dyer the opportunity to showcase thirty-four movies to a wider public, a complete retrospective of Minnelli's work, presenting the public with a possibly once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see the full range of the director's output on the big screen. Audiences are now perhaps most familiar with Minnelli's musicals; this season enabled them to put these side by side with his melodramas and comedies, the brochure and programme notes bringing out their similarities and differences and the development of his work over thirty years. The attendance figure for this season was 6,005 (5.10). This series attracted attention in the press and on the internet, including a Gay Times blog feature ('The Other Minnelli'): 'With recognisable icons (as well as plenty of faces that us whippersnappers will still be to learn) and a healthy dose of cinemagraphic culture, the showcase proves the importance of classics in film. What's more, while Liza needn't worry about her throne just yet, it's never hurt to learn a little of the family history either'. Reviewers also wrote about individual movies shown in the series, including 'rarely seen but frequently referenced' films such as *The Bad and the Beautiful* (Lee Cassanelli (5.5)). And theartsdesk.com discussed, in the light of this retrospective, whether Minnelli had the claim of being an *auteur* (Ronald Bergan (5.6)). Newspapers too used the retrospective as an opportunity to bring Minnelli's work closer to the public, with *The Independent* (29 March 2012 (5.7)) offering a 'Guide to: Vincente Minnelli's Season at BFI Southbank', with its internet site offering a photographic guide to ten of the director's movies.

In this assessment period, the BFI has, therefore, taken the initiative to stage two series of high-profile screenings and events as a direct result of Dyer's research (and their confidence in the public's interest in this). Dyer, in turn, has collaborated productively with the BFI to shape film seasons based on his expertise and research interests. Of Dyer's work on the Rota and Minnelli seasons, Head of Film Programming, BFI Southbank, writes: 'in both instances (and as with Richard's previous collaborations with us), we found his work excellent in every respect; and I know from feedback that our audiences did too, so that we certainly hope to make use of his expertise again in the future' (5.10).

Dyer's research into Rota and Minnelli, the song and musicals intersects with his long-standing research interests in queer film and culture. Dyer has had continued impact in this area during the assessment period. Most notably, his gay-related work in the period saw his involvement in the 'Gay Icons' exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery (2 July-18 October 2009) (3.4), including giving a presentation jointly with the comedian Sandi Toksvig on 23 July 2009 and co-leading with artist Sadie Lee a tour of some of the related portraits in the gallery itself (2 July; 110 tickets sold). The Director of the National Portrait Gallery testifies to the importance of Richard's work: 'First, his essay contribution to the catalogue demonstrated his wide-ranging contextual knowledge of the

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subject of gay iconography. His essay was also of great interest to those who bought the publication and in the discussions around the exhibition. Secondly, his contribution to the public discussion with Sandi Toksvig, was very important in terms of allowing wider debate to flow from the exhibition, and the combination of an academic and a prominent broadcaster made a significant contribution to the public programme of the National Portrait Gallery' (5.10). Dyer also gave a talk on curating the exhibition at a London Metropolitan Archives study day (5 December 2009; 64 attendees). Dyer was an interviewee for a film about Rock Hudson as a queer star (*Rock Hudson – Dark And Handsome Stranger*, directed by Andrew Davies and André Schäfer and premiered at the Berlin Film Festival in 2010). He gave talks on this topic before performances of the play *Rock*, by Tim Fountain, at Unity Theatre Liverpool (part of the Homotopia festival; 66 tickets sold) on 17 May 2008 and Oval House Theatre, London, on 14 June 2008 (40 attendees in the upstairs theatre which seats 50). He also co-presented on issues of queer cinema with Ruby Rich at the Cornerhouse cinema on 12 May 2008 (110 attendees), and for the 2010 Sexuality Summer School he co-ran with Jackie Stacey a workshop on 'Textual Intimacy' on 25 May.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[All website references below last accessed 17 October 2013]

5.1. <http://thatonefilmblog.com/2010/09/05/the-leopard/>

5.2. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00trzc3>
(Music Matters)

5.3 <http://capitalcelluloid.blogspot.co.uk/2012/03/capital-celluloid-2012-day-94-tuesday.html>

5.4 The Other Minnelli (Luke Campbell):
<http://www.gaytimes.co.uk/Interact/Blogs-articleid-8928-sectionid-761.html>

5.5 Lee Cassanelli: <http://www.cine-vue.com/2012/04/film-review-bad-and-beautiful-bfi-re.html>

5.6 Ronald Bergan: <http://www.theartsdesk.com/film/vincente-minnelli-celebrating-mr-hollywood>

5.7 Independent: <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/features/a-guide-to-vincente-minnelli-season-at-bfi-southbank-7593273.html>

5.8 Georgina Gordon-Ham 'Not Just Fellini – the Film Music of Nino Rota', review of talk in *Rivista, the Magazine of the British-Italian Society*, no. 393, 2010/2011, p. 13

5.9 Film Studies for Free: <http://filmstudiesforfree.blogspot.co.uk/2011/03/federico-fellini-studies.html>

5.10 Corroborating statements:

- Chief programmer, BFI Southbank (Impact of Dyer's research projects on programming and audiences at BFI Southbank)
- Education Curator of Public Programmes, BFI Southbank (Impact of Dyer's research as part of overall King's collaboration with BFI Southbank)
- Education Curator of Public Programmes, BFI Southbank (Corroboration of audience figures at BFI Southbank)
- Director, National Portrait Gallery (Impact of Dyer's research on the public programme of the National Portrait Gallery).