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Editorial – *Émergences*, Journal of Screen Music Studies

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Editorial – *Émergences*, Journal of Screen Music Studies

Jason Julliot et Jérémy Michot

DÉDICACE

To Gilles Mouëllic, who guided our steps, and whose memory still lights the path of our research.

NOTES DE LA RÉDACTION

Nous remercions chaleureusement Alexander Robinson pour l'aide à la traduction de ce texte.

TEXTE

- 1 The creation of a peer-reviewed journal within the francophone academic landscape, specifically devoted to the study of screen music, is a profoundly political act. This initiative is indebted to the many individual efforts undertaken over the past century by scholars in film studies and musicology—efforts that have seen a sharp acceleration since the early 2000s and that have led to the gradual legitimization of a field long held in low regard. Without revisiting the many causes behind this marginalization, which have been extensively documented elsewhere (Huvet 2016, 56–62; Rossi 2016 and 2021; Deaville 2011, 1), it is useful to recall that musicology has long constituted a classist field of research, grounded in a narrow and exclusive view of the Western scholarly canon. This perspective shaped both educational paths and research dynamics (Bachman 1992; Levitz 2018; Ewell 2023). Surprisingly, although the discipline has undergone a much-needed transformation since the critical musicology movement of the late 1980s—a shift that has benefited popular music studies, the sociology of music, genetic criticism in music, music therapy, and postcolonial studies of music—screen music remained for a long time the poor relative of musicology. In France, the low-level hum of film music scholarship throughout the

twentieth century (Rossi 2021, 18–28) only began to find a proper foothold in universities from the 1990s and 2000s.

- 2 The recent history of screen music’s academic ascent, in France, can be symbolically marked by milestones roughly a decade apart. Following the concurrent publication in 1995 of pioneering works by Michel Chion (*La musique au cinéma*) and Alain Lacombe and François Porcile (*Les musiques du cinéma français*), it was not until 2006 that the Sorbonne introduced a film music course within its new undergraduate program in “Sciences and Musicology,” primarily focused on technical aspects (Julliot 2023, 14–15). Nearly ten years later, a group of French-speaking scholars came together at a conference in Rennes to form Elmec¹ (Étude des langages musicaux à l’écran). This provided the final stepping stone before the launch of *Émergences*, whose first issue will appear in spring 2025. In this respect, the journal’s title reflects both this slow academic breakthrough and also serves as a statement of intent—i.e. a commitment to renew continuously the approaches, objects, and arenas of study, while maintaining a dialogue with current and past international research. This intent is likewise mirrored in the diversity of the editorial board as well as in our aim to question the very foundations of the discipline through a conscious, situated epistemological framework—one that is at the crossroads of aesthetics, music and soundtrack theory, but also film, television, game, literary, narratological, and material sound studies—although we do not, of course, claim that this list is exhaustive.
- 3 The academic study of screen music in the French-speaking world would be impossible without the pioneering work of Michel Chion, to whom we owe the development of a rich descriptive and interpretative vocabulary. His terminology remains widely used to this day, both in academia and on film sets, and his ideas have long offered a framework for young scholars. Yet considering that any form of hegemony necessarily imposes itself at the expense of alternative approaches, concepts, and theories—which thus find themselves marginalized or overlooked—*Émergences*, as a resolutely multilingual journal, seeks to bring into conversation analytical models and perspectives that remain under-translated or underrepresented. In this respect, the question of screen music’s “language,” as aptly explored by Cécile Carayol in her study on

intimate symphonism (2012), cannot be dismissed too lightly. Nor should we assign too much weight to the words of composers themselves (Gorbman 2004, 15) without critically embedding them in a broader history of forms (Berthomieu 2009, 2011 and 2013) and techniques (Buhler 2019; Huvet 2022; Michot 2025). In the *Émergences* project, this desire to challenge the dominant film-music discourse also translates into a threefold renewal: namely, that of methods, of the audiovisual objects studied, and of the physical form that academic research can take.

- 4 Integrating studies of film, television, and video game music into open science is, indeed, part of a broader shift in the dissemination of knowledge. Until now, French-language research has lacked a journal dedicated to the musical and sonic dimensions of audiovisual works. The decision to publish online and in open access should not, however, be read as an endorsement of the broader project of dematerialization and derealization of the world. As the many lockdowns have shown, conferences, study days, and seminars remain essential spaces for scholarly encounters and debate, as well as informal moments where valuable interpersonal connections are forged—ties that often result in scientific collaborations and which *Émergences* seeks to highlight. Our aim is to make research more accessible to a wider scholarly audience and to circulate knowledge beyond the often narrow confines of traditional academic circles, while also breaking free from commercial publishing models that are frequently unsustainable. Moreover, this format will help preserve a collegial, peer-based structure that supports a freer, more horizontal sharing of knowledge. *Émergences* therefore strives to fulfill both a public service mission—disseminating and promoting academic research—and a disciplinary need: that of building a collective edifice, with each article contributing uniquely and durably to its foundation.
- 5 It would be impossible to conclude without thanking those who, through their invaluable support, have made *Émergences* possible—in particular Basile Bayoux, Vincent Chollier, Stefania Slavcheva, and the entire Prairial team for their expertise and guidance. Our gratitude also extends to our “sibling” journals and their editors for their conversations, advice, and sincere encouragement. In the long marathon that launching an academic journal entails, it is reassuring to be supported by colleagues and friends who have already made

that journey and who are willing to share their treasures: Emmanuel Parent (*Volume*), Sarah Benhaim (*Transposition*), Anaïs Goudmand and Aurélie Huz (*Belphégor*, *ReS Futurae*). We are also deeply grateful to the journal's editorial and scientific boards for their support and dedication, and to the two guest editors of the first issue, Chloé Huvet and Grégoire Tosser, for placing their trust in a digital journal that, until recently, was little more than a scribbled outline on a café napkin in Belleville.

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NOTES

1 Currently known as "Étude des langages musico-sonores à l'écran" ("Study of Musico-Sonic Languages on Screen"), Elmec was co-founded by Emmanuelle Bobée, Hubert Bolduc-Cloutier, Cécile Carayol, Chloé Huvet, Jérémy Michot, and Jérôme Rossi.

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