

## THE AUDIOVISUAL ESSAY COLLECTION

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This collection aims to bring together the audiovisual essays that Adrian Martin and I have been making for more than ten years. All works have been revised for inclusion in this Collection, and many have been technically upgraded and improved.

### VOL. 3: STUDIES IN SOUND, MUSIC AND DANCE

This volume of audiovisual essays, containing 10 pieces ranging from 4 to 13 minutes in length, presents a series of works based on the study of sound, music and dance. Sometimes we explore how particular films engage with these elements; at other times, we concentrate on the relations established between a number of diverse films; in some cases, we explore how an extraneous piece of music incites dialogue with a specific film. A wide range of directors, genres, periods and styles is covered: from romance and thriller to silent and arthouse cinema, from Nicolas Roeg and David Lynch to Chantal Akerman and Stanley Kubrick.

(73 min; 1280x720pp)

#### **ALMOST SINGING, ALMOST DANCING** (2017 / 2023) / 12'45''

*Tomorrow We Move* (2004) is Chantal Akerman's most underrated film. Comedy, sensuality, hard work, mess, cooking, chaos, and above all the constant presence of music, accompanying the movements of everyday life. Like in a musical, everyone is inevitably "enchanted" – but Akerman keeps the relations between music, dance and action loose, mutually autonomous.

#### **THIS IS THE DAY (CHAINED MELODY)** (2021 / 2023) / 5'02''

"This Is the Day" (1983) by British band The The is an often-used song in film and television. It accompanies montages of everyday routine; equally, it can signify momentous change. Using only the parts of the song as it appears on the soundtracks of six examples, we reconstitute the "chained melody" of "This Is the Day".

#### **THE LYNCHIAN TRILOGY I: SHAKE** (2015 / 2023) / 4'10''

Inspired by David Bowie's evocation of a "non-linear hyper-cycle" in his uncompleted 1990s project *Outside*, we look at a micro-poetic series in the various parts of David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* saga made before *The Return* (2018): its system of *motion*. Lynch's characters are animated in a special way: in gestures of *turning* and *shaking*. Are they inside or outside themselves?

#### **THE LYNCHIAN TRILOGY II: WRAPPED IN PLASTICITY** (2017) / 11'11''

Michel Chion declared that the role of Laura Palmer (Sheryl Lee) in the *Twin Peaks* saga "combines all women in one image" – because she functions as a screen for projections of many kinds. Laura is not a "realistic" character in the sense of having one definite, knowable, immutable personality; rather, she is an emblem of the aesthetic *plasticity* so beloved of

Lynch. This audiovisual essay concentrates on incidents involving a audiocassette recording by Laura that appears in the first season (1990) of the TV series.

### **THE LYNCHIAN TRILOGY III: THEN HE KISSED ME (2022) / 4'18''**

“What year is this?” – the final spoken line in *Twin Peaks: The Return* – could be asked of many works by David Lynch. His obsessive time-scrambling is a matter of merrily mixing up diverse cultural associations in his head: lines from pop songs, images from prior films ... It’s what Alain Bergala calls, in the productive lives of filmmakers, *cinema as reminiscence*. Our audiovisual essay is a free-associative grab at one possible constellation of these reminiscences informing *The Return*.

### **REMIX/REMASTER (2022) / 7'33''**

Credit sequences for film and TV have become steadily more elaborate and sophisticated since the 1990s, often becoming mini-films (directed by hired specialists) in their own right. Brian De Palma, however, was already well ahead of this game in 1981. At the very start of *Blow Out*, he daringly arranges key elements from across the entire film with minimalist panache.

### **GUESTS (2016 / 2023) / 6'27''**

Richard Strauss would take a literary source (a story or poem) and then compose a piece of music that, in his mind, matched its flow of events and moods exactly – but he would suppress this point of origin. While watching Stanley Kubrick’s *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999), a song comes insistently to mind, haunting the viewing: it’s Leonard Cohen’s 1979 “The Guests”. In the uncanny mesh between the moods, situations and imagery of the song and those of the film, each work takes up its place as a *guest* of the other.

### **STRANGULATION BLUES (2017 / 2023) / 7'10''**

In Nicolas Roeg’s *Bad Timing* (1980), the central character of Milena (Theresa Russell) is a fascinating screen figure. Bringing together many short fragments, our audiovisual essay evolves like a musical composition, foregrounding a crucial aspect of Russell’s performance: her work with voice. Not the *intention* behind her dialogue, but the precise qualities of *intonation* as she seduces, teases, argues or declares her love. Guided by the intensity of her laughter, the hysterical noises of excitement and joy, the stuttering of sadness. The throat is an overarching motif: Milena’s sonic vitality is directly contrasted with the scopic drive of Alex (Art Garfunkel) to possess and annihilate her being.

### **SWIMMING IN WAGNER (2018 / 2023) / 7'45''**

Three utterly different films: Luis Buñuel’s Surrealist classic, *L’Âge d’or* (1930); Jean Negulesco’s Hollywood melodrama *Humoresque* (1946); and João César Monteiro’s unclassifiably personal fantasy, *A Comédia de Deus* (1995). But all three films feature, in key, climactic sequences, the same piece of music: a well-known, grandly romantic theme from *Tristan and Isolde* by Richard Wagner. By interweaving these three sequences – and their starkly divergent ways of stylising the act of bodily performance – we explore “oceanic” variations on love and death, eroticism and abandon.

### **ROLL & ROCK (2020 / 2023) / 4'55''**

Steve McQueen's *Lovers Rock* (2020), the second part of his *Small Axe* series, was a cinephilic revelation. Conjuring a house party in 1980 for London's Black community, it wheels through many moods, interactions and sensations with great stylistic verve and freedom. Our audiovisual essay recalls what may well be prime influences on McQueen: similar moments and motifs in films by Claire Denis.