

# THE GERMAN EXPRESSIONIST FILM *THE GOLEM* (1920): STUDY OF THE MUSIC SOUNDTRACK BY ALJOSCHA ZIMMERMANN\*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

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As it approaches its centenary, *The Golem* (*Der Golem, wie er in die Welt Kam*, Paul Wegener and Carl Boese, 1920) continues to be considered a masterpiece of German Expressionist cinema by film historians and art critics alike. Although an abundance of research has been produced over the past century from different disciplinary perspectives on the films of this period, the number of contributions related to the study of their music is rather limited, especially when it comes to research focusing on the analysis of film soundtracks and, specifically, on studies of the scores for films produced during the Weimar Republic. The reasons for this are related primarily to contextual factors of conservation (the deterioration of film stock, the disappearance of sequences due to constant re-editing, etc.) and production. In the era of the silent film there was no technological possibility of incorporating synchronised

sound coupled to the visuals, although many films in this period did have their own musical scores. At a film's premiere the music was performed live in the theatre itself, fulfilling both expressive and structural functions in support of the images. Film screenings were enhanced by music *in situ* (with a symphony orchestra, string quartet or just a piano), adapted perfectly to the movement of the images and either establishing a relationship of dependence between the two (synchronous articulation) or flowing independently of the visuals (asynchronous articulation). This has resulted in a wide variety of conclusions drawn in reference to the combined analysis of music and image (Fraile, 2007: 527-538). Over time, many original scores were misplaced and ended up disappearing, hindering musicological studies of these films. But added to all these obstacles, in the area of audiovisual research, is the factor of the structural dependence that exists in the study of sound and music in relation to the image. In view of all of the

above, a contribution like the one presented here seems fitting as we approach the centenary of the period in question.

Historians like Eisner (1996: 21-32) and Mistry (1974: 38-39) locate the origin of Expressionist cinema with *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (*Das Kabinett des Doktor Caligari*, Robert Wiene, 1919). However, other scholars point to the existence of an earlier stage prior to the First World War (Kracauer, 1985: 34-40), with four films: *The Student of Prague* (*Der Student von Prag*, Stellan Rye and Paul Wegener, 1913), *The Other* (*Der Andere*, Max Mack, 1913), *The Golem* (*Der Golem*, Paul Wegener and Henrik Galeen, 1914), and *Homunculus* (Otto Rippert, 1916). Two of these productions were co-directed by Wegener and it was from that time that he enjoyed a productive career as a filmmaker, actor and scriptwriter.

On the subject of the golem, Wegener made three films. In the first, shot in 1914 and now lost (Kracauer, 1985: 37-38), he took the ancient medieval Czech legend of Rabbi Judah Loew, who created a giant creature to defend the Jews against anti-Semitic attacks, combined with the event of the discovery of the Golem in the Josefov district, the Jewish quarter of Prague. A few years later, at the height of the war, Wegener and Rochus Gliese co-directed *Der Golem und die Tänzerin* [*The Golem and the Dancing Girl*, 1917], a film that moves away from the original Jewish legend to tell the story of an actor (Paul) who disguises himself as a golem in order to get close to his love-interest (Jela), an actress fascinated with the clay monster, and once inside her house the disguise gives rise to some wild mix-ups in the purest light comedy style; no copies of the full feature film exist and it is also classified as lost (Chavete, 2006: 39). After the First World War, Wegener, together with Carl Bose, directed another golem film that has survived to the present day: *The Golem* (*Der Golem, wie er in die Welt kam*, 1920), in which he returns to the original Jewish legend, but this time with special emphasis on the magic ritual of giving life to a hu-

man statue of clay created by a rabbi to protect the people of Prague's Jewish quarter (Kracauer, 1985: 110). Later on, other films exploring the Jewish myth would appear (Cuéllar Alejandro, 1997: 24), such as *Le Golem* [*The Golem*] (Julien Duvivier, 1936) and *Golem* (Piotr Szulkin, 1979).

Wegener's filmography shows influences of the Expressionist movement that respond to an aesthetic feeling of the period associated with a specifically Germanic thematic tradition. While the political context of the time - the situation of decline after the war, social inequality, political instability - had an influence on the sensibility of the German people, new avant-garde movements emerged as revolutionary mechanisms against the system and against naturalist realism (Chavete, 2006: 39-45). Together with the fantastic themes present in his films (the concept of the double, the duality of being, fate as an omen) are cultural elements that reference literature (fantasy, the Gothic novel), German Romanticism (*Sturm und Drang*), and art (Expressionism, Neo-Gothicism), as well as the chamber theatre of Max Reinhardt and the *Deutsches Theater*, both of which served as sources for the lighting techniques (Eisner, 1996: 50) that Wegener used in his films.

With reference to *The Golem*, in addition to the director's own reflections on cinematographic and lighting techniques in his work (Eisner, 1996: 42), there are studies from a range of different disciplinary perspectives, including film history (Gubern, 1992; Hueso, 1998), art (Cuéllar Alejandro, 1997; Kurtz, 1986; Staehlin, 1978), architecture (Galmarés, 2010; Spiro, 2013), psychosociology (Kracauer, 1985), textual analysis and discourse theory (Sánchez-Biosca, 1985; 1990), while from a musical perspective there are studies that make generic reference to the role played by music in the films of the European Expressionist period (Chion, 1997: 59-62; Colón, Infante and Lombardo, 1997: 31-37; Güller, 2010: 85-88).

The first studies of film music appeared in the mid-twentieth century with the work of Ador-

no and Eisler (1947), who viewed music as an essential element of cinematic practice. This was followed by a wide range of specialist studies (Hacquard, 1959; Chion, 1982; Buhler, Flynn and Neumeyer, 2000; Powrie and Stilwell, 2006; etc.; in Spain a pioneer in this field was Ruiz de Luna, 1960) making significant contributions in historical, theoretical and methodological terms. Thus, from a historical-contextual perspective there have been studies that examine different musical compositions and composers of importance in the process of creating film soundtracks (Lack, 1999), as well as more specifically historical studies of the functions of music in early cinema, in connection with other performing arts (Arce, 2012: 25). These are contributions that are conceptual in nature, some of which focus on the delimitation of basic elements (Lluis i Falcó, 2005: 150) like the musical soundtrack (as applied to the visuals) and film music (created for the film but with parallel consumption), while others are more precise, addressing the treatment of more specific concepts like musical accompaniment for cinema, whether made specifically for the film or pre-existing (Latham, 2008: 1001). On the other hand, there are studies that focus on the identity of sound itself within the film (Martínez and Mateo, 2012: 121) and others that address the wide variety of uses and functions of music in the filmic narrative (Valls and Padrol, 1986; Xalabarder, 2006: 155). There are also contributions that consider more technical aspects related to music-image synchronisation and the structural-rhythmic-aesthetic function of music in films (Nieto, 2003). Yet others are more theoretical, identifying the prominence of Baroque, Classical and Romantic composers in film (Chion, 1997). Some studies consider the use of classical music as film music for expressive, imitative or emotive purposes (Olarte, 2004: 109-126; 2008: 71-84), and there are overviews that group together more general thematic questions related to musical creation in the soundtrack (Olarte, 2005). A few academic articles are notable

for their reflections on studies of music in cinema, through the analysis of the overlapping of different musical functions and approaches to the issue arising from film music analysis itself (Fraile, 2007: 527-538), as well as the analysis of the aesthetic music-image relationship when screened together (Torelló, 2015).

However, there are no studies dealing specifically with the music soundtrack for the film *The Golem*. In this case, this is because Hans Landsberger's original score used at the film's premiere on October 29<sup>th</sup> 1920 has disappeared without a trace. The surviving film reel was fully restored eighty years after its original production by the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation with footage from the Museum of Modern Art, Film-museum in Munich, Gosfilmofond in Moscow and Cineteca Italiana in Milan (Parril, 2006: 165). For the occasion, the composer Aljoscha Zimmermann was commissioned to create a new musical soundtrack.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The film *The Golem* (1920) has been chosen for study because it is considered by film critics and historians even today to be a valuable work of German Expressionist cinema, while the choice of Zimmermann's composition lies in the fact that his musical soundtrack was created especially for the fully restored and authorised version of the film produced by the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation (2000). Aljoscha Zimmermann's music is the object of study in this research, which is centred on the music as a narrative element of the filmic story, analysing the score in synergy with the other visual elements of the film. It therefore constitutes an original contribution to the field, in view of the fact that there are no music or film studies on the topic with the approach offered here (table 1).

The approach used is the case study method, which has a long history as a research method in

Table I. Technical/artistic/content/context datasheet for *The Golem*

<b>Title</b>	Der Golem, wie er in die Welt Kam	<b>Year</b>	1920	<b>Country</b>	Germany	<b>Première</b>	29/10/1920	<b>Duration</b>	86'	
<b>Title (English)</b>	The Golem	<b>Director</b>	Paul Wegener, Carl Boese		<b>Production</b>	Paul Davidson		<b>Script</b>	Henrik Galeen, Paul Wegener	
<b>Cinematography</b>	Karl Freund, Guido Seeber		<b>Set Design</b>	Hans Poelzig, Rudolf Belling, Marlene Moeschke			<b>Genre</b>	Fantasy-Horror		
<b>Main Cast</b>	Paul Wegener (The Golem), Albert Steinrück (Rabbi Loew), Lyda Salmonova (Miriam), Ernst Deutsch (Rabbi Famulus), Hans Stürm (Rabbi Jehuda), Max Kronert (Servant), Otto Gebühr (Emperor Rudolf II), Lothar Müthel (Florian), Loni Nest (Girl), Carl Ebert (Temple Servant)									
<b>Version</b>	Wegener made three: <i>Der Golem</i> (1914) and <i>Der Golem und die Tanzerin</i> (1917), both lost; and <i>Der Golem, wie er in die Welt Kam</i> (1920).									
<b>Synopsis</b>	Rabbi Loew foresees disaster for the Jewish ghetto. For protection he creates a giant clay statue (Golem), which he brings to life in a magic ritual. Emperor Rudolf II decrees the expulsion of the Jews and sends the Knight Florian to inform the rabbi. He meets the rabbi's daughter, Miriam, and they fall in love, although the rabbi's servant is also in love with her. The Golem destroys the palace and saves the Jews from expulsion, but rebels against its creator and the rabbi removes the magic word in the star on its chest. His servant puts it back on and orders the Golem to kill Florian, which it does and also sets fire to the rabbi's house. As it flees the city, some little girls remove the magic star from its heart and the Golem dies.									
<b>Context</b>	Historical (after WWI). Political (Weimar Republic)				Cultural: Bauhaus School (W. Gropius). Cinematic (1919-24)					
<b>Influences</b>	Chamber Theatre (Max Reinhardt) Lighting style ( <i>Deutsches Theater</i> )			Romanticism ( <i>Sturm und Drang</i> )		Fantastic literature (Gustav Meyrink references the golem)			Artistic style (Expressionism, Neo-Gothic)	
<b>Music</b>	Hans Landsberger (original score, now lost), Aljoscha Zimmermann (authorised restored version) Other composers (Karl-Ernst Sasse in 1977 and Black Francis in 2008)									
<b>Restoration</b>	2000. Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Stiftung, Museum of Modern Art, Filmmuseum (Munich), Gosfilmofond (Moscow), Cineteca Italiana (Milan)									

Prepared by authors

the social sciences (Simons, 2011) deemed appropriate for exploring topics with innovative approaches. For the purposes of conducting a structural analysis of the music (Riemann, 1928) as a narrative element in the film (Lluis i Falcó, 1995; Chion, 1997), and in view of the complexity of the object of study, our study will be supported by other qualitative methods drawing from the latest trends in musicological analysis (Kassabian, 2001) in relation to film soundtracks. An in-depth analysis is offered of stylistic-aesthetic resources of the cinematographic image (shot, frames, angles, camera movements, lighting, special effects, sound sources, props), elements of the music track (melody, harmony, timbre, motifs), instrumentation in the composition (strings, piano), and influences of musical styles (folk, klezmer, Yiddish) in its creation.

### **3. ZIMMERMANN'S MUSIC IN THE GOLEM**

Although the original film reel of the 1920 version has been preserved, Hans Landsberger's original score used for the première has been lost. In more

recent times, in addition to the score by Aljoscha Zimmermann (2000), other compositions have been written in different musical styles (such as a classical piece by German composer Karl-Ernst Sasse in 1977, and a free version by the American songwriter Black Francis for the San Francisco International Film Festival in 2008).

Although he was of Lithuanian origin (born in Riga in 1944), Zimmermann lived much of his life in Germany, until his death in Munich in 2009. A musician and professor known for his compositions for restorations of films from the silent era, Zimmerman's work includes scores for productions by Chaplin, Eisenstein, Keaton, Lang, Lubitsch, Murnau, Pabst, and others (Román et al., 2014: 153), although he also composed arrangements for ballet and musical theatre. Over the course of his career, he maintained close ties with the Filmmuseum in Munich (Auditorium Parco della Musica di Roma, 2009: 32), where he composed more than 400 scores for orchestras and chamber groups, becoming a major figure on the music scene of the 1980s.

One of the main features of his compositions is the frequent combination in the soundtrack of classical elements with modern and popular elements, referencing a wide variety of genres (theatre music, revue, *chanson*, jazz, and ballet), earning him a reputation as a highly eclectic composer (Gradinger, 2004).

In the soundtrack to *The Golem*, since much of the action is set in Prague's Jewish ghetto, Zimmermann opted for a composition with folk music and *klezmer* influences. His score avoids referencing an Expressionist musical style (Sadie, 1995; Alsina and Sesé, 1997; Morgan, 1999), which would have been the most logical option given the original cultural and historical context of the film and the aesthetic movement that inspired it. Instead, the composer chose to create a distinctive score that highlights one indispensable element: melody (Mancuso, 2000). As it develops, it gives a presence to the different characters in the filmic narrative, depicts the different social groups in the story and represents their situations and actions with a result that stands as evidence of the importance of the music in the construction of the characters (Neumeyer and Buhler, 2001). The musical thematic composition and the instrumentation act as a *leitmotiv* (Chion, 1997) for the character and the context, vesting them with a sonic and visual reference and identity.

Zimmermann's proposal poses the challenge of bringing the music into complete synergy with each and every element presented in the images. The different elements of musical language produced by the instruments (strings and piano) interpret the identities of the characters, the dense atmosphere of the film, the elaborate props, the expressiveness of the clay sculptural sets and the Neo-Gothic scenery (Cuéllar Alejandro, 1997: 18-19) of an architectural landscape that conveys a sense of mystery and secrecy.

Zimmermann's score is written for a piano trio (violin, cello and piano), an instrumental trio that has been widely used in the history of music

and that in many cases presents motifs typical of dance in the form taken (solo [idea], *tutti* [development], and accompaniment [stable rhythmic patterns]). Thus, the introduction of the instruments in the solo form presents the action, while the *tuttis* and accompaniments act as a guiding thread (Gauldin, 2009: 492). The solo instrument introduces the main theme, made up of one or more motifs, which will be repeated throughout the film in its original form or modulated by the different instruments of the trio.

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### ZIMMERMAN'S SCORE IS WRITTEN FOR A PIANO TRIO (VIOLIN, CELLO AND PIANO)

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Music plays a primordial role in the Jewish world, which is why in *The Golem* its importance is underscored to reflect the isolation suffered by European Jewish communities in the ghettos, contributing to the development of the Yiddish culture and the evolution of vocal music (Szalay, 2007: 36). Zimmermann draws on this diverse mystical-philosophical universe and effectively fills his composition with references to voice, sound and song in the relationship between God and Man. In this way he takes up elements of Jewish music, *klezmer* and Yiddish song, as the musical expression of these communities of Eastern Europe, a society of immense religious fervour inspired by the melodies and chants of the synagogue (Coen and Toso, 2009). Music formed part of the Jewish socio-religious sphere, with ornamental elements that helped to express and evoke the profound spirituality of prayer and closeness to God (Strom, 2002: 190). It is a varied, popular repertoire filled with powerful rhythms and unusual intonations, including the occasional use of secular melodies in the liturgy (Roten, 2002: 70-76), resulting in a rich stylistic variety that brings together Jewish and non-Jewish

vocal and instrumental melodic elements, with metric structures and in free time.

The composition for *The Golem* uses melodic and rhythmic figurations typical of folk music, recognisable for their expressive features, improvisational turns and musical ornaments (acoustic effects) that imitate the human voice, laughter, sobs, moans and sighs. The music integrates these sound effects, absorbing and emulating them and generating a soundscape (Schafer, 1994: 33ss) of concealment and darkness. In the filmic narrative, the image is the spectator's visual focus while the music becomes the aural focus (Coelho, 2015), contributing emotive-expressive meaning to the image (Jakobson, 1981) and vesting the narration with value (Chion, 1993).

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**RABBI LOEW IS REPRESENTED BY THE CELLO, THE GOLEM BY THE PIANO, AND THE CROWD AND THE LITTLE GIRLS BY THE VIOLIN**

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The instrumentation is notable for its use of chromaticism, dissonance and melodies imitative of dialogue, expressed in a conversation between cello and violin in the scene in Rabbi Loew's laboratory when he tries to give life to the Golem. Expressive melodies give the score greater tension and mystery, setting the scene for the arrival by stealth of the Knight Florian, searching for his beloved Miriam (the rabbi's daughter) under cover of night so as not to be seen, with an atmosphere of chiaroscuro and shadows characteristic of Expressionist lighting.

The music has a driving rhythm on the piano that supports this movement in *staccato*,<sup>1</sup> producing tension, accompanied by a lively melody on the violin with a light and carefree quality. It also provides expressive force in the lower registers of the instruments, while eliciting curiosity and uncertainty in the higher registers and making

masterful use of silences to create tension: like the rhetorical five-second musical silence (Xalabarder, 2006: 66) in the scene where a little girl suddenly kills the Golem by pulling the star off its chest, striking the spectator with a sense of terror and shock. But the instrumental ensemble also presents the different roles played by the characters in the filmic narrative: Rabbi Loew represented by the cello, the Golem by the piano, and the crowd and the little girls by the violin.

As the three instruments join together in time with the visual elements, the sonic density, volume, and register also increase, creating a *crescendo* to bring out the extremes in the characteristic sounds of each instrument and elicit sensations that support the visuals. The musical soundtrack supports the image, giving it density and narrative consistency (Aumont and Marie, 1990). Thus, in the scene where the palace roof falls in on the crowd, the chaos is not only perceived visually with the atmosphere that pervades the scene - with a change in the frame from a pink to a greenish tint - but also with the music, which intensifies the drama of the moment.

The score features scales characteristic of Jewish liturgical music (Phrygian scale), a mode typical of flamenco and evocative of this style. These are present precisely in the traditional theme of a highly symbolic scene that ends the film, with a sonic background that accompanies the moment when the lifeless body of the Golem is carried into the ghetto.

The music engages deftly in an interpretation of the visuals to bring out everything from the main theme of each scene to the mood and feelings of the characters, the atmosphere of the setting and the development of the situations. In this way, the instrumental ensemble identifies the different stories told, and when it reflects an important aspect of the action - such as the monster's death or the Rabbi's prayer - the appearance of musical motifs has a playful effect that contradicts the action itself. Scenes with movement

- when Florian runs through the streets looking for Miriam in the dark of night so as not to be discovered - are matched with driving rhythms accompanied by light and carefree melodies. On the other hand, in scenes of chaos - like the collapse of the palace roof when the court sees the Wandering Jew - the music speeds up with rhythmic patterns that evoke stress and anxiety, cultivating different motifs and repeating them to bring them a climax.

#### **4. MUSICAL STUDY OF THE FILM**

Due to limitations of space, we have chosen to analyse three sequences of great narrative-aesthetic-symbolic importance according to historians, although they were also chosen for the diversity of their musical treatment, which serves to offer a more enriching perspective of the soundtrack created by Zimmermann. The excerpts are: *The Invocation* (28 min. 12 s. - 34 min. 4 s.); *Projection on the Palace Walls* (51 min. 45 s. - 56 min. 48 s.); and *Death of the Golem* (1 h. 20 min. 2 s. - 1 h. 24 min. 36 s.). In the study we analyse structural elements (melody, harmony, timbre, motifs) and stylistic aspects of the visuals (shot, framing, angles, camera movements, special effects, sound sources), and we reference the instrumentation used in the composition and the influences of musical styles in its creation.<sup>2</sup>

#### **EXCERPT 1: THE INVOCATION**

This is a scene that is notable for its striking musical-visual expressiveness. The invocation of the spirits to give life to the Golem takes place in the laboratory of Rabbi Loew, a learned man of astrology who, to save his people from misfortune, must give life to a clay statue that he himself has created. This is possibly the most important scene in the film, as the rabbi needs to find the magic word that must be spoken to give life to lifeless matter. The interest in the action fluctuates be-

tween what we see (the visual) and what we wait to hear (giving importance to the aural), so that the key moment is not found in the image but in the word, which is vested with grandeur by the music.

The scene begins after a fade to black, with a hand in close-up opening an ancient book with instructions for the creation of the Golem and an intertitle with diegetic text: "Golem was made by a wizard. He is brought to life by speaking the code through the amulet he wears on his chest. The symbol is called Schem." While the rabbi searches his books for the answer, under the watchful gaze of his faithful servant, the scene is enlivened by melodies influenced by traditional Jewish and klezmer music, the latter being a secular style produced by a religious society.

The cello begins the scene with a solo, sketching a melody in a low *cantabile* register<sup>3</sup> played very expressively, as if it were a lamentation. Musically, it is based on a motif that is repeated progressively and a repetitive rhythm that vests the image with more movement and tension. Using an idea based on ornaments, the composer develops the whole musical discourse (figure 1) with a driving rhythm of accompaniment on piano and violin. Especially notable are the chromatics and augmented fourth intervals.<sup>4</sup> We then hear a dissonance between two strings, in which the imitative presence of the violin is made evident as it echoes the heartrending phrase with which the cello began the scene. The violin takes improvisational turns based on a harmony characteristic of klezmer music. The instruments take on qualitatively spiritual tones and imitate features of the human voice and the emotions (laughter, crying), employing "bends"<sup>5</sup> in a low register.

Musically, the themes function as *leitmotifs* and are developed to support the visuals. The interest in the action is supported with different musical registers where the instrument carrying the theme draws us closer to the reality of the image. The music provides expressive force, playing with

contrasts and shifting from low to high registers to capture the spectator's attention (figure 2).

This is followed by a silence when the servant, staring vacantly off-camera, makes a self-questioning gesture. The question is expressed in the form of a cello solo, giving way to the intertitle: "Who will know the magic word?" The rabbi gestures for silence with an index finger, accompanied once again by actual silence in the scene, and he looks up to the sky (off-camera), as if searching there for the answer to the mystery.

Immediately thereafter a melody is played in unison on piano and cello while another intertitle appears: "NERYO MANTJE. The message to give life back to the dead," accompanied by a variation on the musical motif with the cello that opened the scene. Rabbi and servant are doing something forbidden and don't want to be discovered, and thus, the rhythm of the soundtrack turns stealthy. A new intertitle appears: "Lifeless thing, come back to life. He who possesses the Key of Solomon and knows the magic formula can compel Astaroth to return." The piano surprises us with its response to the previous string passage, a motif repeated throughout the scene, over a *tremolo* on violin and cello. It is an instrumental dialogue, with arabesque turns and folk music touches (figure 2).

The scene continues with the cello once again, accompanying a new intertitle ("The hour has come") that marks the exact moment for the invocation of the spirits. The *tremolo* on the strings returns, and the piano motif gains intensity, followed by a violin passage with an ascending scale that accompanies the movement of both characters as they approach the clay statue leaning against the wall. This is followed again by the *tremolo* and the piano melody while the rabbi points to the Golem's heart.

Loew, dressed as a wizard with his wand in hand, is shrouded in darkness as the only source of light comes from a window at the back of the room. As he holds his wand, the tension and the silence are palpable, but when he begins to move

it an enigmatic melody plays on the lower octaves of the piano. Throughout this ceremony the sonic density, volume and register increase through a progression on the lower register of the piano and cello, subsequently joined by the violin.

The scene is imbued with the magic of Expressionist lighting with *chiaroscuros* (*Kammerspiel, Deutsches Theater*), in a blend of light and shadow with pictorial influences of Rembrandt (Eisner 1996: 52; Cuéllar Alejandro, 1997: 19) when the terrified servant embraces the rabbi in a gesture that is accompanied by a *tremolo* on the strings and a piano variation. As the smoke clears we see a shining Star of David (the symbol of Judaism) at the end of the wand and the terrified faces of the two characters, underscored by a bright light that seems to emanate from their own bodies. A dialogue develops between cello and violin to piano accompaniment to highlight the magic of the moment. The servant collapses from exhaustion, an action symbolised by the piano motif, and as the smoke rise to obscure the two figures, a title appears - "Astaroth, Astaroth, appear!"—while the violin plays a descending melody.

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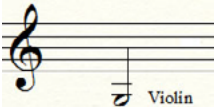
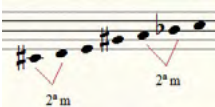
**WE SEE THE FIGURE OF THE GOLEM WHILE THE CELLO BEGINS ANOTHER SOLO, IN AN EFFORT TO HUMANISE THE MONSTER**

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Through the clouds of smoke we see the figure of the Golem while the cello begins another solo, in an effort to humanise the monster. The violin joins in, and then finally the piano as Astaroth makes its appearance. The violin hits a high note while we see the intertitle: "Tell me the magic word." After a brief silence, a low piano repetition is joined by cello and violin. The apparition breathes out a large puff of smoke, like a shaft of light that forms diegetic text over a black background with the word: "Aemaet."



Table 2. Musical analysis of *Invocation* sequence

<p><b>Still frames</b></p>				
<p><b>Instrument</b></p>	<p>Violin, Cello, Piano</p>			
<p><b>Figure 1</b></p>	<p>Cello</p> 	<p>Piano</p> 	<p>Violin</p> 	<p>Augmented 4th interval</p> 
<p><b>Musical development</b></p>	<p><i>Cantabile</i> melody, chromatics, improvisational turns, harmony typical of klezmer music, <i>leitmotifs</i></p>			
<p><b>Figure 2</b></p>	<p>Violin Low Register</p> 	<p>Scale</p> 		
<p><b>Musical development</b></p>	<p>Instrumental dialogue, arabesque turns, piano variations, cello-violin dialogues, double theme in octaves</p>			
<p><b>Composition</b></p>	<p>Folk music, klezmer music influences</p>			

The scene is flooded once more with the magic of Wegenerian illumination, marked by Reinhardt Theatre light effects (Eisner 1996: 50), with the shimmering radiance of a succession of rays of light to underscore the supernatural nature of the moment. The rabbi and his servant faint and disappear in the smoke while the music increases in dynamics and intensity, in a move from *piano* to *forte*. The musical force of the action falls on the cello rather than the violin, the more melodic instrument. It is an ascending melody, characterised by the repetition and imitation of motifs on all the instruments and at different levels. The compact sound of the ensemble facilitates the melodic development, often duplicating the theme in different octaves, without losing the importance of the augmented second. The notes repeated over motifs in the accompaniment facilitate the melodic direction of the main theme. The combination

of motifs and declamations with driving rhythms brings an end to the theme on the fifth of the fundamental, after a minor second flourish. In this scene, the image is vested with grandeur thanks to the solemnity of the music (table 2).

**Excerpt 2: Projection on the palace walls**

This is the scene of the Jewish exodus projected onto the walls of the palace. Present in the scene are Emperor Rudolf II, his subjects, Rabbi Lowe and the Golem. Musically, the violin opens the scene while an intertitle appears that reads: “What is it that you bring me? Strange magician, show me more of your arts.” This thematic motif develops in the style of a declamation, with certain reminiscences of folk music, then leading to a fermata on the piano with a big chord that functions as the introduction to the subsequent violin melody (figure 3).

We then see the intertitle: “Emperor, I will show you my arts, but let no one laugh or say a single word; otherwise it will bring a bad omen. I desire the best for my people.” In the conversation between the two men the rabbi lifts his gaze upwards several times (off-camera), as if he were speaking of something divine. The violin uses its full register as an expressive tool, culminating with chromatics in the upper register. Festive rhythmic elements are combined with long melodies, creating contrasts in an ascending direction *in crescendo*, creating tension. In the second section, the piano develops the melodic motif accompanied by a rhythmic string pattern (figure 4).

In a cross cut, the Knight Florian is looking for Miriam, crouching in dark, narrow lanes so as not to be discovered. The change of scene is accompanied by a change of music, with a driving rhythm on the piano relying on *staccato*, serving as the base for a light and carefree melody on the violin (figure 4).

A black cat (a popular symbol of a bad omen) appears on the scene when Miriam opens the door to her beloved. Inside the house, the lovers unleash their passion in time to an expressive cello melody. The visuals take us back to the palace, a move accompanied by a melodic bridge, while the young couple goes to the bedroom and the servant sleeps unaware. Zimmermann brings out the extremes in the characteristic sounds of each instrument of the ensemble to elicit sensations that support the image. Once again in the palace, the piano develops a monotonous and constant series of motifs in quavers, in a conjunct motion and a rising melody. The cello picks up a motif present throughout the film, used to represent the rabbi. It is an overture to the projection, where this sonic and instrumental background serves to capture the spectator’s attention (figure 5).

The projection begins with a *tremolo* on the strings that accompanies the exodus of the Jews from Israel. The piano repeats the cello melody and makes use of the pentatonic scale (Eastern music)

and arabesques. The accentuated *tremolos* produce more tension, and during the instrumental dialogue the cello is in the foreground once again.

On the screen, the whole court watches keenly until the appearance of the Wandering Jew, represented again by the cello. The sight of this amusing character causes laughter in the crowd; this reaction unleashes his rage, and he walks towards them until his image disappears into a thick cloud of smoke, represented by piano and cello in ascending progression and finally with the violin joining in, expanding the register and creating greater tension.

The chaos is expressed not only through the frame’s change of hue - from pink to green tones - but also through the music: sharp accents on piano and strings in unison and patterns that are insistently repeated as the visuals show the ceiling of the palace collapsing. To represent the confusion, anxiety and commotion, piano and violin perform a frenzied motif. As the roof falls in, the theme picks up the pace with a rhythmic scheme based on semiquavers.

In desperation some in the crowd leap from palace windows; musically this is illustrated with a piano and violin progression, highlighting a theme in octaves on the piano towards an inconclusive cadence that underscores a bigger focus on the main character. Cello and violin in unison add to this motif (figure 6).

Two accents bring a forceful end to this chaotic and confusing atmosphere. When the Emperor begs the rabbi for help, we see the intertitle “Save me and I will pardon your people” while we hear a cello melody whose notes symbolise hope and reason. The rabbi calls to the Golem for help and the monster obeys. Its robotic movements are imitated by the piano, followed by a descending progression on all three instruments. The monster raises its enormous arms and manages to hold up the ceiling, saving all those present. This coincides with the end of the scene and the melodic motif reflects the ebbing of the chaos and the calm that follows it (table 3).

**Excerpt 3: Death of the Golem**



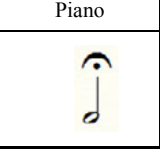

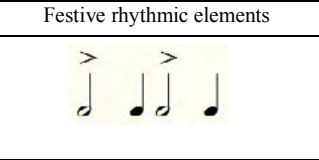
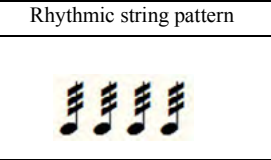
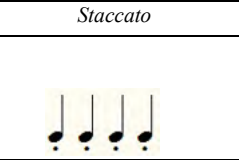

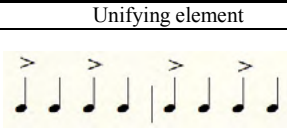
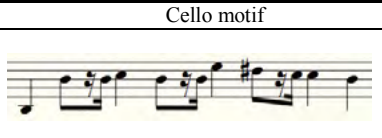
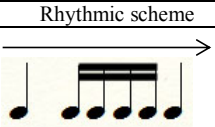
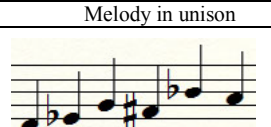
This is an emblematic sequence in which the Golem rebels and leaves the Jewish ghetto, setting fire to the city and fleeing after kidnapping the rabbi's daughter. Zimmermann surrounds the scene with a violin melody (solo), and then develops the motifs. Following this initial display of main material, the scene is accompanied by a dynamic driving rhythm in *staccato* that contrasts with long melodies marked by the repetition of intervals (figure 7).

This accompaniment coincides with the arrival of the Golem at the gates of the ghetto, where

it attempts to break out. An enigmatic melody accompanies the monster's nervous look, clearly fearing discovery. A cello theme begins over a sonic background that resembles a dialogue between instruments, with the piano adding to the *staccato* of strings.

After a brief call from the cello, two little girls appear dressed in white trying to touch the statue of the Virgin Mary where they are laying flowers. A change in musical style, with the *staccato* passing to the melody, represents the games of the group of girls. It is a light melody that express-

Table 3. Musical analysis of *Projection on the palace walls* sequence

Still frames			
Instrument	Violin, Cello, Piano		
Figure 3	Violin 	Piano 	Violin 
Musical development	Chromatics, festive rhythmic elements, driving <i>staccato</i> rhythm, rising progressions		
Figure 4	Festive rhythmic elements 	Rhythmic string pattern 	<i>Staccato</i> 
Musical development	Pentatonic scale, Eastern music, arabesques, theme in octaves towards inconclusive cadence		
Figure 5	Violin sound 	Unifying element 	Cello motif 
Musical development	Extreme sounds, repetition of motifs and rhythms, conjunct motion and ascending melody		
Figure 6	Rhythmic scheme 	Melody in unison 	
Musical development	Frenzied motifs, rhythmic schemes that speed up, theme in octaves, melodies in unison		
Composition	Folk music, klezmer music influences		

es tranquillity and innocence; however, to spark interest a rhythmic pattern is introduced that speeds up the pace of the scene, thereby creating a new combination to support the melodies.

The Golem manages to open the gate and get out, while the terrified girls look on. Its appearance is accompanied by a melody on the violin representing shock and fear of the unknown (figure 8).

The intervals are evocative of folk music. We then hear a *cantabile* cello and violin melody that breaks with the previous style. The connection of motifs is not broken with the changes in tempo, but instead vests the action with movement, presenting motifs typical of dance.

One of the girls who has not fled looks curiously at the Golem and offers it an apple. The gesture is accompanied by dissonant passages that warn of danger. It is a scene with a certain emotional charge for the spectator due to the allusion to the Biblical tale of Adam and Eve, cast out of Paradise for eating from the Tree of Knowledge (Samperio, 2000: 12). A girl dressed in white (symbol of purity) with an angelic face offers forbidden fruit to a creature of clay. The Golem takes her in its arms to the sound of a melody of violin and *pizzicato* on the cello, showing its more gentle and innocent side. The girl fondles the star on its chest and finally pulls it off. Musically, the rhythm becomes progressively slower (*ritardando*). The Golem drops dead in a scene enveloped in absolute silence.

A violin melody then begins, accompanied by a cello *pizzicato* while the girl runs around the Golem's lifeless body, throws the star to the ground and escapes (figure 9). The melody changes in character, representing the commotion of the Jewish crowd searching for the Golem. All three instruments can be heard, and behind a piano pedal the cello comes in again evoking the rabbi, the guide of the people who calls for calm. Once again, an ascending progression ends in a high register.

A solo cello begins again, sounding like a call for attention. The little girl comes back, accompanied by the other girls, to the body of the Golem. A warm violin melody, with piano pedal and cello, envelopes the scene. The violin simulates the voice of the girl, who shows the Star of David that she took from the Golem; she plays with it and throws it into the air (a gesture of freedom) while a festive melody begins to be played on the violin (figure 9).









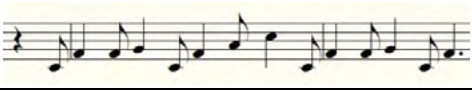

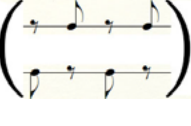
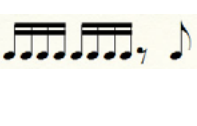
A man warns Loew that the Golem has destroyed the gate out of the city and they set off to the accompaniment of the trio. When the Jews arrive at the gate the little girls flee in fright. The presence of the rabbi is accompanied by a violin melody that represents the Jewish community. Its musicality resembles weeping that stops on a dissonant high note while everyone stands frozen staring at the Golem's lifeless body. Two seconds of silence accentuate the tension of the scene, and then the initial melody resumes. The rabbi raises his hands to the sky and gives thanks to Jehovah for saving the people once more. Everyone kneels while a typically traditional folk music theme begins.

A joyful melody accompanies the carrying of the Golem's body into the ghetto. When everyone has entered, the gates are closed and the entrance to the city is protected with the Star of David (in a superimposed effect with a variable texture that begins with a fade-in and ends with an iris shot, over a shot that ends with a wipe and fade to black), a symbolically charged element in the film. The scene ends with all three instruments playing an offbeat rhythm together (figure 10).

## **5. EPILOGUE**

*The Golem* is considered a masterpiece of German Expressionist cinema. Among the diverse range of studies conducted on the film, there is a conspicuous absence of contributions related to its music, an absence explained by the loss of Hans

Table 4. Musical analysis of *Golem's Death* sequence

<p>Still frames</p>			
<p>Instrument</p>	<p>Violin, Cello, and Piano</p>		
<p>Figure 7</p>	<p>Violin melody</p> 	<p>Driving rhythm</p> 	<p>Interval repetition</p> 
<p>Musical development</p>	<p>Driving rhythm, long melodies, repetition of intervals, folk music, tempo changes</p>		
<p>Figure 8</p>	<p>Rhythmic pattern</p> 	<p>Head-motif</p> 	<p>Interval</p> 
<p>Musical development</p>	<p>Staccato on strings, light melody, rhythmic pattern vesting scene with speed, development of motifs and intervals</p>		
<p>Figure 9</p>	<p>Violin melody 1</p> 	<p>Violin melody 2</p> 	
<p>Musical development</p>	<p>Pizzicato, leitmotiv on cello representing rabbi, festive melodies on violin</p>		
<p>Figure 10</p>	<p>Folk melody motifs</p> 	<p>Rhythmic pattern</p> 	<p>Final offbeat rhythm</p> 
<p>Musical development Composition</p>	<p>Folk melody, stable rhythmic pattern, typical traditional theme, final offbeat rhythm in tutti Folk music, klezmer music influences</p>		

Landsberger’s original score. In this century there have been attempts to reconstruct the composition with different musical styles (Karl-Ernst Sasse, Black Francis, etc.), but none of the versions make use of Expressionist music in keeping with the style of the period when the film was made. The film was fully restored by the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation in 2000, with music by the composer Aljoscha Zimmermann.

Zimmerman’s score breaks with the Romantic and Post-Romantic musical tradition to offer a soundtrack based on Jewish folk music, klezmer and Yiddish song, although there are also some reminiscences of Eastern music. It is an astute proposal in its quest to recreate the thematic content

of the film, the identity of the characters and the atmosphere of the ghetto. The composition uses melodic and rhythmic figurations typical of folk music (referencing religious refrains), improvisational turns and imitative musical ornaments (human voice, laughter, sobs, moans and sighs).

The composition uses an orchestration for piano trio (violin, cello, and piano), perfect for describing different settings (Jewish ghetto, Emperor’s palace, Miriam’s house) and characters (Loew, Golem, the Emperor, Florian, servant, little girls). The violin and cello imitate turns of the human voice, while the piano serves to provide the driving rhythm that vests the scenes with dynamism and tension. The instrumental ensemble also pre-

sents the different roles played by the characters in the filmic narrative (Rabbi Loew [represented by the cello], the Golem [piano], the little girls [violin]).

The *leitmotifs* contribute musical depth to the film, assigning an identity not only to individual characters but also to different social groups (folk music [Jewish community and more formal melodies [palace]). The instrumentation is notable for the use of chromatics, dissonance, and melodies imitative of dialogues, expressed in conversations between the cello and violin, the instruments that best imitate the human voice and around which most of the action is developed. On the other hand, the piano creates tension through its repetitive chords, while the grandeur of the silences in the soundtrack, as a rhetorical element, create anxiety and uncertainty.

It is a musical composition in perfect harmony with the visuals, engaging deftly in their interpretation to draw out everything from the main theme to the moods and feelings of the characters, the atmosphere of the settings and the development of the situations.

Zimmermann's work stands out for its brilliant adaptation of a musical style that post-dates Expressionism in a film from the 1920s, without losing its originality, effectively expressing the aesthetic of the cinema of the Weimar Republic in a modern score.

## NOTES

\* This research article is part of a doctoral thesis completed in the context of the doctoral research project: "Cine y artes plásticas, el expresionismo / narrativa cinematográfica" (Film and Visual Arts, Expressionism/Filmic Narrative") (Dr Anna Amorós Pons, PI, R&D Group CS2), Doctoral Program in Advertising, Public Relations and Audiovisual Communication (Universidade de Vigo, 2004-2010), with scientific outputs (MAS, bachelor's theses, doctoral theses and articles).

1 A form of musical articulation that signifies that the original value of the note it accompanies is cut short.

- 2 Running time of scenes: DVD format (2002). Valladolid: Divisa Home Video. The quotations of all intertitles in the article are translations of the Spanish intertitles from this DVD.
- 3 A form of performing a score in which the human voice is imitated as if singing.
- 4 A musical interval that covers three whole tones.
- 5 A technique that consists in playing a string and holding it down while playing a higher note.

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## THE GERMAN EXPRESSIONIST FILM *THE GOLEM* (1920): STUDY OF THE MUSIC SOUNDTRACK BY ALJOSCHA ZIMMERMANN

### Abstract

This article outlines the results of a study of the musical soundtrack composed by Aljoscha Zimmermann in 2000 for the fully restored version of the film *The Golem* (1920). Using a methodology based on the qualitative case study approach and on the latest trends in musicological analysis for film soundtracks, this musical analysis of the film examines the structural elements, stylistic features, musical genres and string instrumentation used in the score. Zimmermann's composition has clear influences of Jewish music, klezmer and Yiddish song. This article constitutes an original contribution in view of the absence of previous research on the use of this composition in the fields of film studies and music studies.

### Key words

Cinema; Music; German Expressionist cinema; *The Golem*; Aljoscha Zimmermann; Jewish music and klezmer; Yiddish Song.

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## EL FILM EXPRESIONISTA ALEMÁN *EL GOLEM* (1920): ESTUDIO DE LA BANDA SONORA MUSICAL DE ALJOSCHA ZIMMERMANN

### Resumen

Este artículo aborda el estudio de la banda sonora musical del compositor Aljoscha Zimmermann, realizada en el año 2000, para la versión íntegra restaurada del film *El Golem* (1920). Con una metodología basada en la técnica cualitativa del estudio de caso y las últimas tendencias en el análisis musicológico relacionadas con las bandas sonoras en cine, se realiza un estudio musical del film que evidencia los elementos estructurales, recursos estilísticos, corrientes musicales e instrumentación de cuerda empleada en la partitura. La creación de Zimmermann tiene influencias de música judía, *klezmer* y canción *yiddish*. La innovación del texto radica en no encontrarse contribuciones específicas en el ámbito de los estudios fílmicos ni musicales sobre el empleo de esta composición.

### Palabras clave

Cine; música; cine expresionista alemán; *El Golem*; Aljoscha Zimmermann; música judía y *klezmer*; canción *yiddish*.

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