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Abstract:

The paper analyses the score made of music and the one made of music silence in Ang Lee's 2005 drama *Brokeback Mountain*, and tries to prove how skillful, precisely and emotionally navigated use of both, can accentuate all the important ideas of a film. The way we experience this story, and how strong we react to it, is partly due to its sound, musical and ambient, and the lack of it. The sharp contrast between sound and music, and the way it is used to accentuate important emotional relationships, as well as the atmosphere in this film, is as important for the storyline and the emotional engagement of the audience, as the script and the way Lee directed the film. This film features musical silence as an important tool which allows the superb dialog to unfold, giving the narrative space it deserves, and defines the atmosphere and mood of the film, as much as the music score. We notice each occurrence of every music

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theme and each one has a more profound meaning, when it appears after a long period of silence. The melancholic and intimate music score of this film is congruent with the narrative, providing all the emotional and cinematic cues, and determining the atmosphere and the mood of the film, but unlike the big and lush orchestra scores, which define classical Hollywood mainstream cinema, Santaolalla's intimate music introduces a new and different approach to film scoring. But what stands out in the soundtrack is the effective use of musical silence. The absence of musical sound in some of the key moments of the narrative proves to be essential to this film and emotions it produces.

Keywords: Film music, sound, silence, *Brokeback Mountain*, Gustavo Santaolalla, Ang Lee

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Sažetak:

Rad analizira partituru sačinjenu od glazbe i onu napravljenu od glazbene tišine u filmu *Brokeback Mountain* Anga Leeja iz 2005. te pokušava dokazati kako vješto i emocionalno snažno korištenje zvuka i tišine može naglasiti sve važne ideje filma. Za način na koji doživljavamo ovu priču i koliko snažno reagiramo na nju, dijelom su zaslužni glazbeni i ambijentalni zvuci filma, ali i njihov izostanak. Oštar kontrast između zvuka i glazbe te način na koji se koristi za naglašavanje važnih emocionalnih odnosa, kao i atmosfera u ovom filmu, jednako je važan za priču i emocionalni angažman publike, kao i scenarij i način na koji je Lee režirao film. Ovaj film sadrži glazbenu tišinu kao važan alat koji omogućuje odvijanje vrhunskog dijaloga, dajući narativni prostor koji zaslužuje te definira atmosferu i raspoloženje filma, kao i glazbenu partituru. Svako pojavljivanje glazbene teme jasno primjećujemo

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i svaka ima dublje značenje, pogotovo kada se pojavi nakon dugog razdoblja šutnje. Melankolična i intimna glazbena partitura ovog filma usklađena je s pripovijedanjem, pružajući sve emocionalne i filmske naznake te određujući atmosferu i raspoloženje filma. No, za razliku od velikih i bujnih orkestarskih partitura, koje definiraju klasičan hollywoodski mainstream film, intimna glazba Santaolalle uvodi novi i drugačiji pristup filmskim partiturama: ono što se ističe u *soundtracku* upravo je učinkovita uporaba glazbene tišine. Odsutnost glazbenog zvuka u nekim od ključnih trenutaka naracije pokazuje se bitnim za ovaj film i emocije koje stvara.

Ključne riječi: Filmska glazba, zvuk, tišina, *Brokeback Mountain*, Gustavo Santaolalla, Ang Lee

THE POWER OF SILENCE AND SOUND IN *BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN*

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Brokeback Mountain, directed by Ang Lee in 2005, has been labelled a lot of things by film critics, such as “the first gay love story with A-list Hollywood stars”,¹ “potential camp classic”,² “film about love and the cost of lying”.³ But the most often attribute ascribed to this film, pinned by the mass media, “a gay cowboy movie”. does not sit well with Roger Ebert who calls it “a cruel simplification”.⁴ Phillip French, the British critic, states that “the film is a major contribution to our understanding of the western genre. To call it a gay movie would be, if not necessarily misleading, a wholly inadequate way of describing the way it strikes a straight audience”.⁵

Putting aside all the critiques, what this film certainly offers is a different and fresh take on an epic American Western love narrative, bringing to life a short story written by Annie Proulx.

1 David Ansen, “The Heart is a Lonely Hunter”. *Newsweek*, December 12, 2005, <https://www.newsweek.com/heart-lonely-hunter-114021>.

2 Ann Hornaday, “Lost in Love’s Rocky Terrain”. *Washington Post*, December 16, 2005, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/12/15/AR2005121502059.html>.

3 Amy Biancolli, “Brokeback Mountain”. *Houston Chronicle*, December 16, 2005, <https://www.chron.com/entertainment/movies/article/Brokeback-Mountain-1510394.php>.

4 Roger Ebert, “Love on a Lonesome Trail”. *Movie Reviews and Ratings* (blog), December 15, 2005, <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/brokeback-mountain-2005>.

5 Phillip French, “Brokeback Mountain”. *Guardian* (Manchester), January 8, 2006, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2006/jan/08/review.features>.



Fig. 1. Still from a movie *Brokeback Mountain*, directed by Ang Lee (2005). Main characters are played by Heath Ledger and Jake Gyllenhaal (screenshot, fair use)

Director Lee uses different elements of the film-narrative system, most of all cinematography, the “thematic use of colour”,⁶ directing and acting, to portray a story about two gay men, conditioned by their social upbringing and deeply rooted homophobia. The story is set in the conservative American West, defined by “macho” and traditional values. All of these elements of the film’s narrative system have their role and function in accentuating the several underlayers of the story. But when it comes to music and sound in this film, it is not only the music score and the soundtrack that influence the audience’s emotional reaction to the film’s narrative. Here, silence is used both as a structural and a compositional device as well, reinforcing the contrast between life and death, freedom and repression of the self, truth and lies. The way the film’s music composer Gustavo Santaolalla and Lee use the sound—silence building blocks is consistent, thought through and effective. This clever dialogue between sound and silence establishes clear boundaries between contrasting emotional states of the characters, as well as the important and non-important stages and events of their lives, as they develop. Lee also uses cinematography and camera to accentuate the difference between freedom and repression. *Brokeback Mountain* is filmed in such a way that the dullness and constriction of the economically depressed towns of

⁶ Rodney Stenning Edgecombe, “The Formal Design of ‘Brokeback Mountain’”. *Film Criticism* 31, no. 3 (Spring 2007): 3.

the rural West are contrasted to the endless freedom of the mountains, which become the safe haven for these men, and the only place where they are free to love each other and be who they really are. This opposition of immense physical landscape on one hand and the intimate story on the other is common for most of Lee's films (*Sense and Sensibility*, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, *Life of Pi*). Here, in *Brokeback Mountain* Lee goes one step further, using the music score written for the film and silence that engulfs it, in similar ways. Both music and silence are allowed space to convey meaning easily and influence the audience without restriction.

Meaning of Silence in Film

Throughout diverse art forms, silence has had different meaning. Zofia Lissa points out that “moments of silence represent for the spectator a continuation of the psychological condition of the dramatic personae” in drama.⁷ Silence offers the audience time to digest and understand characters and their emotional and psychological states. Opera similarly manipulates usage of silence and music as film. There, muting music will convey the emotion and the message intended for the audience, whether it is “the silence of expectation, horror, surprise, embarrassment, and also the overpowering silence of death”.⁸ When it comes to film music, silence, as a part of the film experience, was not conceivable until the 1950s and 1960s, even though it was a completely viable element of the cinematic experience at the very beginning of silent films. Altman states that films were projected with no organized sound as accompaniment during the years of early development of film (c. 1895–c. 1913).⁹ That dramatically changed in the 1930s and 1940s Golden Era of Hollywood and the invention of music departments and the increased production of movies, when an eclectic group of composers, like Erich Wolfgang Korngold, Max Steiner, and Alfred Newman “solidified the forms and styles to be used by film composers for quite some time to come”.¹⁰ This

⁷ Zofia Lissa, “Aesthetic Functions of Silence and Rests in Music”. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 22, no. 4 (Summer 1964): 444.

⁸ Lissa, “Aesthetic Functions of Silence and Rests in Music”. 444.

⁹ Rick Altman, *Silent Film Sound* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 193-201.

¹⁰ Roy M. Prendergast, *Film Music: A Neglected Art* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), 38.



Fig. 2. In *Brokeback Mountain* the dullness of the economically depressed towns of the rural West is contrasted to the freedom of the mountains and plains (screenshot, fair use)

was a time when important music conventions were established. They would become irreplaceable in the Hollywood music score years later. Silence did not appear as a valid construction block until the 1950s when composers, such as John Cage, and film authors, like Bergman or Antonioni, started experimenting and acknowledging the immense role of silence. They used it not only as a psychological tool that can influence the perception and emotional state of the listener, but also as a useful tool that would navigate audience's understanding of certain points in the story. Today, Hollywood mainstream films tend to use silence in a couple of different ways. Irena Paulus analyses the role of silence in narrative films, stating that "film silence can function almost as well as film music".¹¹ We can use silence as effectively as music to point to a certain element on and off the screen or augment the meaning of a scene or a sequence. If we abruptly introduce silence after a long period of music, it will immediately and effectively draw the audience's attention to an exact event when silence appeared. Another, though drastic example of the effect of silence is the complete lack of nondiegetic music in a film. For example, Miroslav Terzić's psychological drama *Stitches*,¹² which tells a true story of Ana, who is in search of her son, who she believes

¹¹ Irena Paulus, *Teorija filmske glazbe kroz teoriju filmskog zvuka* (Zagreb: Hrvatski filmski savez, 2012), 103.

¹² Miroslav Terzić, dir. *Stitches*. 2019; Belgrade: Filmski centar Srbije, 2019. Theatrical.



Fig. 3. In the *Brokeback Mountain* soundscape the non-diegetic music score is free from structural confinements of the visual media (screenshot, fair use)

was stolen from her after birth, is completely devoid of music. This, in return, creates an impression that the story unfolding is real. Tension feels unmasked and raw, which builds the unease of the character's obsession to find her son. That was a deliberate decision made by the film's director. Terzić did not want any kind of navigation of the audience's emotional response, by the music score (which in a film represents the element of fictional, irrational), nor any relief from the fact that this was, after all, a true story. If we agree with Kalinak's position that "film music reinforces one meaning out of many possible meanings, anchoring the image to specificity",¹³ then it becomes clear how open an interpretation of the narrative can be without the influence of music in a film. The deliberate lack of music cues throughout *Stitches* leaves the audience interpreting different elements of the narrative in different ways, until the very end. After an hour and 45 minutes of music silence, a song I specifically composed for the end titles appears as an emotional release for the audience and offers the spectator time to reflect on the story. First, it appears in the form of diegetic music played on the radio in the final scene of the film, so it smoothly transitions the audience into the end titles, where the song is featured in all its glory.

13 Kathryn Kalinak, *Film Music: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 18.

Among many examples of films without music, Fritz Lang's film *M*¹⁴ uses the silence to intensify the tension and horror of the scenes, making it feel real, as does Sidney Lumet's *Dog Day Afternoon*.¹⁵ One of the many roles of music in film is to help the audience transport itself from reality into fiction, without noticing it or feeling manipulated. When the decision has been made, usually by the director, to leave the audience with the image alone throughout the whole film, the relief of knowing that it is a fictional story does not arrive, making the whole experience less cinematic, and more real and raw.

The music of *Brokeback Mountain*

The *Brokeback Mountain* soundscape is an example of a functional symbiosis of music and silence. First of all, the non-diegetic music (music score) is free from structural confinements of the visual media, as Santaolalla composed it before the film was even shot¹⁶ and consists of separate tracks which are used as music themes and cues during the film. The music is congruent with the narrative, providing all the emotional and cinematic cues, and determining the atmosphere and the mood of the film. But unlike the big and lush orchestra scores, which usually define classical Hollywood mainstream cinema (and *Brokeback Mountain*, for all its purposes, is a Hollywood mainstream film), here Santaolalla introduces a different approach to film scoring, a more intimate and secluded atmosphere, where music, sound and silence all have equal responsibility in forming the audience's emotional reply to the narrative. All of these elements form a parallel layer to the storyline, without any kind of aggressive influence or manipulative guidance.

The soundtrack demonstrates a skilful use of both non-diegetic music (music which is not a part of the diegesis/fiction and is aimed at the audience, influencing its response to the narrative) and diegetic music (music which is a part of the diegesis/narrative and one which can be

14 Fritz Lang, dir. *M*. 1931; Germany: Nero-Film AG / Foremco Pictures Corp., 1931. Theatrical.

15 Sidney Lumet, dir. *Dog Day Afternoon*. 1975; Burbank, CA: Warner Bros. Pictures, 1975. Theatrical.

16 Gustavo Santaolalla, "Music Scores That Move Us". Master Class at LA Film Fest, moderated by Elvis Mitchell, Curator, Film Independent at LACMA, July, 2013; Host, KCRW's The Treatment, 5:45, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqjdeVUXK0c>.



Fig. 4. The instrumentation, melody and harmony of the music score, as well as the songs, refer to American country, bluegrass and folk music tradition (screenshot, fair use)

heard by the characters in the film). These are positioned with tact and moderation throughout the movie.

The original score (non-diegetic music) is based on five music tracks and a few short atmospheric pieces, while the soundtrack (diegetic music) consists of country and bluegrass songs, some written and co-written for the film by Santaolalla himself, featuring artists like Teddy Thompson and Rufus Wainwright, Willie Nelson, Jackie Green, Mary McBride and Emmylou Harris.

Throughout the original score, we enjoy the sound of only a few instruments—the fiddle, acoustic/pedal steel guitar, and bass guitar, all deeply rooted in the American Western music tradition, and used as strong cultural musical codes. The instrumentation, melody and harmony of the music score, as well as the songs used in the soundtrack, refer to American country, bluegrass and folk music tradition, explaining the social background of the characters and determining the spatial and temporal setting of the film.

Thematic material used for the original score is divided into five main cues—Opening, *Brokeback Mountain* 1, 2, 3, and Wings, all played on an acoustic guitar, some supported by bass and pedal steel guitar, one by fiddle and a couple by strings. The melodies and harmonies are simple, usually with a melodic range of an octave. They are repetitive, structured as a two-part, verse-chorus melody, so it is easy to conclude that Santaolalla is first and foremost a songwriter, and then a film com-

poser. His approach to writing themes for a film score is not that different from writing a song. The cues appear throughout the film with the same arrangement and instrumentation, so there is no real development of thematic material. They are mixed and produced using a lot of compression and reverb, accentuating the space and passing of time, and phasing and delay on the pedal steel guitar, transforming it at times into an atmospheric sound used in layers. The score is suggestive in its simplicity, with an uncompromised focus, based on simple but effective thematic material, constructed and formed in such a way that it is impossible not to consciously hear and acknowledge its every appearance. But the music never breaks the spell of fiction and works entirely for the narrative, becoming entwined with the characters and atmosphere of the story. One of Santaolalla's strong points, which comes across in *Brokeback Mountain*, as well as other movies he scored, is his "distinctive style of guitar playing".¹⁷ According to Kulezić-Wilson, who focuses on the musical/rhythmic use of silence in Iñárritu's *Babel*,¹⁸ also scored by Santaolalla, the nature of his composing is, among other things, the reason silence has "musical value".¹⁹ Lee and Santaolalla use a similar treatment of music/silence in *Brokeback Mountain*.

Functional Unity of Music and Silence

Silence can have an equally powerful influence on the audience as music. Gorbman reflects that "the effect of the absence of musical sound must never be underestimated".²⁰ Musical silence in *Brokeback Mountain* allows the sparse dialog to unfold, making it more real and even documentary like. On the one hand, music has a more profound meaning, when it appears after a long period of musical silence. On the other hand, silence which appears between authentic and poignant music cues has a greater significance than silence which appears between generic music events. So, the meaning of musical silence and the way it will influence

¹⁷ Danijela Kulezic-Wilson, "The Music of Film Silence". *Music and the Moving Image* 2, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 6.

¹⁸ Alejandro G. Iñárritu, dir. *Babel*. 2006; Los Angeles, CA: Paramount Pictures, 2006. Theatrical.

¹⁹ Kulezic-Wilson, "The Music of Film Silence". 6.

²⁰ Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press; London: BFI Publishing, 1987): 18.

the audience's perception of the narrative and its emotional response, depends on its position in the score – what are the sound structures that come before and after, how long it lasts and how does it interplay with all the other elements of the film system.

From the start of the film, Lee sets the tone, by introducing the opening wide shot of the mountains in the early morning, with the title of the film sprang across the screen, accompanied only by diegetic musical silence,²¹ the sound of wind and road, with a noticeable absence of music. Gorbman states that “in scenes which conventionally demand background music, diegetic sound with no music can function effectively to make the diegetic space more immediate, more palpable”.²² The fact that Lee opens the movie with this shot accompanied only by diegetic sound, makes the immensity, wilderness and freedom of the mountains, the nature, which is such an important element of this film, real, tangible. It is a strong statement, because the mountains are the only sanctuary for these men, and their idyllic, though temporary life, where they are free to be themselves. That is why the sounds of nature are so subtly foregrounded and underlined in the soundscape of this film.

Ang Lee leaves the spectators with this shot long enough for them to feel the emotional and physical solitude, which the characters in the film feel throughout their lives. Ambient sound within a particular environment can “mean or say more than words or music could ever hope to say and become a kind of music unto itself”.²³ The sound of nature becomes a score of its own, helping the audience immerse deep into the solitude and isolation of the mountains, wind, grass and streams, but most of all the loneliness of people who are not allowed to be who they are. This opening shot, with its silence, sets the tone for the story to unfold.

Classical Hollywood cinema had rare occasions when the main titles were silent, producing an effect of “starkness, bareness or mystery”.²⁴ On the other hand, contemporary Hollywood mainstream films often begin not only without music, but credits as well, leaving them for the end of the

21 Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies*, 18. Gorbman introduces three different kinds of musical silence – diegetic, nondiegetic and structural. Diegetic musical silence refers to the use of diegetic sounds with no background music.

22 Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies*, 18.

23 George Burt, *The Art of Film Music* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1994), 212.

24 Jim Buhler, David Neumeyer, and Rob Deemer, *Hearing the Movies: Music and Sound in Film History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 176.



Fig. 5. The sound of nature in *Brokeback Mountain* becomes a score of its own, helping the audience immerse deep into the solitude and isolation (screenshot, fair use)

experience. Lee positions the main title at the beginning of this film, but it stands naked, absorbing the audience's attention before the narrative unfolds. The absence of credits at the beginning of the movie creates a more real and tangible atmosphere, leaving the spectator undisturbed. Music kept in reserve for a strategic point is "all the more effective when preceded by silence".²⁵ Burt's statement applies to the opening of *Brokeback Mountain* perfectly. After 24 seconds of music silence at the beginning of the film, the first two notes of the "Opening" appear, played *rubato* in repeated sequence on an acoustic guitar, as the main character, Ennis Del Mar, arrives to Signal, Wyoming, in the early hours of the morning. The theme presents itself accompanied by melodic wailing responses from pedal steel guitar.

The sound is so compressed that each note, played with meaning and power, sounds monumental and depicts the wide-open space on the screen. The effect of these notes is augmented precisely because of the silence that preceded it.

The "Opening" theme accompanies not only the first appearance of Ennis Del Mar, his emotional journey and getting close with Jack, but also his breakdown, after their first separation, and their reunion four years later, when Ennis eagerly awaits Jack's arrival. Edgcombe calls

²⁵ Burt, *The Art of Film Music*, 209.

it “the Leitmotif of sexual tension” and analyses its design, concluding that it is built as a subtle cadence, with unexpected resolutions, and “provides a parable of the mountain experience itself”.²⁶ This theme could also be perceived as Ennis’s theme, as it follows his path to love and finding his true self, and is always present when his emotional and psychological state is portrayed.

“Brokeback 1” is the theme of freedom, as it appears every time Ennis and Jack go to the mountains, especially when Jack and Ennis see each other for the very last time, again in the solitude of nature. This time it’s delivered by strings all the way through, giving it a more dramatic sound, and ending with the theme played on a guitar. “Brokeback 2” is a similarly used material, and appears over two montage sequences, combining strings, acoustic and steel pedal guitar, unifying scenes of nature, panoramic views of the mountains and the two men herding sheep. This material is used to convey the atmosphere and establish the setting of the story. “Brokeback 3” addresses the interactions between Ennis and Jack, but also their interactions with their wives and children.

“Wings” is melodically, harmonically and instrumentally the most striking theme, and its first appearance is at the moment when the two men realise they are destined to live their lives by seeing each other only a couple of times a year, out in the cold mountains, far away from civilisation and people. “But there ain’t no reins on this one” is uttered by Ennis, addressing their passionate and profound relationship, admitting to Jack and himself that they are facing a life time of love and loneliness. The theme appears again at the end of the movie with all the instruments playing together, marking the end of the narrative.

The absence of music in several scenes, where one would expect a music cue, is refreshing and powerful. When Ennis and Jack arrive looking for a job, waiting in front of a trailer, on a windy parking lot with the mountain in the distance, there is no dialogue. A perfect place for a music cue, many would argue. But Lee and Santaolalla masterfully use the encompassing sounds of wind and dust, to draw an intimate portrait of these two men and their different characters. The use of diegetic musical silence is effective, and the focus is solely on the two characters and their inability to communicate verbally, making their inadequacies even more real and human.

26 Edgecombe, “The formal design of *Brokeback Mountain*”, 3.



Fig. 6. In *Brokeback Mountain* film composer Gustavo Santaolalla introduces a more intimate and secluded sound atmosphere (screenshot, fair use)

Interestingly, some of the major developments in the narrative, like the first time Ennis and Jack sexually connect at Brokeback, or when Ennis learns of Jack's death, are presented without music. The first of these two events, dramatic, intense, and aggressive, is left with only the diegetic sound of the men breathing, groaning and grabbing each other, and no music, making it raw. This scene is not emotional, it is animal, and Ennis is the one who struggles through, feeling repressed and ashamed. This, again, would be an ideal place for a music cue. But rather than doing what is expected, Lee and Santaolalla leave this first interaction between the two men musically bare, giving the silence and the diegetic sound of the scene a much greater meaning. This approach augments the contrast between a repressed, wild sexual encounter, portrayed in this scene, and complete surrender, portrayed in one that follows shortly.

The next night Ennis surrenders to his emotions and goes to Jack. This time Santaolalla accompanies it with a lyrical, but simple arpeggio melody on the guitar, backed with strings, which appears only here and nowhere else in the film, making it even more significant. The change in Ennis, his letting go, and surrender to his true self is such an important moment in the film, that now it is emphasized by music. The difference between these two scenes and what they convey and represent is skilfully marked by absence/presence of music and silence.

When Ennis finds out about Jack's death, who dies in a brutal way, killed by a homophobic gang, there is little or no music. Ennis receives a return

postcard, the one he sent to Jack about their next trip to the mountains, with “deceased” written on top of it. At that moment, the only sound is a single compressed moan from Ennis. Even now, when his world has collapsed, he still cannot express his sorrow and pain freely, and that is why the delicate music that appears is neutral, not giving away or suggesting any kind of emotion. There is a single atmospheric layer of one note on keyboards, one on the pedal steel, and a bass note played on the acoustic guitar.

The dialogue between him and Jack’s wife Lureen, which follows, is without music, making it authentic, palpable and quite emotionally disturbing. Lureen tells him that Jack has died on a back road, when a tire exploded in his face, while a montage sequence simultaneously portrays a gang of men beating Jack to death.

Gorbman argues that “conventional practice has made an anchor of background music, such that it dictates what the viewer’s response to the images ought to be”.²⁷ That is why Lee offers us the time and space, the freedom to digest this event, understand and feel it in our own way, without any navigation or influence from music. This silence, in this particular scene, is essential for the recap of the story and conclusions made by the audience at the end of the film.

Conclusion

Music in this film is extremely important, whenever it appears it has a strong reason for being there, either to mark the atmosphere or mood, focus our attention to a particular emotion or event, or provide structural unity when used in a montage sequence. It stands as a powerful emotional statement. But it also accelerates our engagement not only with the main characters, their profound love story, but also with the reactions of people from their environment who represent the closed and destructive society, the fear and hatred which still surrounds homosexual relationships in many cultures across the globe. The score made of music and silence in *Brokeback Mountain* proves how skilful use of both can accentuate all the important ideas of a film and create a unique soundscape. The way the audience experiences this story, and how strong it reacts to it, is partly due to its music, where and how it is positioned,

27 Gorbman, *Unheard melodies*, 18.

and the lack of it. The intricate play between music and silence is an example of how one complements the other and how it can occupy the audience's attention and challenge different emotional reactions, but at the same time create space for reflection. Santaolalla's score provides everything the audience needs to react and deeply understands the idea of *Brokeback Mountain*, whether it is through music or silence. This is to show that silence, alongside music, can develop musical, structural and dramatical roles inside the audio-visual system, in creating an authentic soundscape.

Timeline and cue list – original score

- 00:25–01:46 Opening sequence, main title, “Opening” theme appears as Ennis Del Mar approaches Signal, Wyoming
- 08:49–10:15 Jack and Ennis go up Brokeback mountain with the sheep – montage sequence accompanied by “Brokeback 1” music cue
- 12:04–13:13 Montage sequence – up on Brokeback mountain – “Brokeback 2” music cue
- 22:00–22:45 Montage sequence – bonding of the men – “Brokeback 3” music cue
- 23:57–25:19 Getting drunk on Brokeback – “Opening” theme
- 28:47–31:05 Remorse after the first night – atmosphere music
- 31:05–32:55 Finding love on the second night – arpeggio melody on the acoustic guitar
- 41:41–41:54 Ennis breaks down – a fragment of “Opening” theme
- 42:14–43:23 Montage sequence – Ennis bonding with his wife – “Brokeback 3” music cue
- 59:03–59:43 A postcard arrives from Jack – “Opening” music theme
- 01:00:41–01:01:50 Together again after four years – “Opening” music theme
- 01:06:00–01:07:44 Up in the mountains – “Brokeback 1” music cue
- 01:09:55–01:10:27 “They ain’t no reins on this one” – the commencement of the love affair – “Wings” music theme

- 01:10:52–01:11:55 Montage sequence – marriages brake – “Wings” music theme
- 01:13:48–01:14:55 Montage sequence – up on the mountain – “Brokeback 3” music cue
- 01:25:52–01:27:04 Montage sequence – up on the mountain – “Brokeback 2” music cue
- 01:43:28–01:45:26 The last time they see each other – “Brokeback 1” music cue
- 01:47:28–01:47:45 Last postcard – atmosphere music
- 02:01:46–02:03:21 Ennis is all alone – “Wings” music theme

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