The Power Of A Flying Pig: Carl Stalling, Looney Tunes, And America's Need For Escape.

Jordan Virginia Clark
Wayne State University,

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/oa_theses
Part of the Film and Media Studies Commons, and the Music Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/oa_theses/555

This Open Access Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@WayneState. It has been accepted for inclusion in Wayne State University Theses by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@WayneState.
THE POWER OF A FLYING PIG:
CARL STALLING, LOONEY TUNES, AND AMERICA’S NEED FOR AN ESCAPE

by

JORDAN VIRGINIA CLARK

THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

2017

MAJOR: MUSIC

Advisor  Date

4/28/2017
DEDICATION

To my family, may we never stop laughing.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Wayne State University Handbook requires me to name this page “Acknowledgements” but truthfully, it should be titled “THANK YOU!” This note will attempt to acknowledge all of the people that helped, encouraged and supported me through the process of writing this thesis.

First I would like to thank the graduate faculty and my classmates at WSU for their encouragement. I owe many thanks to my advisor Dr. Joshua Duchan for his endless critique, support, and encouragement throughout this entire process. Also, this thesis would likely be double in size if not for Dr. Duchan’s keen ability to remove needless words. Dr. Duchan, thank you for believing in me and helping me carry this project out to completion.

Next, I am thankful to the American Heritage Center for providing anything I requested during my short stay in Wyoming, you were truly a blessing. I would also like to thank Plymouth Canton Cruisers Head Coaches Josh and Z Morgan for their flexibility and understanding as I completed this project, your support has not gone unnoticed and I am very thankful.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, my support system. I wish there were a stronger word than thank you, but sadly there is not one in English! To my friend Ariel, thank you for your encouragement when you listened to me ramble about cartoon music for hours and proofread my many drafts. My Grandma Dale is a champion. Grandma, thank you for taking care of me throughout this long process. I tell everyone that I initially moved to Michigan to take care of you, but you have taken care of me the past few months. To my boyfriend Tony, thank you for your care, kindness, encouragement, and patience over the past eight months. Your patience with me and care for me during the hours I have spent writing and you spent proofreading are above and beyond. Thank you for reading every word, tirelessly listening to my highs and lows, grilling food, hugging me when I cried, and making me laugh, I love you for it. To my sister Casie, your proofreading skills and perspectives were so helpful, thank you for your time, tireless efforts, and joy. Dad, thank you also for proofreading and for encouraging me to go to Wyoming and to step outside of comfort zone. To my mom, your mom-talks of encouragement are like no other, you somehow know exactly what I need to hear and how to make the most of every opportunity, thank you. To my siblings Leigh-Ann, Austin, and Brooke-Lynn, thank you for your humorous texts and stories. Which leads to my final thanks, to all of you, THANK YOU for keeping me laughing. Laughter is truly the gift I am most grateful for, may our laughter never end.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication

Acknowledgements

List of Examples

List of Figures

Introduction

Chapter 1 “Porky in Wackyland”

Chapter 2 “What’s Opera, Doc?”

Chapter 3 “Speaking of the Weather”

Chapter 4 “There They Go-Go-Go”

Conclusion

Appendix A “Caricatures”

Appendix B “Speaking of the Weather”

References

Abstract

Autobiographical Statement
LIST OF EXAMPLES

Chapter 1 Example 1: Rooster Crow sound effect from Carl Stalling’s Document _______17

Chapter 1 Example 2: Stalling’s pay stub for composing the “Mickey Mouse Club Song” in 1932 ___________________________19

Chapter 2 Example 1: Diagram of the five main episodes within “What’s Opera, Doc?” found in Daniel Goldmark’s Tunes for ‘Tones ___________________________32

Chapter 2 Example 2: Form of Symphony for Wind Instruments from Eric Walter White’s book Stravinsky: The Composer and His Work ___________________________33

Chapter 3 Example 1: “Speaking of the Weather” rhythm excerpt ___________________________58

Chapter 3 Example 2: “Summer Nights” excerpt ___________________________60

Chapter 3 Example 3: “With Plenty of Money and You” excerpt ___________________________61

Chapter 3 Example 4: Asia schwam song excerpt ___________________________62

Chapter 3 Example 5: “The Storm” excerpt ___________________________64

Chapter 3 Example 6: Bugle call excerpt ___________________________66

Chapter 3 Example 7: Boulevardier from the Bronx ___________________________67

Chapter 3 Example 8: Minor “A-Hunting We Will Go” ___________________________68

Chapter 3 Example 9: Traditional “A-Hunting We Will Go” ___________________________79

Chapter 3 Example 10: Mexican Dance excerpt ___________________________70

Chapter 4 Example 1: Motive A from Scene 1 ___________________________83

Chapter 4 Example 2: Motive A from Scene 1 ___________________________84

Chapter 4 Example 3: Motive A from Scene 6 ___________________________84

Chapter 4 Example 4: Motive A from Scene 11 ___________________________85

Chapter 4 Example 5: Motive B from Scene 1 ___________________________86
Chapter 4 Example 6: Motive B from Scene 5 ................................................................. 86
Chapter 4 Example 7: Motive B from Scene 7 ................................................................. 87
Chapter 4 Example 8: Motive # .................................................................................... 87
Chapter 4 Example 9: Motive # .................................................................................... 87
Chapter 4 Example 10: Motive # ................................................................................... 87
Chapter 4 Example 11: Motive # .................................................................................. 87
Chapter 4 Example 12: Motive ....................................................................................... 87
Chapter 4 Example 13: Motive C from Scenes 1 and 8 ..................................................... 89
Chapter 4 Example 14: Motive J from Scene 2 ................................................................. 90
Chapter 4 Example 15: Motive J from Scenes 3, 5, and 8 ................................................ 90
Chapter 4 Example 16: Motives K and L from Scene 3 .................................................... 91
Chapter 4 Example 17: Motives K and L from Scene 11 .................................................. 91
Chapter 4 Example 18: Motive N from scene 3 ............................................................. 92
Chapter 4 Example 19: Motive N from scene 11 ............................................................ 92
LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter 2 Figure 1:” Tackety” .................................................................38
Chapter 2 Figure 2: “Goloomb” ..........................................................38
Chapter 2 Figure 3: “oooooooooooooomp” ........................................38
Chapter 2 Figure 4: “poooooooooooooo-o” .........................................38
Chapter 2 Figure 5: Bassoon vs. Harp ...............................................38
Chapter 2 Figure 6: Andante = Abandon .........................................39
Chapter 2 Figure 7: Crescendo vs. Decrescendo ................................39
Chapter 3 Figure 1: Form of “Speaking of the Weather” ......................58
Chapter 4 Figure 1: Form of “There They Go-Go-Go” .......................80
Chapter 4 Figure 2: Moments of Silence .........................................81
Chapter 4 Figure 3: Motive A ...............................................................86
Chapter 4 Figure 4: Motive # ...............................................................87
INTRODUCTION

A rabbit, dressed in a white barber’s coat, is perched on a bald man’s head massaging it to the rhythm of the overture from Gioacchino Rossini’s *Barber of Seville* (1813). As Rossini’s overture builds with each repeated note and half-step, so does the fruit salad the bunny has built atop Elmer Fud’s brow. Many early cartoons utilized classical, popular, and folk music to enliven animations in this way. *Looney Tunes* and *Merrie Melodies* were two series of seven-minute cartoon shorts created from the 1930s through the 1960s by Leon Schlesinger Productions, a branch of Warner Brothers Inc. These brief films helped pave the way for animation accompanied by a soundtrack. Carl Stalling composed the music for these shorts, collaborating with animation directors to weave music and image together to create laughter and provide a psychological and emotional escape for Americans during the Great Depression and beyond.

Stalling became the primary composer for Warner Brothers Animation in 1936. He began playing piano at a young age and enjoyed making people laugh through his music. He is remembered as a “film funner,” one who regardless of the director’s intentions, finds and exploits the comedic potential in all films.¹ Throughout the 1920s Stalling accompanied silent films in theaters in Kansas City, Missouri. During this time he learned how to use the power of music to establish, organize, and manipulate both the emotional level of the story and the feelings of the audience. Stalling took this skill, along with others he acquired through silent film accompaniment, with him when Walt Disney hired him as a composer in 1929. “I really was used to composing for films before I started writing for cartoons,” Stalling said, “I just imagined myself

---

playing for a cartoon in the theater, improvising, and it came easier.”² Later in the same interview he states, “At Warner’s I could use popular songs; they didn’t mind paying for them, as they had their own music publishing firm. At Disney’s, we had to go back to the Nineteenth Century, to classical music, to ‘My Old Kentucky Home.’”³ Thanks to Stalling’s innovations, according to Anne Marie Guzzo, “generations of children have learned classical music through Stalling’s work.”⁴

As animation grew in popularity, Americans struggled under the weight of the Great Depression that followed the 1929 stock market crash. This economic crisis did not stop the Disney brothers from producing animated films. With the help of his older brother Roy, Walt Disney “literally built an entertainment empire on a mouse.”⁵ By 1933 a quarter of the nation was unemployed.⁶ The Great Depression thus brought great hardship that inspired the need for laughter. A 1930s newspaper headline reported a man killing his fiancé because she sold her engagement ring for money to buy food; the next page declared “Comedy pictures will hold sway.

---
³ Ibid., 27.
Producers plan to rout gloom with laughs.”^7 This thesis examines the creation of *Looney Tunes*, and how the powerful pairing of music and animation created a convincing reality and escape for audiences.

An overview of the events that led Leon Schlesinger and Warner Brothers to create *Looney Tunes* will begin chapter 1. This is followed by a brief biography of Carl Stalling, the composer who helped shape these animations. This chapter concludes with a brief analysis of three shorts: “Porky in Wackyland,” “Wabbit Twouble,” and “Wacky Wabbit,” emphasizing the development of *Looney Tunes*.

The analytical process used within chapters three and four is described in chapter two. The first section of this chapter examines how my analysis was influenced by analyses by Daniel Goldmark in *Tunes for ‘Toons: Music and the Hollywood Cartoon* and by Eric Walter White in *Stravinsky a Man and His Works*. This chapter explains how the analyses of two very different types of music influenced the analytical process used in this thesis.

The final two chapters of this thesis contain analyses of two shorts that were produced under Stalling’s musical direction. The first examines “Speaking of the Weather,” released in 1936 and directed by Frank Tashlin. This analysis focuses on Stalling’s use of classical, popular, and folk songs to facilitate an escape. Stalling used an uncommon form of composition by building his scores in blocks, inserting different classical, popular, and folk songs to portray the desired

---

emotion for the animation. These blocks were strung together to form the score. In “Speaking of the Weather” Stalling borrows classical, popular, and folk music with very little original composition.

Chapter 4 analyzes “There They Go-Go-Go,” a 1956 Road Runner-Coyote short to show how Stalling continued to develop his musical block composition style. Even though this short was released well after the end of the Great Depression, the analysis reveals how Stalling and director Chuck Jones collaborated to bring animation to life using musical motives, blocks, and text-painting, ultimately creating an escape for the audience.

All the surviving scores for the music from Looney Tunes shorts are located in the Carl W. Stalling Papers at the American Heritage Center in Laramie, Wyoming. To access these scores, I undertook a trip to Wyoming to conduct archival research. After sorting through over twenty boxes of scores and papers, I discovered that only two complete Looney Tunes scores remain intact, “Raw Raw Rooster” (1956) and “There They Go-Go-Go” (1956). Therefore, the first analysis in Chapter 3 was performed aurally, and all the musical examples represent my own transcriptions of Ariel Fullmer and Dale Thomas. Chapter 4 contains musical excerpts from Carl Stalling’s original score.

Philosophers, psychologists, psychomusicologists, and film theorists offer a variety of theories as to why and how a film can create an emotional and fictional reality into which viewers can escape. However, they generally agree that the combination of image and music creates a

---

perceived reality. Stuart Fischoff, founder and senior editor of the *Journal of Media Psychology*, defines films in this way:

> Films are generally fantasies. And fantasies by definition defy logic and reality. They conspire with the imagination. Music works upon the unconscious mind. Consequently, music works well with film because it is an ally of illusion.\(^9\)

Thus, the *Looney Tunes* shorts could be viewed as fantasies of the imagination. Additionally, semiotician and French film theorist Christian Metz defines the indication of a fictional reality as, “a reality that comes only from within us, from the projections and identifications that are mixed in with our perception of the film.”\(^10\)

Film philosopher Thomas Wartenberg explains in his article “Philosophy of Film”, that there are two theories of philosophy illuminating why people interpret film as a fictional reality and how that creates an escape: *Simulation theory* and *Thought theory*. *Simulation theory* operates under the belief that film evokes emotion within people, but that the emotion it creates is not actionable or offline. For example, a person may get angry because of something he or she sees in a film, but this anger will not cause him or her to start a fight. *Thought theory* exists under the impression that human emotion is stimulated off of thought alone. An example of this is if a person becomes angry when someone told them that an individual was unjustly punished. This person did not see it happen, but was told that it happened, therefore reacting to it. Wartenberg explains that both of these theories have strengths and weaknesses, and both struggle to define themselves

---


completely.\textsuperscript{11} In either case, the \textit{Loony Tunes} shorts analyzed in this thesis are considered with the understanding that film can create a fictional reality for people, which provides an emotional escape. A lengthy literature review of additional sources within the subjects of film theory, music psychology, and media psychology can be found in chapter two.

While relatively young, the field of film music research is developing. Two prominent film scholars whose work was consulted for this thesis are Daniel Goldmark and Charles Berg. Goldmark works at Case Western Reserve University as the head of popular music studies and is a current expert in the fields of cartoon music and its history.\textsuperscript{12} Berg is a film historian and expert in the field of accompanying silent film. The following paragraphs will discuss the most useful sources found in the field of animated music. This is a thesis about animated film and therefore this section will primarily focus on the sources about animated film and its music.

When beginning any kind of research in the field of animated music it is impossible to avoid the rich literature authored by Daniel Goldmark. Goldmark devoted much of his research to music from animated film. He is very kind and open to answering questions about his research. He was helpful in locating a score at the American Heritage Center in Laramie, Wyoming. Goldmark’s first publication was a dissertation titled \textit{Happy Harmonies: Music and the Hollywood Animated Cartoon} which he wrote while at the University of California in Los Angeles, where he received both his M.A. and Ph.D. in musicology. This was followed by his monograph \textit{Tunes for

\footnotesize

‘Toons: Music and the Hollywood Cartoon. Goldmark has co-edited The Cartoon Music Book and Beyond the Soundtrack, along with many others. All three of these publications were important to the inspiration and development of this paper.

Tunes for ‘Toons: Music and the Hollywood Cartoon contains an excellent overview of the history of Looney Tunes, a brief biography on Carl Stalling, and a musical analysis of a Looney Tunes short. Goldmark’s extensive bibliography and notes were used as a starting point for my research. His biography of Stalling is well crafted, combining the information from articles, letters, interviews, and personal notes. Goldmark’s writings on the music from animated shorts are written in a scholarly and knowledgeable fashion of an accomplished musician. He relates the motives that Stalling uses to the leitmotifs of Wagner, something that had been frowned upon by music scholars of the past. Hanns Eisler and Theodore Adorno wrote Composing Film Music (1994) where they blatantly disapproved of music from animated shorts. They state, “here [film music scores] is no place for [the leitmotif] in the motion picture, which seeks to depict reality. Here the function of the leitmotif has been reduced to the level of a musical lackey, who announces his master with an important air even though the eminent personage is clearly recognizable to everyone. The effective technique of the past thus becomes a mere duplication, ineffective and

---


14 Goldmark, Tunes for 'Toons, viii.
uneconomical.”¹⁵ Goldmark acknowledges that the musical score accompanying a feature film should not contain leitmotifs in the same way, but that it is appropriate for animated shorts. When Goldmark describes music from animation, he states in the introduction of *The Cartoon Music Book*, “composers like Carl Stalling...did more than musically narrate each episode they scored; they added speed to the downward falls, pain to the anvils on the head, amorous impact to the love stricken, and swing to every last dance.”¹⁶

In *The Cartoon Music Book* Goldmark edits an interview between Michael Barrier and composer Carl Stalling. This interview led me to a series of interviews that Barrier conducted with directors Frank Tashlin, Hugh Harman, Bob Clampett, and Chuck Jones. Each of these interviews gave a different insight into the creation of *Looney Tunes* and how it operated. These primary sources gave irreplaceable accounts of the process of creating a short, the working conditions at Leon Schlesinger Productions, and what it was like to work with Carl Stalling.

Chuck Jones has two autobiographies, *Chuck Amuck* and *Chuck Reducks*, as well as one biography by Hugh Kenner titled *A Flurry of Drawings*.¹⁷ Each of these biographical works focuses primarily on his career of 40 years at *Looney Tunes*. Jones’s distinct writing style is honest and reveals the working conditions of the employees at Warner Brothers. Jones recounts that the


conditions were bad (termites in the building), the pay was horrible, and they all knew the job may be temporary. Chuck Jones was with the Warner Brothers Animation from the beginning (1930) until they closed in 1963. He colorfully recalls how he created specific characters and how he could not have done it without his team. Maurice Noble verifies all of Jones’s stories and memories in his biography *Stepping into the Picture* (2008) by Robert J. McKinnon. Noble’s and Jones’s accounts of working for Warner Brothers are very detailed and were important in writing chapters one and four.

The pivotal moment for the research of this paper was the expedition to Laramie, Wyoming. The American Heritage Center in Laramie contains the Carl W. Stalling papers. This is the only remaining collection of Stalling’s works and contains details of every aspect of his life. The collection was donated by Stalling’s wife after his death, in commemoration of his great life. Stalling was likely known as a hoarder, as he did not get rid of anything. There are two boxes full of correspondences between Stalling and his associates. These letters reveal Stalling’s kind, laid back demeanor, which all the previously mentioned directors stated as well. The collection contains ten boxes of music; sheet music, books, binders, and pamphlets. When opening these boxes, it seemed like Stalling never got rid of any scrap of music because he may find a use for it. The most rewarding boxes to rifle through are boxes 2a and 2b as both boxes contain Stalling’s original work. In these boxes, I located the score for “There They Go-Go-Go.” Sorting through these documents not only supplied a score to analyze, but also gave a glimpse into Stalling’s compositional process.

This research is valuable because it demonstrates how music and animation created an escape for Americans. This information can be used to help other artists, film and musical alike, achieve similar goals. Moreover, understanding the success of the music from *Looney Tunes*
during the hardest years of the Great Depression can help provide a beneficial model of creativity and resourcefulness. Finally, this research is important because it proves that the creators of *Looney Tunes* achieved their goal. In *Chuck Amuck*, Jones explains: “Believability. That is what we were striving for… that, after all, is the dictionary definition and meaning of the word ‘animation’: to invoke life.”\(^{18}\)

CHAPTER 1: “PORKY IN WACKYLAND”

This chapter contains a brief history of Looney Tunes. The historical events have been carefully chosen, as they pertain to Looney Tunes, and are divided into three main sections. The first section is a history of the creation of Looney Tunes before Carl Stalling became the director of music. The second section contains a brief biography of Stalling up to the beginning of his work with Warner Brothers. Finally, the third section contains a brief history of Stalling with Looney Tunes, along with an analysis of three shorts: “Porky in Wackyland,” “Wabbit Twouble,” and “Wacky Wabbit.” This history will give context to the analysis presented in chapters 3 and 4.

The Creation of Looney Tunes, before Carl Stalling.

Silent animation in the early 1920s was developed by Walt Disney and his brother Roy at Laugh-O-Gram Films, Inc. in Kansas City, MO. Animators Hugh Harman and Rudolph Ising collaborated with Stalling and the Disney brothers during this period. Financially the Disney brothers struggled to keep Laugh-O-Gram Films, Inc. out of debt. In an interview Ising shared that Walt avoided a debt collector for weeks. When the collector came, and asked for “Walt Dinsey [sic]” Walt said there was no one there by that name. However, by 1923 the small animation production company went bankrupt.

---


2 Ibid., 40

3 Ibid.
The Disney brothers moved to Los Angeles, CA hoping to find more success. Walt had to borrow money from friend and composer Carl Stalling to make this move. Animators Harman, Ising, and Freling continued with Disney in Los Angeles, but stepped away when producer George Winkler “promised greener pastures with his own formation of a new studio.” Winkler’s studio lasted less than a year, leaving the animators unemployed.

Hugh Harman and Rudolf Ising were a groundbreaking animation team, helping create many of Disney’s first characters including “Alice” and “Oswald the Lucky Rabbit.” Harman and Ising created their own form of animation in the character of “Bosko,” one that is attributed to the creation of Mickey Mouse. In 1928 they put a copyright on “Bosko” and produced their own short film, “Bosko the Talk-Ink Kid,” hoping to gain the attention of a producer.

“Bosko the Talk-Ink Kid” successfully caught the eye of Leon Schlesinger, a businessman, who had managed some risky but successful business deals for Warner Brothers in the late 1920s. Schlesinger saw quality in Harman’s and Ising’s work, recommending that Warner Brothers open an animation studio. Warner Brothers had recently acquired investments in multiple music

---


7 Maltin, *Of Mice and Magic*, 220.

8 Ibid.
publishing houses including Witmark, Remick, DeSylva, Brown and Henderson, and Harms to name a few. Warner Brothers agreed to Schlesinger’s proposal on one condition: “Each cartoon must contain one full chorus of a song from a Warners’ feature film,” thus creating the Warner Brothers animation studios. Harman and Ising, accompanied by their team, were the founding animators in these studios.

In May of 1930 the first *Looney Tunes*, “Sinking in the Bathtub,” premiered, featuring the famous Bosko. This eight-minute short features “Singing in the Bathtub,” a song made popular in the Warner Brothers 1929 feature “The Show of Shows.” The plot begins with Bosko taking a bath before visiting his girlfriend Honey. He goes to Honey’s house, and then they depart in Bosko’s car for a day of adventure. The animation has some simple gags, but the biggest attribute to this film is its music.

The music in “Sinking in the Bathtub” seems simple compared to the work of Stalling, but for 1930 it was groundbreaking. Harman and Ising’s team worked meticulously to coordinate the storyline of the animation with the musical accompaniment. “Tip Toe Through the Tulips,” “Turkey in the Straw,” “I’m Forever Blowing Bubbles,” and “Singing in the Bathtub” fill the sound track with popular variety. In the short, Bosko devises instruments from his surroundings, pairing the music and motion. In the first scene Bosko begins strumming the water from his faucet like a guitar. Later, Honey’s deck transforms into a xylophone, and lily pads become a marimba.

Bosko caught the attention of many people, and Warner Brothers’ animations became competition for Disney. Warner Brothers was so impressed that they commissioned another series

---

9 Maltin, *Of Mice and Magic*, 220.

10 Ibid., 221.
of cartoons, the *Merrie Melodies*. However, Harman and Ising began to create formulas for their cartoons to fit the available funding and meet the higher demand. Harman requested more funding for *Looney Tunes*, but Schlesinger did not approve it. In Chuck Jones’s biography, he explained Schlesinger’s budget as, “the cash would flow from Warners to Schlesinger, who would pass no more than what he had back to Harman and Ising, while reserving the rest for necessities such as his yacht.”¹¹ This disagreement caused Harman and Ising to leave Warner Brothers in 1933, taking Bosko and their team with them.¹²

During this time of transition in Warner Brothers animation, it created opportunities for up and coming animators and writers, as Schlesinger had no one left. As Steve Schneider puts it, “the rights to the phrases ‘Looney Tunes,’ ‘Merrie Melodies,’ and ‘That’s all, folks!’ but with no staff and no characters.”¹³ Schlesinger, with low funding himself, moved the production of the shorts to a small old building at the back of the Warner lot, which came to be known as “Termite Terrace.” Schlesinger lured Friz Freling and Bob Clampett back to his studio with Frank Tashlin, Tex Avery, and Chuck Jones joining the team shortly after. This new team of directors and animators were required to be innovative, creating new characters and stories. In 1935 Freling invented Porky Pig, the first character of the second *Looney Tunes* generation.

The new group of directors did not enjoy the “one feature song per animated film” requirement that had been made by Schlesinger. Freling understood the practicality of the song


use and stated, “We had to put two singing choruses in every cartoon, the idea being that if people heard something they liked in theatres maybe they’d go out afterwards and buy the song sheets.”\textsuperscript{14} Other directors were not as understanding, and considered the requirement a flaw. Camplett explained that, “We’d have a great story going along but then we’d have to stop and have the singing chorus.”\textsuperscript{15} Avery was very straight forward and said, “We were forced to use a song, which would just ruin the cartoon. You’d try like a fool to get funny [during the song], but it was seldom you did…Finally, when Schlesinger let us get by [without using the songs], the cartoons started picking up.”\textsuperscript{16} Jones plainly states, “It was a pain in the ass.”\textsuperscript{17} However, Warner Brothers did not care about their opinions and maintained the one-song-per-piece stipulation when Carl W. Stalling was hired as the director of music in 1936.

**The Composer**

Carl W. Stalling composed music for Warner Brothers animation from 1936-58. Uncovering the life of Stalling has been an eventful journey as well. Most of the information on Carl W. Stalling’s life is contained in the Carl Stalling Papers at the American Heritage Center in

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Goldmark, *Toons for ‘Tunes*, 18.
\item Ibid., 18.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Laramie, Wyoming. Through research, Stalling’s life has slowly unfolded. This section contains a brief biography of Carl Stalling’s life before he came to Warner Brothers.

Carl W. Stalling was born on November 10, 1891 in Lexington, Missouri. Locally he was known as a prodigy of film accompaniment and began accompanying film by the age of fourteen. An article on Stalling from the 1940s states, “right from the beginning Carl started teething on a tuning fork, and at the ripe age of fourteen, he was playing piano for the picture shows.” In the early 1900s all film was silent, and Stalling accompanied it on piano using techniques like those in George Tootell’s book How to Play the Cinema Organ: A Practical Book by a Practical Player. In a 1969 interview, Stalling remembers his first professional musical job:

I played the piano at a theater about a block from former President Truman’s home in Independence, Missouri, around 1910. That was my first job in the Kansas City area, but I’d played the piano in 1904 at Lexington, where I was born. Lexington is forty miles east of Independence. In those days, they just wanted a piano going while the operator was changing reels. In the cities, they had two machines, so you didn’t have to wait for the next reel, but in little towns like Lexington they hadn’t gotten that far yet.

When recounting his first job, Stalling remembers, “He was playing furioso for ‘The Great Train Robbery’” which was showing in 1903. Stalling attended the Kansas City Conservatory of Music where he studied pipe organ under Pietro Yon, honorary organist to the Vatican. At the Conservatory, he met Gladys Baldwin, to whom he would be married for fifty-four years.

---

18 Ibid., 22.
19 George Tootell, How to Play the Cinema Organ: A Practical Book by a Practical Player (London: Paxton, 1928).
In the mid-1920s Stalling worked for the Isis Theater in Kansas City, Missouri. During his time at the theater he transitioned from playing solo piano, to conducting the orchestra with either the piano or organ. His role as director required that he select music to accompany films. For shorter films like comedies and newsreels he is known to have improvised at the keyboard. During his time at the Isis Theater, Stalling created a document containing the motives and sound effects that he used with the orchestra when specific events happened on screen (see example 1). This detailed account lists the instruments required, the notes preferred, and a thorough description of the mood intended. According to advertisements in the *Kansas City Star* for Isis Theater, “Stalling had extensive experience playing for cartoons in the theater.” During the 1920s all feature films were accompanied with a comical short. The cartoons that Stalling accompanied include “Felix, Comical Cat,” (Aesop’s) “Fables,” and “Alice in Cartoon Land,” a Disney cartoon series.

![Example 1](image)

Stalling met Walt Disney in Kansas City while working for Isis Theater. The two became friends and colleagues. Stalling did assist in the creation of Disney’s “Steamboat Willie,” the first

---


23 Ibid., 12.

24 There are mixed accounts as to whether Stalling met Disney at the Isis Theater or hired Disney to work at the Isis theater. According to his obituary, found in the Carl W. Stalling
animation ever released with synchronized sound. The music from “Steamboat Willie” received harsh reviews, and according to Stalling, was “not even music.” Disney called on Stalling for assistance, bringing Plane Crazy and Gallopin’ Guacho, and two Mickey Mouse cartoons to Kansas City for scoring.  

Working for Disney refined Stalling’s ability to accompany animation and provided him with his first job as a composer. Disney would not pay licensing fees for songs, requiring that only music from the public domain be used. Stalling had to become more creative with his song selections, as the public domain in the late 1920s only contained pieces composed before the early 1870s. Due to the minimal music selection, Stalling suggested to Disney that they create a series of animation driven by music, rather than the cartoon driven Mickey Mouse. In 1929, The Skelton Dance was released, the first of the Silly Symphonies series. Stalling scored these and nineteen other cartoons for Disney, until he left the company in 1930.

Upon leaving Disney’s studio in early 1930, Stalling went to work for Van Buren animation Studio in New York, New York for a short time. He did not remember them fondly, mainly because “they had nothing for me to do.” Stalling left Van Buren after less than a year and began Papers, Stalling hired Disney to created small animated shorts to play during and after organ interludes.


26 Barrier, Gray, and Spicer, “An Interview with Carl Stalling.”

27 Daniel Goldmark. "Stalling, Carl."

working for Iwerks, where he worked on and off for the next six years. He also went back to Disney during this time as an arranger and pianist. This includes playing the piano for the Practical pig in Disney’s “Three Little Pigs” and composing the piano part for the “Mickey Mouse Club Song” (See example 2).\textsuperscript{29} Stalling was paid ten dollars for composing the “Mickey Mouse Club Song,” that is equivalent to about 165 dollars today. A colleague from Iwerks, Ben Hardaway, recommended Stalling to Lean Schlesinger in 1936. Shortly thereafter, Stalling began his work with Warner Brothers where he remained until retirement in 1958, composing and directing music for over 600 shorts.\textsuperscript{30}

![Example 2 – Stalling’s pay stub for composing the “Mickey Mouse Club Song” in 1932.](image)

**Looney Tunes with Stalling**

Carl Stalling began working for *Looney Tunes* in 1936, helping the Warner Brothers’ animation transition firmly into the second generation. Working at Warner Brothers presented Stalling with the opportunity to use hundreds of songs, to compose regularly, and to work with a variety of directors each with his own approach to storytelling. A few directors chose to communicate purely through animation and music, while others utilized the voice of Mel Blanc.

\textsuperscript{29} The American Heritage Center – Pay Stub

Each director had a different style, sense of humor, and cast of characters, varying from the silent Road Runner to the boisterous Foghorn Leghorn, requiring Stalling to be flexible in his compositions. This gave him the reputation, among the directors, of being very relaxed. When asked in an interview if he has any memories working with Stalling, Frank Tashlin replied “Oh, the most pleasant. He'd come in and you'd pick a beat with him, depending on what he'd give.”

He explained that working with Stalling was always enjoyable and that together they would pick the songs for each short. Chuck Jones also remembers Stalling fondly in *A Flurry of Drawings*: “I would walk into the office and Stalling would sit down at the piano, playing a little bit of this and that until we found something that fit.”

This section examines three cartoons that were created at different periods throughout Stallings time at Warner Brothers. “Porky in Wackyland” (1938), “Wabbit Twouble” (1941), and “Wacky Wabbit” (1942) are each roughly seven minutes in length. The animation, music, and their relationship are briefly discussed.

“Porky in Wackyland” was created in 1938 by director Robert Clampett. Carl Stalling was the director of music, Norman McCabe and I. Ellis created the animation. This black and white short has the poorest sound quality of the three, as it contains static. “Porky in Wackyland” contains multiple speaking characters all voiced by Mel Blanc. The following paragraphs will

---


33 *Porky in Wackyland*, directed by Robert Clampett (Warner Brothers 1936).
contain a brief storyline of this *Looney Tunes* episode along with animation features and their musical relationships.

“Porky in Wackyland” begins with a newspaper man yelling “extras read all about it.” The screen is filled with a newspaper stating that Porky Pig is going to find the last of the Do-Do birds. Porky flies across the screen in a propeller plane and the background changes to a globe. Porky is depicted flying over the shades of Africa, from “dark Africa” to “darkest Africa,” the music building by minor seconds, creating tension. During this time the overpowering sound of the plane flying makes hearing the actual music difficult.

Porky’s plane lands after circling a few times and then walks on its tires to its final resting place at the bottom of a sign reading, “Welcome to Wackyland. Population 100 nuts and a Squirrel.” Porky then climbs a twisted mountain and watches the sunrise, as the English horn solo from Rossini’s *William Tell* plays in the background. The horn is distorted and augments many of the leaps within the solo. The eerie music and background combined show the audience that Porky is in a foreign land.

The screen pans to a monkey perched on a giant flower with a drum set on top, gracefully playing the solo from the previous scene on the flute with his nose. The music, a jazz tune, opening with a drum solo performed ferociously by the monkey on his mushroom. After the drum solo ends, the monkey begins playing the jazz melody on a tiny the piano and with his flute-nose, which now sounds like a saxophone. He plays until the flower closes and swallows him by lowering him into the ground.

During the jazz tune the screen pans right, showing many crazy creatures composed of body parts that do not belong to get her. For example, a figure with women’s legs and heels from the knees down, a stick figure upper body, a head that looks a bit like a monkey, and a man’s
bowlar hat strolls across the screen. The women’s legs are much wider than the rest of the body, making the character look awkward. After passing a peacock with a tail made from a deck of cards, there is a tall man with a long torso smoking a giant three stem pipe and a tiny bald man tugging on the long white beard of the tall man. The short pauses, and focuses on a bunny in long underwear and boots, swinging from a branch by his ears. All the characters move in rhythm with the swinging jazz melody.

The jazz tune continues to play, moving to solos on saxophone and xylophone, vibes as a parade of funky characters walks across the screen. A large man in a convict’s suit walks across the screen, holding the jail bars in front of his face. A small police man (half the convict’s size) holding a baton that is larger than him, hits the convict on the head, knocking him silly. Next, a small dark creature resembling a duck with a stretched-out beak as wide as it is tall, waddles across the stage, begging for help. He is followed by an animal with a mallard body and that has a horn for a head. As this creature walks, he grabs the back of his head to toot the horn. An animal with two heads, a cat and a dog, race across the screen, fighting between themselves causing them to spin in a circle.

A three headed man, each head with a long skinny neck, with a big chest and little legs walks on screen. The heads represent the Three Stooges and are arguing in gibberish. A small bird appears and acts as a translator saying “He says his mama was scared by a pawn broker’s son.” Porky asks for directions to the Do-Do and is sent through a hole in the ground. Upon finding the Do-Do and introducing themselves, the Do-Do and Porky chase each other in circles. The Do-Do creates a pencil and begins drawing in thin air. He creates openings such as house doors, windows, and an elevator door to escape from Porky.
The Do-Do thinks he has gotten away from Porky and walks up to a creature that looks like one seen earlier. The creature catches the Do-Do’s attention because he is selling newspapers yelling “extra, extra, Porky catches Do-Do bird.” The Do-Do is shocked and asks how this could have happened. Porky comes out of his disguise and captures the Do-Do proclaiming that he has caught the last Do-Do of its kind. The Do-Do laughs and says “ok sure the last of my kind, ain’t I fellas?” Hundreds of Do-Dos fill the screen, so all you can see is Porky standing in the middle. They all yell “yes” he’s the last of his kind. The moral of the story is not to believe everything you read or everything people tell you.

In each scene, there are many moving characters that stretch the imagination. However, while there are many different creatures moving simultaneously, their movements are very rudimentary. Most characters only move in one direction, or do one kind of movement. The music compliments the animation and acts as a mood setting device. The blocks that Stalling uses are very simple, sticking with one song for an extended period. The characters on screen are coordinated with sound effects to emphasize their actions, but are not coordinated with specific beats in a song. In an article from *Music and Letters*, musicologist Ben Winters states, “[I] cannot adequately recreate the substance of that world in my imagination without the presence of music, just as I cannot recreate the ‘world’ of Mozart’s Don Giovanni without acknowledging that the characters express themselves musically.”

Winters goes on to discuss the power of the imagination and how it is a powerful tool when creating an escape for audiences. “Porky in

---

Wackyland” created an escape for Americans by stimulating their imaginations through the creation of a new world.

The next short discussed is “Wabbit in Twouble” (1941), produced by Leon Schlesinger. The opening credits are cleverly written into the side of a cliff in the language of Elmer Fudd. For example, Supervision (director) by “Wobert Cwampett”, i.e. Robert Clampett.\(^{35}\) The story was written by Dave Mohanan, animation by Sid Sutherland, and musical direction under Carl W. Stalling. The short is in color and has a much better sound quality than “Porky in Wackyland.”

“Wabbit in Twouble” opens with a Big Band playing during the credits. The music quickly shifts to a tropical sounding cha-cha played by percussion instruments. As Elmer Fudd enters the short in an open top car, the car moves in coordination with the music, an advancement from the previous short. As Fudd makes his way down the road, he exclaims to the viewer, “Nothing like a restful vacation in the mountains. Oh boy, peace and relaxation!” This statement becomes the ironic basis of this short.

Throughout the short Bugs Bunny does everything in his power to disrupt Fudd’s “peace and relaxation.” As Fudd enters the park, he sees a sign that states, “Welcome to Jellystone, a restful resort.” Bugs then lures Fudd to his rabbit hole by placing a “camp here” sign outside of it. Fudd sees the sign and begins to set up camp around the hole. The music has changed back to the big band swing sound, emphasizing Fudd’s movements with brass melodies. Upon discovering the rabbit hole, Fudd nails a board over it. This attempt lasts less than five seconds as Bugs simply lifts the board and walks out.

\(^{35}\) *Wabbit Twouble*, directed by Robert Clampett (Warner Brothers, 1941).
Bugs antagonizes the poor Fudd by confusing his time of day. Fudd falls asleep in a hammock with the screen showing the blue and sunny sky above him. A soft lullaby is played as Bugs puts a pair of glasses, tinted with paint, on the sleeping man’s eyes. The music does not emphasize any movement, but is used to set a restful, relaxing mood. Bugs changes Fudd’s clock so that it reads midnight and then wakes Fudd abruptly. A confused Fudd looks at his clock and, assuming it is correct, puts on his purple pajamas and goes to bed. The clever bunny fools Fudd again, after a short time of sleep, into believing that it is morning again.

After Bugs antagonizes Elmer Fudd several more times, the angry man rushing to get his shotgun. Elmer exits his tent and encounters a bear. He pulls out his “guide to camping” and reads aloud what to do when one encounters a bear. As instructed by his manual, Fudd lies on the ground motionless. The bear sniffs him and exits. Bugs of course takes advantage of Fudd’s vulnerability and impersonates a bear, pulling Fudd’s nose, kissing his face and bouncing on his belly. However, once Bugs begins biting toes, Elmer becomes aware that the bunny is not a bear. In anger Elmer lifts his shotgun to hit Bugs in the head, but the bunny moves quickly and Fudd hits the angry bear instead. Each of the actions in the bear gag is perfectly timed with a smooth major melody played by the trumpet. Elmer Fudd and the bear chase each other around the forest. During this time the Rossini’s *William Tell* overture is playing in the background. As the chase progresses, so does the tempo of the overture, with humorous chase gags timed perfectly with the piece’s rhythm.

The short ends with Fudd hastily packing his things from the campsite and leaving the park. On his way out he stops and destroys the park’s entrance sign that promises a “relaxing resort.” In the midst of the sign’s destruction a park ranger appears and takes the distraught Fudd to jail. However, only seconds after he thinks he has found peace in jail, Fudd finds out Bugs Bunny and the bear are also in his cell. The two uninvited guests each ask “How long ya in for Doc?”
“Wabbit Twouble” has many advances from “Porky in Wonderland.” First, the animation has a clear storyline, composed of familiar characters and backgrounds. This is a large contrast to “Porky in Wonderland” where many different abstract and unrealistic subjects moved simultaneously. The use of music within “Wabbit Twouble” is also more advanced. The opening car scene and the Fudd-bear chase scene both have synchronized animation and musical movement. Finally, in “Wabbit Twouble” the characters directly address the viewers by either giving them a statement or asking a question. This contrasts with “Porky in Wackyland,” where the characters only interacted with each other on screen.

The next short, “Wacky Wabbit” (1943), was directed by Robert Clampett. Warren Foster wrote the storyline, and Stalling composed and directed the music. “Wacky Wabbit” is another Bugs Bunny- Elmer Fudd short, in which Bugs is voiced by Mel Blanc and Fudd by Arthur Q. Bryan.  

“Wacky Wabbit” begins with Elmer Fudd walking across the desert, singing “Oh! Susanna,” and carrying a giant pack on his back with his belongings hanging off it. Fudd begins to change the lyrics of the familiar song after the first verse to be about digging for gold. The final line of the song has been changed to “V for victory.”

Fudd continues to journey through the desert, singing as he goes, passing Bugs Bunny hiding under a cattle scull. Bugs hops up and the viewer expects him to start antagonizing Fudd. However, Bugs begins harmonizing with Elmer for the last part of his verse. As they sing “V for victory” together they hold up their hands in peace signs. This moment is one of the few in Bugs

36 *Wacky Wabbit*, directed by Robert Clampett (Warner Brothers, 1943).

37 “Oh! Susanna” was a familiar minstrel song written by Stephen Foster in 1848.
Bunny history in which Bugs and Elmer are hugging, harmonizing, and in complete agreement.\(^{38}\) This scene clearly symbolizes the fact that America wanted victory in WWII.

The next scene depicts Elmer digging in the sand with a pick ax singing “I’ve Been Working on the Railroad.” Elmer stays true to all of the original lyrics for this song and stops singing once he places dynamite. Bugs Bunny throws the dynamite around and literally defuses Elmer’s gold digging expedition. Bugs distracts Elmer from angry retaliation by yelling “They found gold over there!” Attempting to prove his point, Bugs points to his tooth as proof. Elmer opens his mouth, and they compare gold teeth, seeming to bond over their common ground.

This brief harmonious moment ends when Elmer remembers Bugs is a prankster, and they begin chasing each other through the desert. During the chase, Bugs cuts open Elmer’s shirt revealing a tightly bound corset underneath. Elmer’s responds in a harsh tone, “Don’t worry, I bet plenty of you men wear one of these.” The exact meaning of this is unclear, but it could be symbolic of men needing to man up and join the forces. This scene ends with Elmer Fudd inside of a bunny hole with Bugs shoveling dirt over the hole singing, “Burry Me Not on the Lone Prairie.”

The final scene of this short depicts Elmer Fudd emerging from the ground and fighting Bugs for possession of his gold tooth. Fudd is determined to find gold before he leaves the desert and emerges from the quarrel, victoriously holds up a tooth and announces, “Eureka! Gold at last!” Bugs stands up with a smile, reveals that his tooth is intact, as Elmer is unknowingly holding his own tooth and agrees, “Eureka! Gold at last!”

---

This discussion of the development of *Looney Tunes* shows a development of characters and their collaboration with music. In the first film, there are many characters that interact and cross the screen. The main plot is understood, but the viewer has many distractions from the main plot. In the Bugs Bunny shorts, the directors were discovering the best ways to keep a narrow character base and still paint the overarching picture they have. As this discussion shows, from 1936-1958 *Looney Tunes* directors and their teams developed their ability to focus on their subject and bring it to life through music, creating an escape for audiences.
CHAPTER 2: “WHAT’S OPERA, DOC?”

Analyzing (Film) Music

The analysis within this thesis is inspired primarily by the analyses of Looney Tunes shorts performed by Daniel Goldmark in his book, *Tunes for ‘Toons: Music and the Hollywood Cartoon*, and Eric Walter White’s analysis of Stravinsky’s *Symphony for Wind Instruments* in his book, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*. This section provides a brief overview of the two influential scholars and how they directly relate to the analyses of “Speaking of the Weather” and “There They Go-Go-Go” in chapters three and four respectively.

Goldmark, an expert in the field of cartoon music, has written and edited numerous articles and books on the subject including, *Tunes for ‘Toons: Music and the Hollywood Cartoon*, which contains original analysis of cartoon shorts. Goldmark focuses on the different genres found within cartoons, including jazz/swing and classical melodies. Chapters on each offer an overview of a broad range of cartoons that contain these styles. Many of his examples come from *Looney Tunes*. Goldmark’s descriptions are detailed and paint a picture of the general use of music within cartoons. My analysis of “Speaking of the Weather” is similar in that this short contains a variety of music from the classical, popular, and folk genres. However, my analysis differs from Goldmark’s because I focus on only one short, finding musical elements, how they are paired with animation, and how they create a sense of escape for audiences.

At the end of his book, Goldmark devotes an entire chapter to an analysis of “What’s Opera, Doc?,” a parody of Wagnerian opera. Goldmark proves that “this cartoon and others like it have

---

helped form a new cultural concept of opera, an awareness built on comic appropriations of the form rather than on the operas themselves.”\(^2\) Goldmark continues, explaining: “In fact animation offers the perfect medium for realizing Wagner’s hopes for the Gesamtkunstwerk since it sets no physical bounds to the animator’s creativity.”\(^3\) Chuck Jones, the short’s director, boasts that he parodied “fourteen hours of the Ring of the Niebelungen in six minutes.”\(^4\)

Goldmark’s analytical chapter is divided into eight sections:

1. Characteristics of Opera and Animation
2. The Story: Elmer Chases Bugs Wagner Style
3. Wagner’s Presence in Film and Cartoon Music
4. The Prehistory of “What’s Opera, Doc?”: Cartoons and World War II
5. Production Issues: Visual Appearances
6. The Music
7. Storytelling in “What’s Opera, Doc?”
8. Wrestling Opera

Each section compares “What’s Opera, Doc?” to similar animated films. In the first, Goldmark analyzes the complete Looney Tunes repertoire and finds ten different pieces by Wagner used in


\(^3\) Ibid. On pg. 132, Goldmark defines Gesamtkunstwerk, a term originally associated with Richard Wager, as “the ‘total artwork,’ fusing together and giving equal weight to the poetry, the music, and the staging and is approached here [in animation] from a modern (or perhaps postmodern) angle.”

\(^4\) Ibid., 133.
one hundred twenty different shorts.\textsuperscript{5} Many come from \textit{Tannhauser}, which Goldmark attributes to the fact that \textit{Tannhauser} was the first of Wagner’s operas to be performed in America.\textsuperscript{6}

Goldmark’s second section, “The Story,” is a summary of the short’s storyline, similar to the summaries at the beginnings of chapters three and four of this thesis. Within his summary, Goldmark identifies the music accompanying the action on screen. He gives a few specific examples, a table showing all of the Wagner works included in “What’s Opera, Doc?,” and the duration for which they are heard. However, while Goldmark’s chapter gives the impression that it is focused only on one animated short, it considers many different aspects of the relationship between Wagnerian opera and animated cartoons generally. In contrast, my analyses focus on only one short, showing explanation of the specific musical details within each.

In Goldmark’s “Storytelling” section he lists the different sections of the short as they relate to Wagnerian opera, and which piece is heard during each moment (example 1). This is similar to how the form of “Speaking of the Weather” is diagramed in chapter three of this thesis. Both diagrams list the form in five sections, giving a description of the section and/or the piece that is played during that section. My analysis differs from Goldmark’s because “Speaking of the Weather” is not based on an opera, but contains a large variety of genres, with the sections determined by the change of story between sections. My handling of the analysis is different because the storylines in the second and fourth sections of “Speaking of the Weather” are not related, whereas in Goldmark’s they are a continuous story.

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., 141.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., 140.
Example 1 – Diagram of the five main episodes within “What’s Opera, Doc?” found within Daniel Goldmark’s *Tunes for ‘Toons.*

Because the shorts I chose to analyze are not filled with the music of one composer, like “What’s Opera, Doc?” with Wagner, I sought an alternate analytical method, drawing inspiration from Eric Walter White’s chapter on *Symphony for Wind Instruments* from his book, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works.* White analyzes the *Symphony for Wind Instruments* using “episodes” and “motives” that fit into the overall form. He labels his episodes with letters from the beginning of the alphabet (A, B, C, D) and motives with letters from the end of the alphabet (Z, Y, X, W). The episodes have themes—“Two Russian Popular Melodies,” “Pastorale,” “Wild Dance,” and “Chorale”—and are surrounded by shorter motives, which White labels “Bell motive,” “Two-bar Motto,” “Chiming chords,” and “Counterpoint triplet phrase” based on the sound and construction of the motive. White’s form of *Symphony for Wind Instruments* (shown in example 2) lists the episode and motive letters, separated by section. When one of the episodes or motives is circled or boxed, it is heard in its entirety.

---

7 Ibid., 151.


9 Ibid., 293-294.

10 Ibid., 294-295.
Example 2 – Form of Symphony for Wind Instruments from Eric Walter White’s book *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works.*

My analysis of “There They Go-Go-Go” follows a structure similar to White’s. I determined different motives (A-aa) and laid them out in a diagram in the order in which they are heard. Each motive is related to a specific movement and/or character. Similar to White’s labeling, I call these motives the “blink motive,” “stepping motive,” etc., based on the animation that accompanies them. In “There They Go-Go-Go,” there are two motives, the # motive and the * motive, that are more significant than the others, similar to White’s “episodes.”

Using these techniques, I conducted the analyses within this thesis by means of the following method. First, the shorts are analyzed aurally by listening to each one at least five times without looking at the animation. This phase of analysis identifies the musical blocks that Stalling works with and how they are formally linked together. The first listen is used to record an outline of the blocks, recording the exact time each block begins and ends. The second listen verifies this

---

11 Ibid.
form and recognizes the instrumentation. During the third listen the blocks containing borrowed content are compared to their original sources using the following process questions:

1. Is the content of this musical block identical to the original composition? If yes then stop. If no, proceed to questions two and three.

2. In what ways has this musical block been altered from the original composition? Is it augmented, inverted, including a change of key, change of instrumentation, rhythmic variation, or changed in other ways?

3. Why was this block altered from the original in this way? Does it better portray an emotion? How does it help the short create an escape for the viewer?

Listens four and five are used to compare similar blocks in the short, using these three process questions:

1. Is the musical content of both blocks identical? If yes then stop. If no, proceed to questions two and three.

2. In what ways are the two blocks different? (Augmentation, inversion, change of key, change of instrumentation, rhythmic variation, other)

3. Why was this block altered from the original in this way? Does it better portray an emotion? How does it help the short create an escape for the viewer?

With this new understanding of its musical fabric, the short is then viewed, observing which movements in the animation relate to each specific musical block. Finally, all the observations, musical and visual, are examined for common themes and patterns. This technique was inspired by the words of Michael Barrier at the beginning of his interview with Carl Stalling:

It is instructive to listen to the soundtrack of a Warner Brothers cartoon – especially one in pantomime – without watching the pictures. The music…[is a] mirror of the
action, so completely integrated into the whole that, for many of us, Carl Stalling’s music…is the common thread that holds the Warner Cartoons together.  

Reality, Music, and the Audience

Central to this thesis is the idea that within animation, music creates a reality and offers an escape for audiences. This idea is supported by literature in the fields of film music, film theory, music psychology, and media psychology. Therefore, this section surveys these fields as they relate to the purpose of music within film, the reality within film and film creating reality, and how the audience perceives this reality. Theories about motion pictures are acknowledged as well as those specific to animation.

Reality within a film vs. Film creating a reality

Within the realm of film musicology, history, and theory, there are differing views as to whether the music within a motion picture should help the picture create its own reality or try to become as close as possible to our reality. The films analyzed within this thesis are animated and therefore many of these rules of motion picture films do not apply. Film scholar Roy Paul Madsen explains that animation is one of the two kinds of film—the other being musicals—that follow their own set of rules. The first step in animation is composing the score, he writes. Then the music is measured by frames, the measurements written down on a bar sheet, and the animators then

---

12 Michael Barrier, Milton Gray, and Bill Spicer, “An Interview with Carl Stalling,” 

match the animation to the frame. Madsen claims that music in animation “contributes as development of character themes, locale themes, moods, tempo, continuity, dramatic emphasis, premonition, commentary, satire, humor, transitions, and to add information.”

Many film scholars do not address animation, as it is seen as a different branch of film, separated from motion pictures. The scholars that do examine animation agree that it embodies the imagination of the composer, director, and animators. In his book, Madsen includes an entire chapter on animation titled “The Eye of the Mind,” in which he argues that music is a tool to bring the imagination of the composer and director to life for the audience. Madsen defines animation as “The animated film is an extension of the human imagination and can give graphic form to anything the mind can imagine through the artwork presented before the camera.” Live action film reproduces reality, while animated film reproduces the idea of anything “visually conceived” and defies the laws of gravity and reality.

Roy M. Prendergast and Ben Winters use the analogy of opera buffa to explain how music is used within animation. Prendergast calls the music within animated films a form of characterization, bringing the films to life: “This is clearly reflected in the average present day cartoon score: when we look at the music we see that it makes sense only if considered as


14 Ibid., 115.

15 Ibid., 147.

16 Ibid., 151.

17 Ibid., 147, 151.
Prendergast relates cartoons to the neoclassical movement:

It is no accident that some of the greatest works to come out of the neoclassic movement were ballets; because of the cartoon’s dancelike quality, the neoclassic style was well suited to it as well. The relationship of cartoon music to neoclassicism is better understood if we trace the neoclassic movement back to its model, the classical period…and to comic opera, or opera buffa.  

Prendergast finds similarities between the two arts, opera buffa and cartoons, beginning with their ability for to defy gravity and reality. Cartoons utilize their ability to transcend physical reality through their characters. An example is in my analysis of “There They Go-Go-Go” the Coyote defies gravity and never remains injured. In “Speaking of the Weather,” magazine covers come to life. Carlo Gozzi, an eighteenth century composer and influence on Mozart, described his “dramatic fables” as “the great magic of seduction that creates an enchanting illusion of making the impossible appear as truth to the mind and spirit of the spectators.” Another similarity between the two genres is that the audience must accept certain conventions to make the characters’ actions believable. In opera buffa, “one must accept the idea that it gets dark enough outdoors for a valet to disguise himself as his master by the mere exchange of cloaks.” Similarly, in animation we must believe conventions of animated characters. Finally, Prendergast states that

---

18 Ibid., 184.
19 Ibid., 185.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
“the comedy of situation, the preeminent dramatic substance of opera buffa, is also endemic to the dramatic elements of the cartoon for there is little, if any dignified expression in short cartoons.”

Prendergast’s laments many directors’ and animators’ lack of musical knowledge, a topic Goldmark also examines. Prendergast interviewed animation director Chuck Jones, inquiring about how he used music in his shorts. Jones referred to drawings he had published in Hollywood Quarterly in 1946:

Figure 1 - “Tackety”  Figure 2 - “Gloomb”

Figure 3 – “ooooooooooooooooomp”  Figure 4 – “pooooooooooooooo-o”
An approaching sound. A sound moving away

Figure 5 – Bassoon vs. Harp

---

22 Ibid., 186.

23 Ibid., 196-197.
These images show the image that Jones associated with a specific sound or dynamic.\(^{24}\) Jones’s lack of musical background caused him to rely on such images to understand music. These images also show how Jones translated music into animated movement, enabling him to pair them closely together. This is a form of “tone contouring,” according to Prendergast. “Not only did the composer have the last and precise word on dynamics, but he was also forced to specify the exact tone-contouring of each note; that is, what sort of attack, sustention and decay each tone was to have.”\(^{25}\) This can be seen in the few remaining fragments of bar charts in the Carl Stalling Papers in the American Heritage Center Archives. This form of composing allowed the music and animation to coexist inseparably, allowing the cartoon to create a stronger sense of reality.\(^{26}\)

---


\(^{25}\) Roy M. Prendergast, *Film Music: A Neglected Art* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), 204.

\(^{26}\) Ibid.
Film musicologist Ben Winters provides a compelling argument for how music brings a sense of reality in his article, “The Non-Diegetic Fallacy: Film, Music, and Narrative Space.” He discusses the different definitions that film scholars have given to “diegetic” and “non-diegetic”, arriving at the conclusion that he does not agree with any of them because they “straight jacket film musicology into a set of preconceived functions.” Winters explains:

We may accept the presence of music in the narrative space of the film, then, partly as a sign of the fictional state of the world created on screen. It is an indicator that the universe in which the events we are watching takes place is not real; and having accepted that, music’s presence seems entirely natural, rather than a troubling element that needs to be assigned on a separate level of narrative.

This is important to cartoons because music is omnipresent, creating the world on screen. The music is not distant or completely separated like that within an elevator, rather it is directly ingrained into enlivening the animation. Once these conclusions are drawn Winters emphasizes the importance of music within film by comparing it to opera stating, “it would be almost bizarre trying to imagine an operatic scene or a scene in a filmed musical without its orchestral music.”

---

27 Winters, “The Non-Diegetic Fallacy,” 224-244.

28 Ibid., 38. Diegetic music is music that comes from objects within the film, such as a woman singing or a record player. Therefore non-diegetic music is music accompanies the film that is not derived from within it. Winters does not agree with the definitions of film scholars and creates his own definition of non-diegetic. Christian Metz, *Film language; A Semiotics of The Cinema*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

29 Ibid., 13.

30 Ibid., 17.
Winters then refers to film scholar Daniel Frampton and his definition of “filmind” within his book *Filmosophy*:  

*Filmind* conceptualizes film as an organic intelligence: a ‘film being’ thinking about the characters and subjects in the film…The filmind is not an ‘external’ force, nor is it a mystical being or invisible other, it is ‘in’ the film itself, it is the film that is steering its own course. The fimind is ‘the film itself’.

Winters uses this definition to explain how music exists in the air of music, not coming from any particular source within the film, but rather enveloping it to set the mood, emotion, and character of the overall work. He believes that music and film are not to separate entities, but rather work together to form a more memorable and powerful film. Winters lists animation among abnormal types of film, concluding that

In a sense, it [music] demonstrates the greater interpretive freedom offered by a model of film music unconstrained by an overly-realistic philosophy of film…. More than that, though we are no longer required to imagine that the fantastical fictional film worlds and the characters we enjoy in the cinema exist in some realistic world, separated from the music that defines them.

---

31 “Filmind” is a term that Daniel Frampton invented in *Filmosophy* (London: Wallflower Press, 2007), meaning the mind of/within the film.

32 Ibid., 7.

33 Winters’s definition of non-diegetic music is different from the standard definition because he believes that the music and film are not two different entities, but rather meld together to create a more powerful film. Winters uses the example of Indiana Jones stating, “Indiana Jones cannot exist without [his musical] theme. And, of course, that theme would be nothing without Indiana Jones” (“The Non-Diegetic Fallacy,” 1).

The Purpose of Music within Film

Theorists and psychologists agree that music has different meanings when heard by different people. According to James L. Mursell, music psychologist and educator:

It is a basic error to suppose that we ever have a response to all aspects of the music, or that it is always and for all persons substantially the same thing…There are many types of listening. Music may be apprehended and enjoyed with respect to…. many elements which together make up the complete musical experience.\(^{35}\)

Mursell explains there are intrinsic and extrinsic factors of listening. Intrinsic factors are aspects of listening that come from within the piece itself such as melody and harmony. Extrinsic factors are factors from outside of the music that effect how it is heard. These factors include the mood surrounding the music and visual experience accompanying it, both of which apply to film.\(^{36}\)

Yet film musicologists and theorists have differing opinions on the purpose of music within film and how it affects the listener/audience. Many indirectly accept Mursell’s factors of listening into account when discussing of the purpose of music within a film. Tony Thomas, a British-American film historian, contends that film is experienced just as much aurally as it is visually, claiming that “there has never been such a thing as silent film.”\(^{37}\) Imagination is paramount: “For composers of imagination and inventiveness it [film music] is an art with no boundaries…the only requirement is that it works.”\(^{38}\) Thomas paints a picture of film needing the warmth of music to humanize it.


\(^{36}\) Ibid., 205-218. Mood is defined as the “presence of emotion” (205).


\(^{38}\) Ibid.
For the viewer a film is a fantasy, and a fantasy, like space, has no dimensions. They [fantasies] conspire with the imagination, and it is for this reason that music and film work so well together. Of all of the arts music is the one most removed from reality and the one that best works upon the unconscious part of the mind.  

Thomas calls music an “ally of illusion” and “conspirator with the human soul.”  

He agrees with Mursell that the true effect of music can only be known individually and emotionally. “Music is conductive to hallucination. It plays upon the emotions. It is a non-intellectual communication. The listener does not need to know what the music means, only how it makes him feel. In short, it is perfect for film.”  

Thomas devotes the remainder of his book to examining the lives of various film composers and their views of film music in an attempt to “state the case for film composition.”  

Aaron Copland agrees with Thomas that, “by itself the screen is a pretty cold proposition. Music is like a small flame put under the screen to help warm it.”  

Copland offers five ways that “music serves the screen.”  

---

39 Ibid., 5.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., 5.

43 Peter Larson, Film Music, translated by John Irons (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2007), 184. In his notes, Larson states that he took the quote from the introduction of Charles Hofman’s Sounds for Silents (1970). However, the original quote came from the 1940 edition of the periodical Modern Music. The exact publication of this periodical could not be found so Larson is cited as a reference.

44 Thomas, Film Score, 13.
1. Creating a more convincing atmosphere of time and place.
2. Underlining psychological refinements – The unspoken thoughts of a character or the unseen implications of a situation.
3. Serving as a kind of neutral background filler – music one isn’t supposed to hear, but that the film would be empty without.
5. Underpinning the theatrical build-up of a scene, and rounding off with a sense of finality.

Copland believes that music and film are paired together to serve each other; film becomes enhanced when the music is heard. He argues that audiences would experience film (motion pictures and documentaries) on a different emotional and atmospheric level if they took their “ear muffs off.” Copeland is convinced that people watching feature films were not fully grasping the fullness of film because they either did not care to listen, or did not know to.

Contrary to Copland, German-American film musicologist and composer Kurt Weill states: “the silent movie needed music as the dry cereal needed cream.” Peter Larsen, professor in the department of media studies as the University of Bergen, Norway, explains that Weill thought of music as a distraction for the audience from the boredom of the film: “For Weill…the music is a kind of bait that will lure the spectators to accept dry film, a luxury item, something that is added and turns a prosaic experience into a pleasurable one.” Composers who view music in this way also view music as being derived from the screen (i.e., a child practicing piano next door or a nearby car radio creating music). Musicologists Theodore Adorno and Hanns Eisler address this perspective on film music in their book, Composing for the Films:

---

46 Ibid., 17.
48 Larsen, Film Music, 184.
The threadbare-ness of this artifice is illustrated by those scenes in which the hero accompanies himself 'realistically' on the piano for about eight bars, whereupon he is relieved by a large orchestra and chorus, albeit with no change of scene. In so far as this device, which obtained in the early days of sound pictures, is still applied, it hinders the use of music as a genuine element of contrast. Music becomes a plot accessory, a sort of acoustical stage property. 49

Bronislau Kaper, film composer during the 1940s-60s, agrees with Copland that music is fundamentally important within a film in that it creates a reality of its own or makes reality more real. He disagrees, however, with the notion that film does not need music: “Films not only need music, they need it badly. Music is the simplest and most direct way of making a statement, even though it is subconscious.” 50 Kaper recounts times that actors approached him after the preview of a film and complimented him, saying that his music made their acting better. 51 He believes that the “interplay between the visual experience and the aural can be fascinating [and] the general public may not be aware of how they have been affected by the composer’s work.” 52

Other film composers that Thomas interviewed include Dimitri Tiomkin, Fred Steiner, Laurence Rosenthal, and John Williams. As composers, they emphasize the importance of music within film and how it builds the film’s character. Tiomkin thinks of music as a form of “storytelling,” with each piece of film music individualized to the film. 53 “Just try to transplant any picture’s musical score to similar scenes in another picture,” he explains. “You will find that

---


50 Ibid.

51 Ibid., 115.

52 Ibid., 114.

53 Ibid., 123.
the transplantation doesn’t live.”\textsuperscript{54} After explaining the process of putting film to music, Rosenthal states, “Something extraordinary has been added, perhaps warmth, perhaps a kind of life-energy, or an ‘atmosphere’ in the sense that the film begins to breathe in a new way.”\textsuperscript{55} He elaborates on the need for music within film, the need for silence, and the qualities that separate film from theatre. “Before it [film music] lies an endless path of discovery about the relation of sound to image, emotion, and idea.”\textsuperscript{56} According to John Williams, “one of the principle goals in writing for film music is to try to create a musical atmosphere that will marry with the film.”\textsuperscript{57}

This idea of “creating a musical atmosphere” is not a new concept. The atmosphere is defined by film scholars and historians Roger Manvell and John Huntley as “music which does its work without thrusting itself obtrusively on the attention of the audience.”\textsuperscript{58} In regards to cartoon music, Manvell and Huntley theorize that the public audiences have been conditioned since the inception of sound-animation-film in the 1930s to “accept unusual combinations of sound as normal on the sound-track.”\textsuperscript{59} Manvell and Huntly define the pairing of sound and animation as “visualized music,” making the two media inseparable.\textsuperscript{60} The idea of “visualized music” is

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 303.
\textsuperscript{56} Thomas, \textit{Film Score}, 307.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 328.
\textsuperscript{58} Roger Manvell and John Huntley, \textit{The Technique of Film Music} (London: Focal Press, 1957), 154.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 155.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 164.
fundamental to my analysis of “There They Go-Go-Go” in chapter four, as it attempts to prove that certain sounds accompanied by certain motions on screen create a reality and escape for the audience.

Larsen divides the functions of music within film into five general categories:

1. Synesthetic equivalents and structural matching – The connection of music and image within a film.
2. Formal Functions – Distinguishes the film from others, giving a feeling of wholeness.
3. Narrative Functions – Music that moves the plot along, dealing with events in time and space.
4. Emotional Functions – Intensifies or articulates moods already articulated [by] images, dialogue, camera angle, etc.
5. Leitmotifs and perceptual unity – A recognizable piece of music that occurs multiple times, bringing unity to the film.61

Film music can overlap into multiple categories, causing it to relate to the audience in multiple ways. The music from *Looney Tunes* commonly falls into function categories one, four, and five as it helps create the structure of the short (as in “Speaking of the Weather”) while also affecting the audience’s emotion and perception of the short.

**The Audience’s Perception**

According to Ernest Lindegren, the purpose of film music is to “arouse through the ear the same feelings…stirred through the eye. [But this] is not sufficient to explain the clearly deep-seated and instinctive demand for music with the silent film, which film audiences have always

---

61 Larsen, *Film Music*, 204, 208-209, 212-213. The category names are Larsen’s and the descriptions are my understanding of Larsen’s work.
felt."\(^{62}\) Lindegren is one of many film scholars who have attempted to understand the perception of film, an intriguing medium because it is one of the few arts that rely on both sight and sound. Theories on the topic abound.

Siegfried Kracauer gives a detailed description of how a film viewer can go in and out of consciousness and/or a dreamlike state. This lowered consciousness gives the perception of the film as being as realistic as a dream.\(^{63}\) In their book *Composing for the Films*, the first on the art of composing for film, Adorno and Eisler give the following definition of the audience’s perception:

> The public’s general attitude expresses both the human desire for music and the troubled need to escape, and no individual audience reaction can be subsumed under one or the other category. The only possible method is to determine in each individual case, on the basis of the function and nature of the music, to what extent it actually fulfills its mission or to what extent its humanity is used only to mask the inhuman.\(^{64}\)

These theories are important because they show that the pairing of music and animation within *Looney Tunes* created an escape for Americans during the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. Understanding the different purposes and functions within music is important in understanding the role of music within *Looney Tunes*.\(^{65}\) Next, knowing how and why film can create a reality is


\(^{64}\) Adorno and Eisler, *Composing for the Film*, 121.

\(^{65}\) Larsen, *Film Music*, 202-218.
relevant because the goal of animation is to create a reality and to understand this we must know how it is done.\textsuperscript{66} Finally, how the audience perceives the reality within film is vital to this thesis. If a reality can be understood by the viewer, then they can escape into that reality, leaving their own behind for a moment.\textsuperscript{67} These theories support the claims made in chapters three and four that \textit{Looney Tunes} creates an escape for people. The following two chapters analyze the music detail within two \textit{Looney Tunes} shorts and how the music pairs with the animation to create its own reality and an escape for the audience.

\textsuperscript{66} Prendergast, \textit{Film Music}, 204.

\textsuperscript{67} Kracauer, \textit{Theory of Film}, 157.
CHAPTER 3: “SPEAKING OF THE WEATHER”

“Speaking of the Weather” is a seven-minute short produced by Leon Schlesinger and released by Warner Brothers on September 4, 1937. “Speaking of the Weather” was the first color short supervised by Frank Tashlin and is the first in a series of three like it. This short’s animation was drawn by Joe D’Igalo and Volney Write, both known for their ability to animate personalities.1 Carl Stalling directed the music of this short. “Speaking of the Weather” contains many references to comedic pop-culture figures, songs, and works. This small film also contains folk and classical music reminiscing about better times and is centered on the song “Speaking of the Weather” by Harold Arlen. Tashlin cleverly weaves surface gags into a larger gag, stealing giggly laughter. The focal point of this short is escaping into happiness and laughter.

Synopsis

“Speaking of the Weather” is a song that became popular through Warner Brothers’ 1936 musical romance comedy film Gold Diggers of 1937. The short is set at midnight in a drug store with a magazine sale. Upon entering the store the screen pans to the magazine rack where the magazine covers begin to come to life. On the cover of Radio Stars a rugged cowboy Bob Boins plays his rendition of “Speaking of the Weather” on his “bazooka.”2 As the comedic cowboy poorly plays this song his trombone-like instrument begins to fall apart. Boins points to the cover of Radioland stating he cannot play as well as Ted Lewis. Lewis bounces off the cover of Radioland stating he cannot play as well as Ted Lewis. Lewis bounces off the cover of Radioland stating he cannot play as well as Ted Lewis.

---


2 Speaking of the Weather, directed by Frank Tashlin (Warner Brothers, 1937).
Radioland and asks “Is everybody happy?” An irritated looking man on a black and white newspaper answers with a snarky “no.” Lewis ignores this remark and begins playing “With Plenty of Money and You” on his clarinet. A chipmunk jumps into the cover of Music Master to pluck the bassline accompaniment on an upright bass with his tail. A silhouetted couple on the cover of The Dance, the wrestlers on the cover of The Ring, and the flowers on the cover of Home and Garden all begin to dance along with Lewis. At the end of Lewis’s performance all of the magazines come to life to applaud him.

The next scene begins with a small Middle-Eastern man in a loin cloth and turban playing a shawm on the cover of Asia Magazine. He plays snake charmer music and the hose on the cover of Better Homes and Gardens comes to life like a snake, splashing water on surrounding magazines. Water falls on The Etude where Leopold Stokowski, a conductor, is about to perform “The Storm” from Rossini’s William Tell. The conductor, clad in his white tailcoat, is not fazed by the sudden storm. He turns on his score-wiper, a windshield wiper for a music stand. The score-wiper acts as a metronome, counting the beats before the orchestra begins. “The Storm” plays with full orchestra, the conductor moving quickly and pulling his hair in unison with the music. After about twenty beats of Rossini’s music, Stokowski turns mid-phrase to face the audience and in Mel Blanc’s crackling voice sings the first line of “Speaking of the Weather.”

An all-female trio sitting at a white grand piano on Radioland continues singing the catchy tune. The ladies sing a few verses of the song joined by a variety of magazines and advertisements. One of these advertisements features sandwiches sticking their tongues out punctuating the ends of musical phrases and accompanied with the slogan: “Tongue Sandwiches Made with Blunder

---

3 Ibid.
Bread.” Another advertisement presents a smiling dancing lobster surrounded by the catchphrase “You won’t be crabby when you eat lobster!” When the trio sings the words “let the heavens dance” The Etude conductor signals a thunder rumble, and a kettle over a fire on Home and Fireside shrieks to a boil.⁵

After that chorus the Boswell Sister Trio begin another, but this time it is at about 75 beats per minute, a contrast to the previous 100. The music slows to draw attention to an angry mobster sneaking out of the front of Gang Magazine. The joyful tune ends with a cheerful applause from Child Magazine. The thug grabs a blow torch from Popular Mechanics and begins to rob a vault on the cover of Magazine of Wall Street. Cholly Jam (Charlie Chan), a detective from Detective Fiction Weekly, catches the thug in the act. The thug is judged by a jury from True Confessions, sentenced by a judge from Judge to life, and sent to a prison cell on the cover of Life. However, the gangster crawls behind a row of magazines and escapes through the bars on the cover of Liberty.

A posse formed by the Boy Scouts of America from Boy’s Life, Tarzan from Jungle Stories, the wildlife from Nature Magazine, and the Navy from Sea Stories cannot catch him. “A-Hunting We Will Go” plays in a minor key as the “thin man” and his dog try to sniff out the thug.⁶ The music changes to “Oh Where, Oh Where has My Little Dog Gone” when both man and dog have

⁴ Ibid.


⁶ Thomas Arne, A Hunting We Will Go (London, 1777).
their noses to the ground in search of the villain. The pair discover the thug hiding in a carriage on the cover of *Better Babies*.

The mobster is slammed down with balls from the player on *Polo*, lassoed by a cowboy on *Western Story*, and bombed by the pacific fleet on *Our Navy*. The mobster is finally caught by a fisherman after falling into the lake on *Country Life*. The fisherman hooks the mobster and throws him into a pin-ball table. The goon bounces around as the music plays a quick tempo “Speaking of the Weather.” The mobster bounces into the book *Twenty-Thousand Years in Sing Sing* which imprisons him for good. The mobster and a caricature of Hugh Herbert, a 1930s comedian, banter back and forth in giggles for a few seconds. The bantering ends when the gangster grabs and throws the globe off the *World Almanac* hitting a giggling Hugh Herbert in the head. The short ends ironically with the convict having stolen the light giggles and silly clapping of Hugh Herbert.

**Who’s Who in “Speaking of the Weather”**

“Speaking of the Weather” contains caricatures of ten different characters. A complete list of the caricatures along with pictures of the celebrities and their cartoon doubles can be found in Appendix A. The story itself is a recreation of the 1937 arrest of Louis Buchalter. Buchalter was a mob boss in the 1930s and is compared to Russian Mafia in a redacted file from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He was a part of the National Crime Syndicate (NCS) and associated

---


with mobsters nationwide. Through his connections Buchalter formed a private army of 250 “strong armed men”\(^9\) called Murder Inc. This organization murdered for the Cosa Nostra mob among other associations. Buchalter was in and out of prison multiple times in the 1920s and according to the FBI, he seemed “immune to punishment.”\(^10\) With the help of reporter Walter Winchell authorities arrested Buchalter and his partner Jacob Shapiro in 1937 and sent them to Sing Sing Prison in New York.\(^11\)

“Speaking of the Weather” depicts this story in a comical, yet true fashion. The thug coming out of *Gang Magazine* is caught for burglary, for which Buchalter was repeatedly arrested throughout his career. The short puts a humorous spin on the case when the mobster is sent to *Judge* and then sentenced to *Life* after being considered guilty at *True Confessions*. *Judge* and *Life* were comedy magazines in the 1930s and are listed in an interview with Tashlin as two of the funniest of that time.\(^12\) Walter Winchell is caricatured as Walter Snitchell. At the end of the short the mobster is thrown into the book. In this way, this short was not completely unattached from reality, but created humor through poking fun at a current event.

The first caricature seen in this short is Bob Burns (Bob Boins) playing “With Plenty of Money and You” on his “bazooka” -- a homemade trombone-like instrument fashioned from stove

\(^9\) Ibid.

\(^10\) Ibid.

\(^11\) Ibid.

\(^12\) Barrier and Gray, “An Interview with Frank Tashlin,” 1. *Life* Magazine was first published as a humor magazine. The magazine has since been bought and its purpose changed, but the name remains the same.
pipes and a whisky funnel.\textsuperscript{13} Bob Burns was a comedian and friend of Bing Crosby in the 1930s. Covers of magazines from that era describe him as having “A heart as big as the U.S.A.” and claim that “His rippling rhythms will keep you happy as you laugh ‘till it hurts!”\textsuperscript{14} Burns promoted laughter and happiness everywhere he traveled throughout the Great Depression. Originally from Arkansas, he became known as the “Jolly Arkansas Traveler.” Tashlin’s choice to put Boins at the opening of “Speaking of the Weather” presents an immediate light-heartedness and laughter, especially as the “bazooka” comically falls apart in his hands.

The next caricature Tashlin utilizes is Ted Lewis. Lewis is addressed by name and picks up the tune “With Plenty of Money and You” where Boins leaves off. Ted Lewis was a band master and entertainer during the 1920s and 30s whose life mission, per the Ted Lewis Museum, was to “Make everybody happy through education and entertainment.”\textsuperscript{15} Within this short Lewis says both of his catch phrases “Is Everybody Happy?” and “Yessssssssss!\textsuperscript{16} Lewis’ main instrument was the clarinet which he is shown playing in “Speaking of the Weather.” Lewis helps define this short as one full of happiness and laughter. Everything that Lewis stood for was an escape from the reality of the Great Depression.

\textsuperscript{13} "BOB BURNS, FAMED BAZOOKA COMEDIAN, IS CRITICALLY ILL." Chicago Daily Tribune, February 1, 1956.


\textsuperscript{16} "Ted Lewis, and His Shadow, are Gone." Los Angeles Times, August 26, 1971, 2.
Leopold Stokowski, the conductor from *The Etude*, was the conductor of the Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra and led a transcontinental tour with the orchestra in 1936, the first in American history. The orchestra gave thirty-three concerts in twenty-seven cities over the course of thirty-five days. Later in the decade, Walt Disney would partner with Stokowski and feature him in *Fantasia* (1940). Stokowski was chosen because of his national visibility, afforded to him by the 1936 tour.

The rest of the people caricatured fit the role of being comical and popular. The Boswell Sisters were a popular trio and would have been recognized from the cover of *Radioland*. Charlie Chan (Cholly Jam) was popular in the 1930s for his detective books, radio show, and movies. Another caricature featured was William Powell (Thin Man) who was featured in the 1934 film *Thin Man* based on the book by Dashiell Hammett. In the movie the “thin man” gets his name because he is thin on money, but in the cartoon short Powell is depicted as a man constructed of thin triangles. The next caricature is Greta Garbo, who is caricatured on the cover of *Photoplay* with contorted legs and oblong feet, forming a rocking chair, a play on her height and early

---


The final large caricature was that of Hugh Herbert who acted in multiple Warner Brothers feature films and was popular for his humor. Herbert is caricatured more times than anyone else in this short with five separate appearances. During “Speaking of the Weather” Herbert is always featured in a newspaper article stating,

This famous Warner Brothers star has been featured in many screen hits; including such outstanding productions as ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream,’ ‘Sing Me a Love Song’ and the cartoon classic ‘Coo Coo Nut Grove.’ He produces his devastating giggle by tickling himself with a feather duster worn strapped to the sole of his left foot.

Speaking of the Music

Carl Stalling weaves five Warner Brothers pop songs, three folk songs, and a western lullaby together to create the soundtrack that brings this short to life. Throughout the quickly changing songs there are three commonalities: meter, tempo and dotted rhythms. The entire short is set in 2/4 meter at a tempo of 80 beats per minute. The tempo is visualized by the windshield wiper in the Etude scene as the wiper acts like a metronome. Later, as the Thin Man and his dog are sniffing out the mobster their noses are sniffing on beat. Dotted rhythms appear in most of the songs in the short. Within this short the song “Speaking of the Weather” repeatedly returns, (see figure 1).

---


24 *Speaking of the Weather*, directed by Frank Tashlin (Warner Brothers, 1937).
A – “Speaking of the Weather”

B – A comedy adventure featuring “With Plenty of Money and You,” the snake charmer and the conductor.

A’ – “Speaking of the Weather”

C – The Thief

A” – “Speaking of the Weather”

Figure 1

The A sections vary in instrumentation, length, and repetitions of the chorus of the popular jazz song “Speaking of the Weather.” The first A section is used primarily as introductory material, sounding directly after the Looney Tunes opening theme, playing during the title of the short and the listing of the cast of creators. The opening line of “Speaking of the Weather” is composed of an eighth note-sixteenth note pattern, giving the song a swing musical idea throughout (see example 1).

Example 1

The lyrics of “Speaking of the Weather” create an escape for audiences. The chorus of the popular song speaks of a man getting swept away talking about his love for a woman. The weather is a metaphor for the girl’s beauty and personality. When Dick Powell sings this song in Gold Diggers of 1937 he has just made a large profit for his company through a deal. Dick Powell sings “Speaking of the Weather” to his girlfriend the receptionist, completely forgetting that he is in his office. This tune quickly became popular after its release in 1936. The 1937
audience of this short would have likely recognized the song and known the feelings associated with it of getting lost in singing about love.

Speaking of the Weather, Speaking of the Thunder  
Speaking of the lightning, it’s frightening dear what your eyes can do  
Let the heavens clash, zoom and swirl  
Let it play, boy meets girl  
Speaking of the weather, good old weather  
Ain’t it lovely weather and incidentally I love you²⁵

Though there are not any lyrics within the first A section, music is used to sweep the viewer away into the animation. Appendix B contains the complete lyrics of this song. This A section only lasts for five seconds, giving only the second half of the chorus. Section A fades into section B when the animation begins.

The B section contains a series of songs, caricatures and gags all revolving around laughter and happiness. This section begins with the popular jazz tune “Summer Night” by Harry Warren and Al Dubin (see example 2). It was recorded by Miles Davis and selected for the Great American Songbook as a jazz standard. In the short’s opening the tune is played in g minor on a muted trumpet. During the scene the animation consists of a simple clock in front of a drug store. Alone this image would be dull, but accompanied by the swinging melody of “Summer Night” the opening phrase sets the mood of a cool summer evening for the short.

This phrase is composed of an E-flat (flat-6) dotted eighth note, a B-natural sixteenth note, and resolves up a minor second to c natural which is held for two beats. This phrase is repeated and followed by a series of downward moving minor seconds and a major third. The last two pairs of intervals both begin on A-flat, the leading tone to G. The G resolution is not heard for two beats

creating more tension which dissipates in the next line of music. The rhythmic pattern from the opening is repeated, but this time spanning a perfect fifth and then moving up major second.

Example 2

The lyrics of this song, which are not sung during this short, are about a man being jealous of a summer night because he thinks the night can see his lover better than he can. This song personifies the summer night giving it eyes and the ability to move. As this song plays the animation on screen goes into the drug store and pans over a variety of magazines that begin to come to life.

Summer night, starry skies
You can see my sweetheart with a thousand eyes
Why have I only two
To behold a thousand charms I idolize
Summer night, you’ve a right
To come in her window when the day is through
She tells you all her thoughts
In the fading candle light
Summer night oh how I envy you

Stalling uses a common tone modulation to transition from “Summer Night” to “With Plenty of Money and You” played by the caricature of Bob Burns on his Bazooka. “With Plenty of Money and You,” by Harry Warren and Al Dubin was also featured in Gold Diggers of 1937 and quickly became a huge success. In this short the song is purely instrumental, played

---

charmingly by Ted Lewis on the clarinet. The original lyrics of this popular jazz song are stated below.

In spite of the worry that money brings,  
Just a little filthy lucre brings a lot of things.  
And I could take you to places you'd like to go  
But outside of that I've no use for dough.  
It's the root of all evil, of strife and upheaval,  
But I'm certain honey  
That life could be sunny  
With plenty of money and you.²⁷

These lyrics follow the theme of escape. The line “I could take you places you’d like to go, but outside of that I’ve no use for dough” implies that your only use for money is to spoil “baby.” This song also puts millionaires in a negative light and makes wealth seem more work than it is worth. This would have been an important mindset during the Great Depression. The Great Depression era caused an extreme gap between the upper and lower class with the middle class almost extinct.

“With Plenty of Money and You” continues the theme of the dotted rhythm with its syncopation. In the refrain the syncopation is long-short-long-short-long. The rhythm is half note-quarter note repeated with a tied quarter to a dotted half note at the end (example 3). This jazz song is played in such a way that the swung rhythm displaces the beat. This displacement causes the downbeat to lost. However, if a metronome is set at the beginning of the short, the beat is still the same at the end.

Example 3

The next scene features a small Middle-Eastern man sitting cross-legged playing a shawm.\(^{28}\) His melody is centered on the E-flat natural minor scale. Flourished with trills, this scalar pattern is repeated twice. The first time it ends with a swung triplet and the second time on a trill. Even though this is played by a shawm, it is played in a jazz-swing way like the preceding jazz pieces. In measure two of example 4, the second beat is written as straight eighth notes, but sounds as a more syncopated swing pattern. The scalar passage at the end of the melodic phrase contains a dotted eighth-sixteenth note rhythm, creating a long-short-long musical idea.

![Example 4](image)

During this scene the small Middle-Eastern man is dancing to his tune on the cover of *Asia Magazine* and looks over to the cover of *Better Homes and Gardens* to see a hose. The hose comes alive like a snake and begins squirting water on beat. This is another instance of a cartoonish metronome keeping the beat during the short. The snake charmer repeats the melodic material given in example 4, but this time a third higher. The heavily swung melody distorts the beat, but

the squirting hose keeps it intact. The Middle Eastern man and hose create an escape by reinforcing the lack of reality in the animation. The music brings inanimate objects to life, creating a humorous animated reality and an escape. This relates back to the discussion of film music in the introduction.

The hose sprays water on other magazines including The Etude. During this brief transition from Asia Magazine to The Etude, a muted trumpet plays variations on “September Rain,” a jazz tune by Harry Warren and Al Dubin that features swung quarter notes and melodic motion in major seconds and thirds. The whining of the muted trumpet is comical and ironic because this jazz tune is normally arranged for voice and piano, not trumpet. Once the conductor realizes rain is falling on his open score of Rossini’s “The Storm” from the William Tell overture he turns on his score-wiper and the jazz tune ends.

Stokowski, the conductor, taps his baton on the edge of his music stand silencing all the magazines and catching the attention of the audience. He begins to conduct “The Storm,” bending over with the quick downward run in E minor. He then gradually stands up during each repeated octave emphasizing the beginning of each by pulling on his mop of white hair. The combination of motion and music gives the effect of a sprinkler, musically painting the picture through the quick sixteenth note run and followed by syncopated quarter notes (see example 5).

Stalling’s rendition of “The Storm” is not far off from the original. Stalling simplifies the runs and makes the tempo a little faster. The upward movement by third or major second of each repetition of the phrase is the same as Rossini’s original. Rossini primarily uses strings and trombones to give the effects of the storm during this section, having the strings play the fast-

downward scalar passage accompanied by trombones during the longer syncopated rhythms that follow. Stalling uses woodwinds to sound the downward E minor scale and a combination of woodwinds and brass during the syncopated quarters. This instrumentation causes Stalling’s scale to sound harsher than Rossini’s, but makes the transition between songs easier because the instrumentation remains the same throughout the short with different instruments being emphasized.

The E minor chord at the beginning of the phrase is forcefully accented, played at fortissimo, the loudest note of the short so far. The dynamics decrescendo slightly during the downward scale. Then with each repetition of the octaves the piece gains intensity until it arrives at the next chord, beginning the next phrase. With each phrase beginning higher than the previous (see example 5) the intensity builds throughout like the classic “Rossini crescendo.” The E natural minor scale following the A minor chord during the third repetition of the phrase, continues to build until it is abruptly cut off when the conductor turns around singing “Speaking of the Weather,” waving his arm to keep time. This concludes the B section and marks the beginning of A’.

Stalling’s use of “The Storm” facilitates an escape for the audience in two main ways. First, this piece created an escape because it was loved by many and a popular piece in the classical repertoire. Percival R. Kirby, a South African ethnomusicologist, writes about the performance of
operas, stating in 1952 that, “every musician is familiar with Rossini’s *William Tell* overture.”\(^{30}\)

The popularity of this piece is reiterated in the program notes that the Netherlands Opera, in Amsterdam, wrote for their performance of *William Tell*. They state “Then there are tunes that might be called ‘operatic escapees’ -- melodies heard so often, and in so many places, that they've earned a life of their own, independent of the operas for which they were created, to the point that they're barely associated with opera at all.”\(^{31}\) This relates back to the discussion in chapter 2 on how classical music created an escape for Americans. The second way that this piece formed an escape is its ability to bring the animation and ‘gag’ to life. Stalling and the animators collaborated to perfectly time the conductor’s movements with the music and relate them both to the short as a whole. This form of escape relates back to the discussion of media psychology presented within the introduction.

The A’ section is entirely composed of four variations of “Speaking of the Weather.” The first is simply the caricature of the Boswell Sisters singing in close three-part harmony, accompanied by the piano. The second is similar to the first, but punctuated with outside characters. After each phrase of the line “Speaking of the Weather” during the beginning of the chorus, an advertisement for “blunder bread” echoes with “la-la-la-la” sticking their tongues out


http://worldofopera.org/operas/operas/item/2694-more-than-just-a-prettu-overture-rossinis-william-tell?pg=page2
between their slices. This variation is further punctuated with a shrieking tea kettle after each repetition of “let the heavens clash.”

The third variation of this “Speaking of the Weather” is played by a big band with the melody accompanied by castanets. A dancing lobster moves across the screen acting like he is playing castanets with his claws. This quick-moving variation is followed by the Boswell Sisters singing again, this time at half tempo, a change that draws attention to the mobster entering the screen.

The C section utilizes music that depicts the escape, chase, and recapture of the mobster from the cover of *Gang Magazine*. Once the mobster has escaped and the reporter has announced that the thug is on the loose, a scout on the front of *American Boy* plays the assembly call through his bugle. This call is used to signal troops to assemble at a specific location.

All the magazines come to life with dozens of characters joining posse. The Bugle call is repeated a step higher as the posse gathers.

This bugle call maintains the theme of dotted rhythms, a constant theme throughout this short. The dotted eighth note – sixteenth note rhythm is straight and played exactly as written. Previously all the rhythms in jazz tunes had been swung, exaggerating the dotted or longer beat. “The Storm” also contained syncopation, but did not have a clear long-short-long rhythmic pattern. The clear placement of the beat within the bugle call causes the listener to snap to attention.

The assembly scene shows the boy scouts, Tarzan, wild animals, the navy and cowboys all joining together in the fight. *Jungle Stories* features Tarzan beating on his chest. A main
characteristic of his music are moving octaves played by the piano in the bass, pounding at the same time Tarzan is pounding his chest. *The Nature Magazine* is characterized by low chords played by brass instruments moving up and down minor thirds as the Tarzan call echoes above them. *Sailor Stories* and *Our Navy* bring a complete change in timbre. The music becomes military-like featuring popular tune “The Song of the Marines” by Harry Warren, which is full of fan-fare and dotted rhythms, ending the call to assembly in the same way that it began.\(^\text{32}\)

The next scene introduces the Thin Man.\(^\text{33}\) The Thin Man struts out of his book to a variation of the jazz song “Boulevardier from the Bronx” by Harry Warren and Al Dubin.\(^\text{34}\) This melody played by the flute and higher woodwinds is composed entirely of major thirds, major seconds, and a perfect fourth (see example 7). During this melody, the Thin Man is pictured walking his dog past a row of *The Saturday Evening Post*, lined up side by side with a countryside picture on the cover. The major melody combined with the countryside image give the Thin Man a simple appearance of going for a leisurely stroll in the park.

---

\(^{32}\) Dubin, “The Song of the Marines,” 1937.

\(^{33}\) Throughout this chapter the Thin Man is a book, movie and character. In this instance the Thin Man (William Powell) is walking out of the book *Thin Man* on scene. The movie *Thin Man* (1934) was based on the novel *Thin Man* (1933) by D. Hammett. This short shows the book on the shelf next to the magazines with the caricature of William Powell.

The screen pans over to *Dog World*, where a white Boston Terrier recognizes the Thin Man as his owner and jumps off of the page. The Thin Man and dog are seen sniffing the ground with their bottoms in the air, searching for the mobster. Their noses sniff audibly in time with the metronome. The folk melody “A-Hunting We Will Go” plays as they sniff.\(^{35}\)

Stalling’s rendition of “A-Hunting We Will Go”\(^ {36}\) is composed of a minor third and minor seconds. The tune, which is usually major, has a different melodic twist yet the same basic rhythm (see example 8). Stalling’s rendition is filled with dissonance and outlines the key of G minor. The original, written by Thomas Arne (see example 9), is much more consonant outlining the G major triad. Both versions are composed primarily of long-short-long-short rhythms following the theme from the rest of the short.

\[\text{Example 8}\]
Example 9

Example 8 clearly shows how Stalling’s version outlines the minor triad. The section begins on B-flat, moves down a minor third to G and then eventually ends on D. The minor dissonance deepens the image of the man and dog sleuthing. If the music were major the pair would be joyfully hunting, but as it is they are seriously, carefully hunting out the mobster. Thus, if Stalling had used a transposed version of the original “A-Hunting We Will Go,” the scene would not have the same meaning.

After “A-Hunting We Will Go” ends, the man grabs the dog and blindfolds him. This may seem a bit comical on its own, but when paired with the music it is hilarious. Stalling selects the folk song “Oh Where, Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone” for this moment, a comical choice because this folk tune tells the story of a man searching for a dog. The dog and man, who had previously been searching for the thug with their eyes and nose, are now relying on their noses alone. This gag would not be complete without the music. This relates back to the discussion from the introduction on how music makes the motion, in this case the gag, comes to life and how that creates an escape.
The man and blindfolded dog walk along and when they are about to find the villain the music changes to a Mexican dance. The dance outlines the G-flat major triad in a set of three triplets. The melody then descends the scale in repeated sixteenth note-dotted eighth note rhythm (see example 10). The melody is repeated, this time up a major third, outlining the B-flat major triad. This brief melody emphasizes the dotted-rhythm theme that has carried throughout the short.

The dotted rhythms throughout this short are significant because they are a characteristic of the swing-jazz style. All of the songs by Harold Arlen, Harry Warren, and Al Dubin are composed in this style. This style, as discussed in chapter 2, brought an escape for many Americans. Even though some of the songs that contain this rhythmic pattern, such as “A-Hunting We Will Go” and “Oh Where, Oh Where has My Little Dog Gone,” are not swing-jazz songs, the continuity of this pattern throughout brings unity to the diversity of blocks Stalling used to build the music for this short.

The final song featured in the C section is the popular song “All’s Fair in Love and War” by Harry Warren and Al Dubin, which was also featured along with “Speaking of the Weather” in *Gold Diggers of 1937*. This song is in a major key with a large upward scalar passage. As it is played here, the thief is being pounded by polo balls, lassoed by a cowboy, struck by a bag of toys that Santa drops, and shot by the cannons on the Battleship from *Our Navy*. Each event occurs on a down beat simultaneous with an accented note, an effect that strengthens both the music and the animation. The animation reinforces the meter and the music brings the animation to life. This
scene ends with the Battleship’s bombs blowing the thief onto a pin-ball table and “Speaking of the Weather” begins again.

The final A” section plays with a full Big-Band. There are multiple brass instruments and woodwinds playing the melody of “Speaking of the Weather.” Within this section the chorus of the song is played only once through becoming *Allegrando* as it ends. The first phrase broadens as the thief is being thrown into prison. The second broadens and becomes louder as the short ends and the thief steals Hugh Herbert’s laughter.

This short is a great example of how the music within *Looney Tunes* was used to help form an escape for people during the Great Depression. This short is named after and created around a popular song “Speaking of the Weather.” This short features a section of the popular classical piece the *William Tell* overture. Seamlessly woven together, the folk melodies of “A-Hunting We Will Go,” “Oh Where, Oh Where has My Little Dog Gone,” and popular jazz tunes create an escape through their familiarity and style. Silly gags and clever music work together to form a comical adventure in bringing magazines to life. This reinforces the discussion, presented in the introduction, of how music used in film creates an escape for the audience. Tashlin and Stalling’s collaboration created a short that borrows from many aspects of American culture, creating a comical escape.
CHAPTER 4: “THERE THEY GO-GO-GO”

“There They Go-Go-Go,” directed by Chuck Jones, was released on November 10, 1956. This short contains no speaking and relies entirely on music to convey its message. Jones relied heavily on his team and when asked to describe how they work together he replied,

The nearest analogy for studio animation seems to be Wagnerian Opera, which requires expert set designers, virtuosos of lighting, voice-coaches, scene-changers, costumers, nowadays experts at getting the unobtrusive microphone into the right place, even someone adept at comforting a sulky bassoon.¹

His willingness to listen to the ideas of those on his team is evident in the quality of his work. Michael Maltese wrote the storyline and Richard Thompson, Ken Harris, Abe Leviton and Ben Washam created the animation. The layout and backgrounds were created by Philip Deguard with effects animation by Harry Love. Carl W. Stalling is credited with musical composition and direction.²

“There They Go-Go-Go” contains two characters, Wile E. Coyote and Road Runner. In his autobiography, Chuck Amuck, Jones writes that he based the character of Wile E. Coyote on Mark Twain’s description in his book Roughing-it. Twain describes,

The coyote is a long, slim, sick and sorry-looking skeleton, with a gray wolf-skin stretched over it, in a tolerable bushy tail that forever sags down with despairing expression of forsakenness and misery, a furtive and evil eye, and a long sharp face with a slightly lifted lip and exposed teeth. He has a general slinking expression all over. The coyote is a living, breathing allegory of want.³


² There They Go-Go-Go, directed by Chuck Jones (Warner Brothers, 1956).

³ Mark Twain, Roughing It (Chicago: American Publishing Company, 1872). Jones recalls that his parents encouraged him to “swim, read and laugh” all qualities that made Jones a great
While this may not describe the real coyotes of the wild, it certainly depicts Jones’s Wile E. Coyote. Throughout all of the Road Runner-Coyote films Wile E. Coyote attempts relentlessly to catch the speedy bird. Sadly, the Coyote’s schemes always end in self-destruction. Jones states “The only enemy the Coyote has is his overwhelming stubbornness. Like all of us, at least some of the time, he persists in a course of action long after he has forgotten his original reason for embarking on it.” Jones describes further that the Coyote is a depiction of his own “war with all tools, multiplied only slightly.” Jones describes himself as the opposite of a handy man, with household projects commonly ending in disaster. “It is easier for me to have the Coyote make one small human error and fall on his face than it is for me to fall off a ladder carrying a bucket of yellow paint. I have never fallen off a ladder carrying anything but yellow paint.” Giving the Coyote a human element causes viewers to have empathy for the poor creature. The famished Coyote devises plans that should work, but there is always at least one thing wrong which leads to his humiliation.

________________________


4 Jones, Chuck Amuck, 221.

5 Ibid., 219.

6 Ibid., 221.
In *Chuck Amuck*, Jones quotes Groucho Marx: “Comedy is not so much what you do, as what you don’t do.”

To create this series, Jones and background artist Maurice Noble devised a set of rules for each Road Runner-Coyote short.

1. The Road Runner cannot harm the Coyote except by going “Beep-Beep!”
2. No outside force can harm the Coyote – only his own ineptitude or the failure of the ACME products.
3. The Coyote could stop anytime – IF he were not a fanatic. (Repeat: “A Fanatic is one who redoubles his effort when he has forgotten his aim.” – George Santayana.)
4. No dialogue ever except “Beep-Beep!”
5. The Road Runner must stay on the road – otherwise, logically, he would not be called Road Runner.
6. All actions must be confined to the natural environment of the two characters – the southwest American desert.
7. All materials, tools, weapons, or mechanical conveniences must be obtained from the ACME Corporation.
8. Whenever possible, make gravity the Coyote’s greatest enemy.
9. The Coyote is always more humiliated than harmed by his failures.

“There They Go-Go-Go” follows all of these rules.

Another strength of Road Runner-Coyote cartoons is the cutting-edge backgrounds created by Noble and his “apprentice” Phillip Deguard. This team of background designers created a vibrant visualization of Southwest America. Noble guided the direction that the backgrounds took, as he was born and raised and Southwest America, and he created a specific stylized design that

---

7 Ibid., 224.
8 Ibid., 225.
9 Robert J. McKinnon, *Stepping Into the Picture: Cartoon Designer Maurice Noble* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008), 86. Phil Deguard worked closely with Maurice Noble on many backgrounds for Jones. Deguard was an excellent background artist in his own right (82) but worked under Noble’s direction on all Road Runner-Coyote cartoons.
was based on reality. However, Noble tried to “push-ahead” from reality. In his own words, “I would take a tiny pebble and have a monstrous thing sitting on top of it, looking as if it might fall over! That’s ‘pushing-ahead’ from reality.”

“There They Go-Go-Go” was written well after “Speaking of the Weather and shows how Stalling refined the skills he gained during his early days at Warner Brothers. One example is Stalling’s use of musical blocks. Each block contains a motive individually characterized by its melody, intervals, instrumentation, timbre, rhythm, and through its association with animation. Stalling uses musical blocks in “There They Go-Go-Go” in an unpredictable pattern, which leaves the viewer wondering what will come next. Musically, no two gags in this short begin and end the same way (although visually most begin with the Coyote plotting and end with his humiliation). This unpredictability enables the short to become more of an “escape” than ever, because the audience cannot fit the music or animation into a predetermined form or formula. The musical blocks are arranged in such a way that the musical form remains ambiguous, not fitting into any traditional form such as verse-chorus or rondo.

The second way this piece directly relates to earlier shorts is that it creates an escape in more than one way. Aside from the use of musical blocks, there is no strong storyline. This creates an escape because it further separates the reality of the animation from the reality of the audience.

Ibid., 141. These “pushing-ahead” techniques that Noble was utilizing draw the viewers’ attention to the background, a place not usually observed in detail. Noble portrayed Southwestern America so well that a man from France who had seen many Road Runner-Coyote shorts came to visit the Bryce Canyon just to see what it really looked like. To the Frenchman’s surprise, Noble’s drawings were incredibly similar.
As discussed in the introduction, the musical blocks enliven the animated reality, making it an escape. The only plot is as follows:

1. The Coyote schemes a plan
2. The Road Runner zooms by
3. The Road Runner is not caught in the Coyote’s trap
4. The Coyote is humiliated

All of this happens in a matter of seconds and is repeated eleven times throughout each Road Runner-Coyote short.\(^{11}\) In a 1971 interview, Frank Tashlin, a fellow director at Warner Brothers stated, “I see these Road Runner cartoons—which I'd never seen in theaters—and they are joke-topper, joke-topper. Tries to catch him, sets up a thing, boom, back-fires. That happens twenty times and that's the picture.”\(^{12}\) While this plot seems simple, it is also self-contained and restricted. In *A Flurry of Drawings*, Jones states, “You don’t lose when you restrict, no, you gain. That’s the true of all art.”\(^{13}\)

---

\(^{11}\) McKinnon, *Stepping into the Picture*, 17. Jones and Noble were extremely anal about every detail of the Road Runner-Coyote shorts down to the number of gags allowed. They determined that exactly eleven gags would occur within each short, no more, no less. They thought that eleven was just enough times to facilitate laughter but not bore the audience with repetitiveness.


\(^{13}\) Kenner, *A Flurry of Drawings*, 35.
Synopsis

“There They Go-Go-Go” begins with Wile E. Coyote forming a chicken out of desert clay. He scurries to his bread oven where he anxiously bakes his chicken while impatiently tapping his foot and examining his nails. He then pulls out his chicken and licks his lips in excited anticipation as he struggles to pull off a leg. However, upon his first bite the hard clay chicken breaks the Coyote’s front tooth off. Setting the roasted clay chicken aside, the Coyote goes back to his clay pit. He quickly molds and fires a trashcan and throws the disappointing chicken away. The screen freezes with the Coyote’s foot still on the trash can lever, hands on his hips and a vicious look in his eye. At this point, Wile E. Coyote is introduced as “Coyote (Famishius Fantasticus).” This is one of only four moments in the entire short that words or symbols are used to convey meaning.

Road Runner dashes across the screen knocking Wile E. Coyote into his trash can. A bewildered Coyote peaks out, with a question mark above his head. The screen pans and freezes on Road Runner, grinning cheekily. This log-legged purple and blue feathered bird is introduced as “Road-Runner (Dig-Outius Tid-Bittius).” Road Runner sticks his tongue out at the Coyote, giving his signature “Beep-Beep!” and dashes off screen. The Coyote, still in his trashcan, begins running in place, tongue dangling and clay chicken perched on his head. The famished coyote frees himself from the trash can and begins chasing the beautiful Road Runner. The rest of the film shows the Coyote chasing and attempting nine times to capture the Road Runner. Throughout all the attempts the Coyote only injures himself.

The first Road Runner-Coyote gag is a simple chase scene. The Road Runner, true to his name, is seen running down a winding road through the desert. The Coyote does not follow the road but instead cuts across the desert in hot pursuit. As the Coyote gets closer, the Road Runner gets faster, leaving a trail of fire behind him. The Coyote runs through the fire, setting his feet
aflame. After stomping out his flaming toes, the Coyote sniffs the air only to realize that his tail is also aflame. The terrified coyote rushes to a tree where he finds a Y shaped branch. Branch in hand, the Coyote frantically searches for water. When the stick points down the Coyote digs a hole and promptly sits in his puddle. With a piano glissando and sigh of relief the Coyote turns and plots his next attack.

The first scheme that the Coyote attempts puts him standing at the top of a cliff with the road below. He holds a large spear and has rope tied from his belly to an adjoining cliff. However, when he swings down to puncture the innocent Road Runner he misses and drives the spear and himself in the ground.

The Coyote’s next plot is more elaborate. He places a revolver on a large spring, squishing it in a hole by the road. He attaches a string to the spring door and goes to wait behind a rock. When Road Runner zooms by the Coyote pulls the string but to his dismay the spring stretches too far and the revolver shoots the Coyote in the head. The remaining schemes similarly involve a huge sling-shot, a giant rocket, and dynamite.

The Coyote’s final attempt to capture the Road Runner is the most comical of them all. He is seen at the bottom of a canyon where he has piled rocks on top of two boards with a rope tied beneath them, so that when it is pulled the rocks will fall on the road below. When the Road Runner zooms through the Coyote pulls the string and the doors open, but the rocks do not fall. Angrily, the Coyote runs up the mountain and stomps on top of his rock pile. When that does not work, he stands under the looming pile poking it with a large stick. The pile begins to crumble and and the Coyote holds up a sign that states “In heaven’s name what am I doing?” The Coyote opens a tiny pink umbrella, attempting to hold off the coming avalanche. Once he is buried, the antagonist slowly pokes his pole up and raises a white flag of surrender that says “The End.”
The Musical Character

The musical fabric of this short is simultaneously simple and dense. The music consists of motives that form musical blocks. *Grove Music Dictionary* Online defines a motive as:

A short musical idea, melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, or any combination of these three. A motive may be of any size and is most commonly regarded as the shortest subdivision of a theme or phrase that still maintains its identity as an idea. It is most often thought of in melodic terms and it is this aspect of motive that is connoted by the term ‘figure’.  

In this analysis a motive is also defined by the animation that it accompanies.

“There They Go-Go-Go” uses twenty-seven different motives, which together comprise the short’s musical form. Some motives are thirty seconds long, while others are a brief one or two. Within this analysis, a “scene” is defined as a change in action or when the characters move on to the next “gag.” There are eleven scenes in this short. Figure 1 shows the motives in each scene for the entire sort, along with the timing in the short.

---

Figure 1 – The form of “There They Go-Go-Go”

The following discussion analyzes the patterns found within this short, which motives are emphasized most, which scenes stand out musically and why these features facilitate escape.

Media-psychologist Stuart Fischoff stated that,

In film music it was found that an audience could be influenced into buying the character or mood state of an actor—rather than simply of a scene and its overall mood—if a theme, ballad, or motif was connected to the actor and repeated over and over, with tonal variations, no matter what the context.  

The motives in this short will be judged on their ability to create an escape based on Fischoff’s research and the discussion presented in the introduction. All musical examples were found in the Carl W. Stalling Papers at the American Heritage Center in Laramie, Wyoming. The musical examples have been left in the composer’s original writing.

Aside from the musical material, silence is an important part of this short. In Figure 1 the # symbol represents the swelling motive and the * symbol represents when there is musical silence. In many ways silence is just as important as the music itself. In the words of John Cage, “The

---

material of music is sound and silence. Integrating these is composing.”\textsuperscript{16} These moments of silence are obvious because not only does the music stop, the animation moves minimally as well. The silent moments are diagramed in figure 2, where the asterisks indicate moments of silence (with two asterisks indicating two such moments in a scene) and a slash indicates no moments of silence.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|}
\hline
Scene 1: /  \\
Scene 2: **  \\
Scene 3: /  \\
Scene 4: /  \\
Scene 5: *  \\
Scene 6: /  \\
Scene 7: *  \\
Scene 8: /  \\
Scene 9: /  \\
Scene 10: **  \\
Scene 11: /  \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\hspace{1cm}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Scene 1: / & ** & / & / & / & / & / & / & / & /  \\
Scene 7: / & / & / & / & / & / & / & / & / & /  \\
Scene 8: / & / & / & / & / & / & / & / & / & /  \\
Scene 10: / & / & / & / & / & / & / & / & / & /  \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Moments of silence.}
\end{figure}

Figure 2 contains two copies of the same chart. Chart A is vertical for the convenience of locating scene numbers. When turned horizontally (chart B) the pattern in the moments of silence becomes clearer. It is a palindrome -- the pattern is the same backwards and forwards. Therefore, the first and last scenes are equivalent. So are scenes two and ten, both of which include two silent moments, which are used to show the Coyote’s personality. Conversely, the scenes with only one silent moment the personality of the Road Runner is highlighted. The silent moments are used to define the character’s personalities, causing the viewer to have empathy towards them. This creates an escape as the viewer’s understanding of the characters on screen deepens.

The first two moments of silence, located in scene two, occur at the end of the scene. These moments are used to introduce Wile E. Coyote and the Road Runner to the viewers. During these

moments, the character being introduced is frozen in the middle of the screen, the music is silent and his name is written. This pause causes the viewer to pay close attention to the state of the characters. During the Coyote’s introduction, he has a malicious grin on his face with one hand on his hip and the other leaning on his trash can. The Road Runner is grinning gleefully during his introduction, blue and purple feathers puffed and orange beak glistening. This brief moment not only introduces the characters, but also their personalities in a matter of seconds.

The next two silent moments occur in scenes five and seven where silence is used to announce the Road Runner’s entrance. In scene five the Coyote freezes, startled by Road Runner’s distant “Beep-Beep!” Scene seven contains a similar moment, but shows only the trap set for the Road Runner. The Road Runner announces his presence with a loud “Beep-Beep!” and then zooms by leaving a bewildered Coyote behind. During these moments it is clear the Road Runner is completely oblivious to the Coyote’s presence and plots. These two moments build the innocent personality of the Road Runner by highlighting his unexpected entries and rapid “Beep-Beep!”

The final two silent moments occur during scene ten, when the Coyote has placed himself inside of a large rocket. During this silence, viewers can observe the obvious flaws in the Coyote’s plan. Not only is the rocket aimed directly at the cliff, nowhere near the road, but there is no logical way for the Coyote to catch the Road Runner from within the rocket. The silence is then broken when the Coyote re-emerges and lights the rocket. It is again silent as the wick of the rocket burns down. These silent moments build the Coyote’s character, showing that he is so determined he is blind to error by emphasizing that even though his plan will clearly fail, he nonetheless follows it through to completion.
Figure 1 also indicates the motives used in each scene. The A motive is characterized by a series of downward moving upward stepping intervals: up a third followed by leaping down a perfect fifth. Each A section has approximately four repetitions of this motive (see example 1).

Example 1 – Motive A from Scene 1

Example 1 contains the opening music for the first gag of the short when the Coyote is molding a clay chicken. This specific motive is played at the piano dynamic by the violins. This example begins on G and moves up to B then leaps down a fifth to E then up to G. The melody leaps down a perfect fifth again to C followed by an E a third above. This figure causes the E minor and C major triads to interlock, sharing their common tones, E and G.

Stalling slurs the motive, effecting an extreme legato. In other areas of the score he separates repeating groups of two from each other with small slurs. However, in the A motive, Stalling draws straight lines connecting each note to the next, as seen in example 2, which occurs about six measures after example 1 and still represents the Coyote forming a clay chicken. Here, Stalling writes a two-voice violin part, again at piano. Instead of making the two voices parallel, they contrast each other. The top voice follows the same pattern as the previous example. The lower voice moves in the opposite direction by stepping down a third, up a second, down a third, up a second, etc. The strings playing in harmony give the Coyote’s action more weight as he forms his chicken. This motive emphasizes the importance of the chicken and in turn the Coyote’s starvation.
The A motive can also be seen in example 3, from scene six. At this point in the short the Coyote has attached himself to a sling, which is tied to a long rope and attached to the top of a tree. This causes the tree to bend down, almost touching the ground. In hopes of being flung forward, onto the Road Runner, the Coyote cuts the rope. However, instead of flying out of his sling, the Coyote is whipped back and forth from one side of the tree to the other like the hand of a metronome. Example 3 shows the melodic figure that accompanies this swinging motion. On the first of each pair of notes the Coyote hits the ground. This example has the same melodic motion but with different intervals. Stalling may have made the leap down between the smaller upward intervals larger to emphasize how hard the Coyote hits the ground. Additionally, in this example Stalling also writes the motive in two voices. This time they are on separate staffs and are moving in parallel motion. The top staff is still played by the strings and the bottom staff is now played by brass instruments. The figure is now played at *forte*. These elements make the motion of the Coyote whipping back and forth even stronger.
The final example of the A motive occurs in Scene 11 (see example 4). This A motive is different from the others in that the melodic motion is inverted and it is played *fortissimo*. This example moves down a second and up a sixth like the lower voice from Example 2. The bass line is playing an upward moving chromatic scale from D-sharp to A. The alto voice contains the regular A motive this time stepping up a second, down a fourth. This combination of melodic lines builds suspense as the Coyote is clenching his fists, widening his eyes and grinding his teeth in anger. This motive emphasizes the Coyote’s growing rage through moving seconds.

Figure 3 shows all of the instances of the A motive. In examples 1 and 2 the Coyote is content building his clay chicken, a plan which ends in a crushed tooth. Example 3 accompanies the Coyote’s defeat as this motive accentuates him whipping back and forth instead of catching the Road Runner. Example 4 builds the Coyote’s rage over yet another failed plan. Each of these examples show how the A motive is used to describe the Coyote’s changing emotional state through melodic direction, dynamics, and instrumentation. This is important because without the accompaniment the animation would not be able to portray the same emotion. This strong and quick changing emotion deepens the character of the Coyote, making him more relatable for the viewer and creating an escape.
The B motive is the next motive heard in “There They Go-Go-Go” and is characterized by a series of upward moving sixteenth notes followed by a quarter note. Examples 5 through 7 contain Motive B from different scenes of this short. In all cases the B motive is used as transition between two larger motives. Figure B plays in example 5 as the Coyote is standing up, in example 6 the Coyote closes the latch on the spring door for the loaded gun, and in example 7 when the Coyote pulls and unwinds a string connected to spike balls that fly into the air. These examples show how Stalling used music as a text-painting tool. When the motive is going up, something in the animation is going up as well; either the Coyote, the latch or the spike-balls.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene 1:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 3:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 4:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 5:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 6:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 7:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 8:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 9:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 10:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene 11:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 – The A motive.

Example 5 – Motive B from scene 1

Example 6 – Motive B from scene 5
Similarly, the # motive is used almost entirely for text-painting purposes. It is characterized by two quick moving sixteenth note runs. The first run is always upward moving and the second always down (see examples 8-12). This motive is the most common in the entire short, (see figure 4) occurring almost every scene and accompanying the animated actions of jumping, hiding, lifting and dropping (see examples 8-12).

The bassoon plays example 8 at the beginning of scene five. The first four sixteenth notes play as the Coyote lifts the trap door and the last four sixteenth notes play when he slaps it down.
The dynamic markings, a swell of a crescendo followed by a diminuendo are seen above the figure depicting the lifting and shutting of the door.

Example 9 is the quickest of all of the # examples given and is played at mezzo forte by the flutes when the Road Runner darts into view and then quickly off again. Stalling wrote “Road Runner in the distance” above this figure. Again, this figure is given the dynamic markings to swell in the middle. The quickness of the figure accentuates the Road Runner’s speed. The timbre of the flute gives the Road Runner elegance.

The # figure from scene five (in example 10) is different from all the others as it is played by a distorted instrument. The large arcing squiggly line in Example 10 symbolizes the # motive. This example of the motive is both comical and clever. It plays as the Coyote is lifted off the ground by a large spring that has failed to shoot the Road Runner and instead shot the Coyote in the face. The spring retracts pulling the Coyote with it, back into the small trap door it came from. As the spring lifts the Coyote in the air the # figure moves up and when the Coyote falls into the trap the figure moves down. Stalling’s use of the distorted instrument here makes the Coyote’s demise seem comical rather than sad: he has a bewildered look on his face as he is being lifted, which adds to the humor.

Scene seven contains two uses of the # motive (see examples 11 and 12). Example 11 vividly shows how Stalling used the music to paint the animation. It occurs when the Coyote hides and waits for the Road Runner. The Coyote leaps into the air, pauses, puts his hands together, and dives behind a pile of rocks. A run of four sixteenth notes moves up the scale from C-sharp to F-sharp. The F-sharp resolves to a G which is held for a quarter note. The G is followed by a downward run of four sixteenths from B to F-sharp. The F-sharp resolves down this time an eighth
note on E followed by a quarter note rest. There are specific directions for the animation below this motive. Stalling wrote, “Leap, hold in air, dive down.”

Example 12 shows the # figure from the end of scene seven when the Coyote has concocted a circle of spikey metal balls tied together on a pole. The Coyote’s goal was to spin them quickly so that they would hit the Road Runner. However, they spin too quickly and take off like a helicopter, landing (of course) on the Coyote’s head. After the balls have all fallen, one lone ball lifts itself and falls on the Coyote’s forehead. This is funny because these balls can clearly not bounce, therefore the ball bouncing up and falling twice on the Coyote’s head is of the animated world. Stalling uses the # figure to enliven this lone ball lifting and falling. This repetition of the figure is played at mezzo forte and is split between two staves of the music. The upward running sixteenth notes are played by the bassoon and the downward running sixteenth notes by the flute. This instrumentation adds to the humor of this moment.

The C and J motives are the final two motives that will be discussed. These motives both depict the motions and movements of Wile E. Coyote. The C motive is composed of run of four to eight staccato sixteenth notes (see example 13). This stepping motion is played by pizzicato strings and bassoon. The bassoon gives each step weight and the strings make each step a tip-toe. This stepping makes the Coyote sound like he is always sneaking around.

From scene one:  
From scene eight:  

Example 13 – Motive C
Similarly, the J motive accentuates the Coyote’s eye blinks with a small two-note motive, one note for the eyelid shutting and the next for it opening. Example 14 shows the first two blinks of the short as the Coyote blinks in astonishment because the Road Runner has just zoomed by him. The second two sets of blinks belong to the Road Runner. The Road Runner’s blinks act in a response to the Coyote’s bewilderment.

Example 14 – Motive J from scene two.

All other blinks and instances of the J motive are performed by the Coyote. The blink motive is played by a variety of instruments from bassoon to xylophone. Example 15 gives a few more examples of blinks from this short.

Example 15 – J Motive

Motives B, #, C and J are all used as text-painting tools. There are a variety of other motives throughout this short, but these are the most significant because they help build the emotion of the characters and short. When the characters become real it is easier to forget your reality and acknowledge theirs. These motives allow for this to happen. The B, #, C and J motives create an escape by embodying the animation and making it come to life.
“There They Go-Go-Go” also contains other patterns and formal connections. One links three and eleven, the first and last scenes containing a Road Runner-Coyote gag. Scene eleven contains the melodic material from scene three, but only backwards. Another one is in scene three, where the K and L motives are alternated during the chase (see example 16). The K motive moves melodically downward and leaps up to the beginning of the L motive. The L motive moves downward, using a small repeated two sixteenth note-eighth note figure. These two motives are repeated in the final scene of the short, but are shortened. They are played when the Coyote is angrily poking his pile of rocks with a long pole.

Example 16 – Motives K and L from scene 3.

Example 17—Motives K and L from scene 11.

In scene three the running sequence is followed by the N motive, which is characterized by movement in thirds. The first beat of each figure is accented: in Example 18 the first figure is G, F-sharp, C, F-natural, D-flat, G-flat, E-flat, A, and the G, F-natural and E-flat are all accented. Motive N is also repeated at the end of the short in scene eleven. However, this time most of the notes are accented.
“There They Go-Go-Go” is a cleverly written comical Road Runner-Coyote short created following a specific recipe laid out by Chuck Jones. Perfectly timed to the action, Carl Stalling’s music can be broken down into twenty-seven different motives, which each highlight a different element of the short. Stalling’s use of these motives in the short’s larger musical structure helps create the reality of the Road Runner and the Coyote. The strength of the characters and motions on screen cause the viewer to believe their reality, relate to the characters and creates an escape.
CONCLUSION

For me and, I presume, for many others, *Looney Tunes* brings back fond memories, from my youth, of watching cartoons with my family. While my parents loved *Looney Tunes*, laughing with each other as they quoted Bugs Bunny, Elmer Fudd, and Foghorn Leghorn, I was fascinated by its music. As a child I tested myself by attempting to name the title and composer of every classical piece and folk song. When, after college, I moved away and began to feel homesick, I watched *Looney Tunes* on an old laptop computer. The speakers no longer worked, so I silently watched the animation, realizing that without the music the shorts did not evoke laughter or come to life. This realization led me first to consider the cartoon’s music more seriously, and eventually to Carl Stalling, his style of composition, and how his music brought animation to life, induced laughter, and created an escape.

This thesis examined Stalling’s compositional styles at varying levels. The discussion at the end of chapter one shows his development from using music as a mood setting device to using it descriptively to enliven the actions on screen. Stalling’s ability to use a variety of genres of music is highlighted in the discussion of the shorts “De-touring America” and “Speaking of the Weather” as both borrow classical, popular, and folk music. Stalling’s close collaboration with the directors of these shorts is evident in how well the animation and song selection are paired.

The analysis in Chapter 4 examines the culmination of Staling’s abilities in “There They Go-Go-Go.” Small musical blocks, composed of short motives, are directly coordinated with the actions of the Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote while demonstrating Stalling’s orchestration abilities through his specific instrumental choices—including silence. This motive-filled compositional style is reminiscent of the document that Stalling wrote as the music director of silent film. In that document he designates a specific motive is designated to describe a specific
action, a sort of accompanimental *leitmotiv*. This creative musical composition style brings the animation to life. As the literature in the fields of film and media studies and psychology contend, music has the special power to create realities that may not match our own and, therefore, can offer an escape for the audience. This thesis has attempted to prove how Stalling’s music does just that.

The original audiences of *Looney Tunes* were impoverished by the Great Depression. Americans’ need for escape was filled, if only partly, by *Looney Tunes* shorts. Warner Brothers animation endured the Great Depression and WWII, partially due to the *Looney Tunes*’ directors’ efforts to make their animations timeless. In *A Flurry of Drawings*, Kenner states, “Termite Terracers tried to avoid topical gags that might be incomprehensible three years down the road. That’s one reason their creations stand up so well four decades later.”¹ The shorts evoke laughter and spark the imagination. *Looney Tunes* have also endured because of their ability to create a believable animated reality through the collaboration of music and animation.

This research is important because it helps us to gain an understanding of how *Looney Tunes* shorts were created by examining the musical tools Stalling and his colleagues used to create a reality in these cartoons—immensely popular combinations of sound and animation that have endured decades of American culture.

Stalling used any available musical genre and technique if it would further the ability of the short to create an escape. Musical references and allusions helped set and change the mood within the narrative, while musical motives strengthened the animated gags. In his autobiography, director Chuck Jones recalls a list of rules that his mentors, Friz Freling and Tex Avery, gave him.

One was: “You must remember always that only man, of all creatures, can blush, or needs to; that only man can laugh, or needs to and that if you are in that trade of helping others laugh and to survive by laughter, then you are privileged indeed.”

APPENDIX A

This Appendix consists of screen shots of the caricatures drawn within the short Speaking of the Weather, accompanied by a photo of the original person. This appendix has been created purely to show the talent of the animators and to give you, the reader, a few smiles.

Bob Burns

Ted Lewis

Leopold Stokowski
Boswell Sisters

Greta Garbo

Charlie Chan
Walter Winchell

William Powel

Hugh Herbert

Verse

Pardon me miss, do you belong to this umbrella
Pardon me miss, it matches your eyes
Speaking of eyes, if they belong to this umbrella
They should be sheltered at once from those threatening skies.
Speaking of skies and the storm in view
I’d like to clear up a point or two.

Chorus

Speaking of the Weather, Speaking of the weather
Speaking of the weather, it isn’t the humidity it’s you
Come Donner, come Blitzen, come Pitter or Pan
What in thunder is thunder?
Come pair to my heart when it beats like that.

Speaking of the Weather, Speaking of the Thunder
Speaking of the lightning, it’s frightening dear what your eyes can do
Let the heavens clash, zoom and swirl
Let it play, boy meets girl
Speaking of the weather, good old weather
Ain’t it lovely weather and incidentally I love you
REFERENCES

Cartoon Music


Guzzo, Anne Marie. The Life and Music of Carl Stalling: From Toy Pianos to Dog Ears.

Berkeley: University of California, Davis, 2002.


**Film Music**


**The Great Depression**


**American Music History**


**Laws**


**Psychology and Philosophy**

Fischoff, Stuart. "Evolution of Music in Film and Its Psychological Impact on Audiences.”


**Interviews**


**Animated Shorts**


Film.


Film.


Musical Recordings and Scores

Arne, Thomas. A Hunting We Will Go. London, 1777.


**Additional Literature**


"BOB BURNS, FAMED BAZOOKA COMEDIAN, IS CRITICALLY ILL." *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 1, 1956.


"Ted Lewis, and His Shadow, are Gone." *Los Angeles Times*, August 26, 1971. 2.


ABSTRACT

THE POWER OF A FLYING PIG:
CARL STALLING, LOONEY TUNES, AND AMERICA’S NEED FOR ESCAPE

by

JORDAN VIRGINIA CLARK

May 2017

Advisor: Dr. Joshua S. Duchan

Major: Music

Degree: Master of Arts

This thesis examines the creation of *Looney Tunes* cartoons and how the powerful pairing of music and animation created a convincing reality and escape for audiences. *Looney Tunes* was created in 1933 by Warner Brothers animation under the stipulation that one song from a Warner Brothers feature film was used in each short. In 1936 the company hired composer Carl Stalling, who worked closely with the animation directors, progressively learning how to better pair music and animation. Stalling often used familiar popular, classical, and folk melodies within his compositions. An analysis of the *Looney Tunes* short “Speaking of the Weather” (1937), shows how Stalling wove these different genres of music together. An analysis of the short “There They Go-Go-Go” (1956), shows how Stalling’s composition style and coordination with animation developed. This analysis demonstrates how Stalling’s compositions are built out of repeated memorable motives, coordinated with specific actions in the animation. Drawing on theories from film and media psychology, these analyses demonstrate how *Looney Tunes* created a psychological escape for audiences.
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Jordan Clark has loved the piano since the age of eight. She enjoys sharing her love for music with others, teaching piano lessons out of her house. In 2015, Jordan graduated from Radford University receiving a B.S. in Music with a concentration in Piano Performance. Originally from Virginia, Jordan moved to Michigan in the summer of 2015 to pursue her Master’s in Music at Wayne State University. During her time at Wayne State University, Jordan wrote “The Power of a Flying Pig: Carl Stalling, Looney Tunes and America’s Need for Escape.” Jordan received her M.A. in Music from Wayne State University in May, 2017. She lives in Michigan with her grandmother and enjoys embracing every opportunity to enjoy music, water, and sunshine.