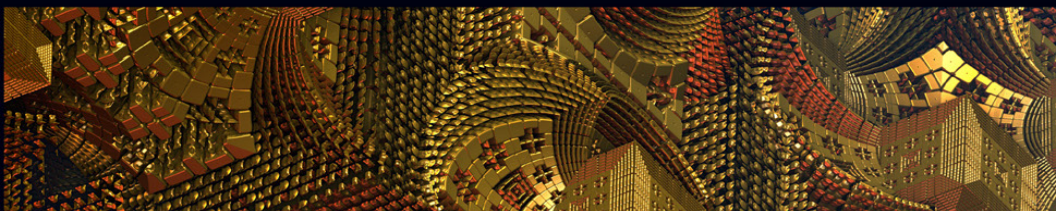


CRC FOCUS



# VÁCLAV TROJAN

## Music Composition in Czech Animated Films

Marco Bellano



**CRC Press**  
Taylor & Francis Group

# Václav Trojan

## Music Composition in Czech Animated Films

**The Focus Animation Series** aims to provide unique, accessible content that may not otherwise be published. We allow researchers, academics, and professionals the ability to quickly publish high impact, current literature in the field of animation for a global audience. This series is a fine complement to the existing, robust animation titles available through CRC Press/Focal Press.

**Series Editor Giannalberto Bendazzi**, currently an independent scholar, is a former Visiting Professor of History of Animation at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore and a former professor at the Università degli Studi di Milano. We welcome any submissions to help grow the wonderful content we are striving to provide to the animation community: [giannalbertobendazzi@gmail.com](mailto:giannalbertobendazzi@gmail.com).

**Published:**

Giannalberto Bendazzi; *Twice the First: Quirino Cristiani and the Animated Feature Film*

Maria Roberta Novielli; *Floating Worlds: A Short History of Japanese Animation*

Cinzia Bottini; *Redesigning Animation United Productions of America*

Rolf Giesen; *Puppetry, Puppet Animation and the Digital Age*

Pamela Taylor Turner; *Infinite Animation: The Life and Work of Adam Beckett*

**Forthcoming:**

Lina X. Aguirre; *Experimental Animation in Contemporary Latin America*

# Václav Trojan

## Music Composition in Czech Animated Films

Marco Bellano



**CRC Press**

Taylor & Francis Group

Boca Raton London New York

---

CRC Press is an imprint of the  
Taylor & Francis Group, an **informa** business

A FOCAL PRESS BOOK

CRC Press  
Taylor & Francis Group  
6000 Broken Sound Parkway NW, Suite 300  
Boca Raton, FL 33487-2742

© 2020 by Taylor & Francis Group, LLC  
CRC Press is an imprint of Taylor & Francis Group, an Informa business

No claim to original U.S. Government works

Printed on acid-free paper

International Standard Book Number-13: 978-0-8153-5852-7 (Hardback)

This book contains information obtained from authentic and highly regarded sources. Reasonable efforts have been made to publish reliable data and information, but the author and publisher cannot assume responsibility for the validity of all materials or the consequences of their use. The authors and publishers have attempted to trace the copyright holders of all material reproduced in this publication and apologize to copyright holders if permission to publish in this form has not been obtained. If any copyright material has not been acknowledged please write and let us know so we may rectify in any future reprint.

Except as permitted under U.S. Copyright Law, no part of this book may be reprinted, reproduced, transmitted, or utilized in any form by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying, microfilming, and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without written permission from the publishers.

For permission to photocopy or use material electronically from this work, please access [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com) (<http://www.copyright.com/>) or contact the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc. (CCC), 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, 978-750-8400. CCC is a not-for-profit organization that provides licenses and registration for a variety of users. For organizations that have been granted a photocopy license by the CCC, a separate system of payment has been arranged.

**Trademark Notice:** Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

---

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

---

Names: Bellano, Marco, author.

Title: Vaclav Trojan : music composition in Czech animated films / Marco Bellano.

Description: Boca Raton : CRC Press, 2019.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019018726 | ISBN 9780815358527 (hardback : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Animated film music--Czech Republic--History and criticism. | Trojan, Vaclav, 1907-1983--Criticism and interpretation. | Trnka, Jiri, 1912-1969--Criticism and interpretation. | Stop-motion animation films--Czech Republic--History and criticism.

Classification: LCC ML2075 .B43 2019 | DDC 781.5/42092--dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2019018726>

---

Visit the Taylor & Francis Web site at  
<http://www.taylorandfrancis.com>

and the CRC Press Web site at  
<http://www.crcpress.com>

Jiří Trnka: the most celebrated puppet animation director ever. Václav Trojan: the most significant Czech composer of post-World War II Czechoslovakia. Their work together: a harmonious collaboration between two highly talented people. Period. For about 70 years, the pair's relationship, output, and artistic achievements didn't go beyond these bare-bone appreciations. Marco Bellano, an animation historian and orchestra conductor, eventually fills the gap with this book, and tells both the specialists and the ordinary filmgoers the What, Who, Where, When, and Why of this unique two-man job.

**Giannalberto Bendazzi, animation historian**

In 2018, Marco Bellano presented a paper on “Jiří Trnka and Václav Trojan's Bajaja” at the Third Chinese Animation Studies Conference in Chengdu. As co-chair of that conference and a Chinese scholar and curator who has long been concerned with the history of European animation, but also as a fan of classical Czech animation, I am very excited to read that research in full. Marco's book reconstructs a historical-cultural space, spanning from Czech art to contemporary music. This approach to animation studies is in tune with the recent scholarship on memory and myth at the cutting edge of interdisciplinary research.

**-Chunning (Maggie) Guo, School of Arts,  
Renmin University, China**



**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

*To Faranak*

---





**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

---

# Contents

---

Acknowledgments, xiii

About the Author, xv

Introduction, xvii

CHAPTER 1 ■ Czech Animation and Music: Premises and Context	1
ORIGINS OF CZECH ANIMATION	1
WHY PUPPETS? THE CZECH PUPPET THEATER TRADITION	5
From Stage to Screen	8
<i>Sound and Music in Early Puppet Films</i>	11
SMETANA AND THE PUPPET THEATER: A CASE STUDY	17
CHAPTER 2 ■ Jiří Trnka: Early Career and Relationship with Music	23
TRNKA THE PUPPETEER	26
TRNKA THE ILLUSTRATOR, PAINTER, AND DESIGNER	30
TRNKA AND MUSIC	33
BROTHERS, TRICKS, SHIRTS, AND FILMS	37

CHAPTER 3 ■ Václav Trojan's Music: A Stylistic Outline 39

CHAPTER 4 ■ The Films by Trnka and Trojan 51

<i>ZASADIL DĚDEK ŘEPU (GRANDPA PLANTED A BEET, 1945)</i>	52
<i>ZVÍŘÁTKA A PETROVŠTÍ (THE ANIMALS AND THE BANDITS, 1946)</i>	55
<i>ŠPALIČEK (THE CZECH YEAR, 1947)</i>	58
<i>CÍSAŘŮV SLAVÍK (THE EMPEROR'S NIGHTINGALE, 1949)</i>	64
<i>ČERTŮV MLÝN (THE DEVIL'S MILL, 1949)</i>	68
<i>ROMÁN S BASOU (THE STORY OF THE CONTRABASS, 1949)</i>	71
<i>BAJAJA (PRINCE BAJAJA, 1950)</i>	72
<i>VESELÝ CIRKUS (THE MERRY CIRCUS, 1951)</i>	78
<i>O ZLATÉ RYBCE (THE GOLDEN FISH, 1951)</i>	79
<i>STARÉ POVĚSTI ČESKÉ (OLD CZECH LEGENDS, 1953)</i>	81
<i>JAK STAREČEK MĚNIL, AŽ VYMĚNIL (HOW THE OLD MAN TRADED IT ALL AWAY, 1953)</i>	91
<i>DOBŘÝ VOJÁK ŠVEJK (THE GOOD SOLDIER ŠVEJK, 1954–1955)</i>	92
<i>KUŤÁSEK A KUTILKA JAK RÁNO VSTÁVALI (KUŤÁSEK AND KUTILKA WOKE UP IN THE MORNING, 1955)</i>	96
<i>PROČ UNESCO (WHY UNESCO?, 1958)</i>	99
<i>SEN NOCI SVATOJÁNSKÉ (A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, 1959)</i>	101
<i>RUKA (THE HAND, 1965)</i>	111

APPENDIX 1, 119

APPENDIX 2, 155

REFERENCES, 163

INDEX, 171



# Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

---

# Acknowledgments

---

THE AUTHOR WISHES TO express his gratitude to Prof. Giannalberto Bendazzi, a mentor and a friend, who generously offered his invaluable support and advice. The research challenges and difficulties that this book posed have largely been overcome because of his help.

Gratitude is here also addressed to another colleague, teacher, and friend: Prof. Alberto Zotti Minici. My academic career in film music and animation studies would not have happened without his continuing backing and trust.

A special thanks to the NFA – National Film Archive in Prague – and especially to Lukas Hanzal and Tomáš Žůrek.

Thank you to George C. Papagiannis, Chief of Media Services at UNESCO, Paris, for allowing research on the film *Proč UNESCO* (*Why UNESCO?*, 1958).

Thanks to Dr. Eva Strusková for her insightful suggestions.

My gratitude goes also to Prof. Massimo Tria, for a frank and friendly dialogue about the Czech language.



# Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

---

# About the Author

---

**Marco Bellano**, PhD, teaches the history of animation and is a research fellow at the Department of Cultural Heritage of the University of Padua, Italy. He previously taught the history of Italian cinema at the Boston University Study Abroad Padua. Several times he has been guest teacher of film music at the University of Salamanca, Spain. He graduated from the Conservatory of Vicenza in piano and orchestral conducting.

In 2014, the Society for Animation Studies (SAS) presented him with the Norman McLaren-Evelyn Lambart Award for Best Scholarly Article. In 2014, he organized and chaired “Il cinema d’animazione e l’Italia” (Padua, 2014), the first ever Italian academic conference on animation, co-funded by the SAS. He was Chair of the 29th SAS Annual Conference (Padua, 2017).

He is associate editor of the cinema journal *Cabiria* and a member of the scientific board of *Popular Music Research Today* (University of Salamanca) and *Mutual Images Journal*. He collaborates with many orchestras and cultural institutions, including the Palazzetto Bru Zane in Venice.

He wrote the books *Metapartiture. Comporre musica per i film muti* (Cinit, 2007) and *Animazione in cento film* (Le Mani, 2013, with Giovanni Ricci and Marco Vanelli). He is currently writing *Allegro non Troppo: Bruno Bozzetto’s Animated Music* (Bloomsbury, 2020). In 2017, he co-edited (with Giannalberto Bendazzi) the final issue of *Animation Journal* issue, on Italian animation.





**Taylor & Francis**

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

---

# Introduction

---

ANIMATION AND MUSIC ARE kindred arts. Their oft-remembered mutual bond, though, should not be taken for granted, or just passively inferred from the existence of a heritage of animated works with a strong musical attitude. There is indeed an impressively long list of animated short films, full-length features, music videos, and video art pieces that set up thoughtful interplays between images, movements, pitches, and rhythms: the renowned examples of the Walt Disney productions, the keen and personal experimentations of Norman McLaren, the wry audiovisual humor of Bruno Bozzetto, and the illuminating metamorphoses of color and sound in Georges Schwizgebel's shorts are among them. Such abundance of musical animation is a consequence of something, more than a cause. A historical fact provides a hint: the affinity between the two expressive fields started to be explicitly addressed well before the late 1920s, when the growing availability of the technology of synchronized sound allowed Disney and others to create a fixed (and even obsessive) counterpoint between animation and its musical score. The precinematographic, hand-drawn animations by Émile Reynaud, presented at the Musée Grévin in Paris from 1892 to 1900, already had piano scores by Gaston Paulin. In comparison, after the debut of the Brothers Lumière's cinématographe in 1895, no film (animated or not) had an especially composed score until 1905. Similarly, the most ancient full-length animated feature still preserved, Lotte Reininger's *Die Abenteur des Prinzen Achmed*

(*The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, 1926), was conceived together with an accompanying symphonic score by Wolfgang Zeller. In the same period, during the European historical avant-garde age, several artists sought the creation of a pure cinema, independent from other arts and, as such, with an absoluteness comparable to that of instrumental music. As they pursued this ideal, they consistently turned to animation, creating abstract silent shorts that were not supposed to be accompanied by music, but that were based on visual equivalents of the musical language. Hans Richter's *Rhythmus 21* (*Rhythm 21*, 1921) ends with something like a crescendo, for example, as "the disparate shapes of the film briefly coalesce into a Mondrian-like spatial grid before decomposing into a field of pure light" (Suchenski 2009). Viking Eggeling, in his *Symphonie Diagonale* (*Diagonal Symphony*, 1924), displayed elegant curved shapes to achieve an "orchestration of time [...]. He [...] used them according to the musical term *instrument*" (Richter 1952: 81).

What makes animation and music converge is, first of all, a matter of shared core identity, at the level of their basic constituents. The ways artists choose to manipulate such constituents and make them meaningful are similar between the two fields.

The minimal unit, in animation, is the frame (and not the image, as the same image can reappear in distinct frames; for example, when they animate in twos, each image gets repeated for two frames; see Williams 2015: 78). The prime task of an animator is to create meaning out of the reciprocal arrangements of the frames, being in control of each one of them. As Norman McLaren wrote, in animation "what happens between each frame is much more important than what exists on each frame; animation is therefore the art of manipulating the invisible interstices that lie between the frames" (McLaren in Furniss 1998: 5). Among the different meanings that can be elicited by the arrangement of frames, one distinguishes itself for its powerful communicative potential: "not so much the attribution of motion but the attribution of a soul (or a personality) to objects,

forms, or shapes (even abstract) that are otherwise lifeless” (Bendazzi 2004: 6).

In the words of a classic scholar of musical aesthetics, in music “the crude material which the composer has to fashion [...] is the entire scale of musical notes” (Hanslick 1974: 66). It would be maybe better to say that the basic constituents are sound events (including also silences). The organization of such events is today much freer than its equivalent in animation. In fact, animation is often used for film or video works, which are technologically bound to a fixed frame rate (for example, 24 frames per second; but there are also other options). Music, instead, can continuously change its time signature and meter, even though more traditional and mainstream compositions do not take advantage of this chance too pervasively. Moreover, music does not only unfold on a single, *horizontal* level (melody), but it also benefits from simultaneous superimpositions between multiple layers of sound (polyphony and harmony). A loose equivalent could be found between musical harmony and the multiple layers that compose an image in hand-drawn cel animation, or the layered approach to key animation in 3D computer graphic works; however, this would probably bring the music-animation parallel too far. In any case, the job of a composer has always been to choose and arrange sound events in a time sequence, in order to achieve an expressive meaning from the relationships between them. The analogy with the act of animating is very strong. Igor Stravinsky observed that the “indispensable and single requirement [of music] is construction. [...] It is precisely this construction, this achieved order, which produces in us a unique emotion having nothing in common with our ordinary sensations and our responses to the impressions of daily life” (Stravinsky 1962: 53). On these premises, Stravinsky then proceeded to make a comparison between music and architecture, which is not a time-based art. A comparison with animation would have been perhaps more insightful but, given his mixed feelings about the use of his *Sacre du Printemps* in Disney’s *Fantasia*, it is understandable why he avoided touching the topic.

Both in animation and musical composition, thus, the aesthetic value derives from a minute and organic time structuring of elementary constituents; the aim is to communicate emotions and meaning. In this respect, they also have a lot in common with language, which is also founded on the organization of minimal cells into larger structures, intended to convey messages; in fact, it is not wrong to identify music and animation as languages of their own.

This grade of affinity between such languages allows them to be coordinated in painstakingly accurate ways that are best exploited when the two roles of animator and composer coincide in a single artist. For example, that was the case of Ferdinando Palermio, an animation director and musician who was a major contributor to the works of the Italian Nino and Toni Pagot; or of Børge Ring, who wrote the music of the shorts he directed. However, this is not a common occurrence; notwithstanding the core similarities, the knowledge and the intensive training needed to achieve mastery in one of the two disciplines are not automatically applicable to the other one – even though fine animators are often in possession of a heightened musical sensibility.

A good alternative to the rare role of the animator-composer is the stable professional association between an author of animation and a trusted composer, or a composer's longstanding practice with a series of stylistically consistent animated works. When a collaboration of this kind goes past its early stages and is consolidated, it easily gives way to solid audiovisual solutions, where music and animations coalesce into inseparable artistic entities. There, it becomes particularly true that the study of the animation can shed light on the musical devices applied by the composer, and the analysis of music can provide a better understanding of its visual counterpart. The critical discourse on those works should thus be fully audiovisual in order to be meaningful: it must equally reference music and animation, with an interdisciplinary approach. In 2005, Daniel Goldmark used this approach to study two of the most outstanding composer-animation ententes in the United States: Carl Stalling at Warner Bros (Goldmark 2005: