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# **BALIO DVARIONIO** KINO MUZIKOS TIPOLOGIJOS BRUOŽAI FILME "KOL NEVĖLU"

Typological Features of Balys Dvarionas' Cinema Music in the Movie "Until It's Too Late"

#### SUMMARY

The typological features of cinema music by the Lithuanian composer Balys Dvarionas are analysed in the article. Lithuanian musicologists have extensively studied Dvarionas's symphonic, instrumental and vocal works. His music for cinema films, however, has not been thoroughly analysed from the musical or historical points of view. Deconstructing the musical soundtrack created by Balys Dvarionas for Vytautas Žalakevičius' film "Kol nevėlu" (Until It's Too Late), my article attempts to highlight the main typological features of the film's music used to develop the overall dramaturgy of the film. The article takes a broader look at how types of music are /are not creating additional musical significance in the overall artistic context of the film.

### **SANTRAUKA**

Straipsnyje nagrinėjamos lietuvių kompozitoriaus Balio Dvariono kino filmų muzikos tipologinės savybės. Kompozitoriaus simfoninė, instrumentinė, vokalinė kūryba išsamiai nagrinėta lietuvių muzikologų darbuose, tačiau j muziką kino filmams nėra įsigilinta nei muzikologiniu, nei istoriniu požiūriu. Dekonstruojant Vytauto Žalakevičiaus filmui "Kol nevėlu" (Žalakevičius 1957) Balio Dvariono sukurtą muzikinį garso takelį, bandoma išryškinti pagrindinius filmo muzikos tipologijos bruožus, kurie per kompozitoriaus individualų kūrybos braižą buvo naudojami plėtojant bendrą filmo dramaturgiją. Bandoma plačiau pažvelgti, kaip naudoti muzikos tipai kuria (arba nekuria) papildomas muzikos prasmes bendrame meniniame filmo kontekste.

RAKTAŽODŽIAI: kino muzika, muzikos tipologija, leitmotyvas, lietuviškas kinas. KEYWORDS: cinema music, typology of music, leitmotif, Lithuanian cinema.

Lithuanian composer Balys Dvarionas (1904–1972) is the first author of professional Lithuanian cinema music who has created music for three documentaries ("Neringa", "Nemuno žiotyse" (By the Nemunas' Estuary), "Tarybų Lietuva" (Soviet Lithuania) and three feature films ("Marytė", "Aušra prie Nemuno" (Dawn by the Nemunas), "Kol nevėlu" (Until It's Too Late) (Gaudrimas 1960: 41). The composer entered the history of Lithuanian cinema music by becoming the author of the first Soviet Lithuanian film "Marytė".

Although the music of Balys Dvarionas has been extensively studied by musicologists J. Gaudrimas, J. Antanavičius, J. Gustaitė, V. Mažeika, the main problem is that the specificity of cinema music in

the general context of the composer's work has not been thoroughly analysed (like all the Lithuanian cinematic music). Beginning with a professional musicological analysis of the specifics of Balys Dvarionas' music for films, the film "Kol nevėlu" (Until It'sToo Late) directed by V. Žalakevičius in 1957 was chosen as the main object of the study. Based on the phenomenological and hermeneutic research methods, the aim of this article is to reveal the main types of Balys Dvarionas' film music, their variability in the overall dramaturgical context of the film "Kol nevėlu" (Until It's Too Late), elucidating the composer's individual style of creation in the general-classical typology of cinematic music.

# THE GENERAL CONTEXT OF EARLY SOVIET LITHUANIAN CINEMATOGRAPHY AND THE PLACE OF BALYS DVARIONAS IN IT

The ideological "imprint" of Soviet Lithuanian cinema predetermined that important and significant works of Lithuanian cinematographer have not been described and haven't been given a proper place in Lithuanian culture. Lithuanian cinema of the Soviet era remains, in principle, a white spot in the Lithuanian and European cinema tradition. The view from the inside perspective of the national cinematographer is sorely lacking. In the Soviet Union, Lithuanian cinema evolved in the "kingdom of Soviet professionals", closely supervised by Moscow censors and Soviet film critics as an integral part of the Soviet cinematographer.

The ideological pressure on the cinematographer throughout the Soviet era is undeniable, but it is worth emphasizing that this historical period also shaped

the artistic self-consciousness of both filmmakers and film users. Not everything that existed in the period of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic is worth rejecting. It is obvious that in the post-war nationalized cinematography Moscow's central government and along with it the Lithuanian film studio primarily funded propaganda film art. Approved by power structures and strictly adhering to its directives, feature films were produced to reveal the communist vision of history. Today it is clear that some "historical cinema" films, like "Ignotas grįžo namo" (Ignotas Returned Home), directed by A. Razumnas, "Tiltas" (The Bridge), directed by B. Šreiberis (both in 1956), "Svetimi" (Strangers) (1961), "Žaizdos žemės mūsų" (The Wounds of Our Land) (1971) and "Dul-

kės saulėje" (Dust in the Sun) (1977) (all directed by M. Giedrys), "Sužeista tyla" (Injured Silence), directed by A. Kundelis (1979), "Būrys" (Platoon), directed by A. Simonovas (1985), or the household dramas of 1970's "Kur iškeliauja pasakos" (Where the Fairy Tales Go), directed by A. Dausa (1973), "Nerami rudens diena" (Restless Autumn Day), directed by A. Kundelis (1975), "Ilga kelionė prie jūros" (A Long Journey to the Sea) (1975) and "Pasigailėk mūsų" (Have Mercy on Us) (1978) (both directed by A. Araminas) have to be treated as a failed marginal creation, not so much because of the propaganda worldview and vulgar ideology of socialism, but primarily because of its unfortunate artistic value. However, alongside a flourishing for six years (1953-1959) socialist realism and unfavorable political conditions of monumental historical-propaganda works in Lithuanian cinema, a different cinema seeking its own path has formed.

At that time copyright cinematography takes hold - thoughtful, asking important questions, challenging not only ideological and professional discourse, but also cultural self-awareness. Films made in the State of prohibitions and control paradoxically criticized the stubborn system and appealed to viewer awareness. Many of the films produced despite governmental orders had considerable artistic value and were awarded with prizes from various festivals and the sympathy of audiences. Raimondas Vabalas, Almantas Grikevičius, Vytautas Žalakevičius, Algimantas Puipa, Gytis Lukšas became the authors of significant works that rejected the model of propaganda cinema. Having overcome the party po-

litical control over the cinematographer, these directors succeeded in preserving and revealing the artist's identity. So, does it make sense to write off a decade of cinema that has produced a number of exceptional films, while some directors have reached the peak of their creative talent? After all, the music of Vyacheslav Ganelin from "Velnio nuotaka" (The Bride of the Devil), "Gražuolė" (The Beauty) continue to excite, "Riešutu duona" (Bread of the Nuts) has become the most watched comedy, "Skrydis per Atlanta" (Flight over the Atlantic) is the only film about the tragic march of Steponas Darius and Stasys Girėnas (in the Soviet period it represented a kind of national voice in the cinema).

In the origins of the formation of copyright cinema we see the film "Kol nevėlu" (Until It's Too Late). This is a typical comedy of socialist realism about the life of collective farmers, based on the work of the father of this genre, Pyriev, where dancing and singing collective farmers experience love scenes in flowering collective gardens. The main axis is the story of an educated foreman communist Vilius (Genys), who lured the beautiful Nijolė (Irena Leonavičiūtė) from the loser lazy Aloyzas (Napoleon Bernotas). A young, handsome foreman Vilius who meets a bridal escort in the Curonian Lagoon while fishing with his brigade of women on a fishing boat "Hurricane". The escort have a broken boat and cannot sail to church. As an honorable foreman, Vilius would be delighted to help, but adheres to his convictions. ("I won't go to church for a hundred rubles, which is against my beliefs" he says). Bride Nijolė (the only daughter of a wealthy farmer) falls in love at first sight, dreaming about working for the brigade. The gradually growing love between a fishing achiever and a bride with a dowry is intertwined with the line of vermin – a loser, no longer a groom, Aloyzas, constantly inserting English or French phrases, demonstrating power, and his aunt Petronėlė (Vanda Lietuvaitytė), both trying to thwart the incoming love. The national motive had to be the transfer of the action to Nida, presenting Lithuanians as the nation of fishermen. The extra gig of the comedy had to be the fictional "gags" and "sketches" coming from the popular interwar foreign comedy tradition.

The film was accepted without major celebrations. In 1957, after the premiere Pukys ironically (and quite rightly) discussed the advantages of the first Lithuanian comedy (Pukys 1957: 3):

To me personally it seems that "Kol nevėlu" (Until It's Too Late) is a comedy that makes you smile. A smile is a good thing. However, it is an entirely individual matter. For example, I smiled at what my neighbor on the right thought to be stupid. On the contrary, what my neighbor on the left smiled at, was a pity for me.

The role of composer Balys Dvarionas in the early Lithuanian cinematography was especially important. In addition to music for one of the first propaganda – type Lithuanian film "Marytė", the composer also wrote music for "Aušra prie Nemuno" (Dawn at the Nemunas) (1953). It was a film about the prosperity of collective farms in the post-war Lithuania. The plot of "Aušra prie Nemuno" (Dawn at the Nemunas) can be understood as a classical black-and-

white scheme of socialist realism, which is particularly vivid here. There are positive heroes (the new chairman agronomist Tauras Gabrys and his beloved, the daughter of peasant Prankus Birute) and negative characters (classical enemies, saboteurs Tučius and Dundulis, the pastor and foreign imperialists of all kinds). There are also undecisive characters who are ideologically inconsistent (religiously prejudiced Prankus and Pikelis) (Valerijonas ir Derkintis), hesitant to join the collective farm, however, they finally become proponents of a new political system and after long hesitations they join. The plot had to comply with the propaganda expectations of the authorities, so the story is full of brainless vitality, the life of the collective farmers is getting better and better, the tables are breaking from the abundance of food, as Tauras "creates a wealthy collective farm with double harvests", for which everyone is delighted. The endless joy is supported by an illustrative "full of folkness" music by Balys Dvarionas, while the film is embellished with "powerfully sounding from the hearts of the collective farmers" and "penetrating to the depths of the heart" song of the Soviet poet Eduardas Mieželaitis performed by the LSSR State Song and Dance Folk Ensemble (forced to take part in filming according to the regulations of the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers of the LSSR):

Where the Nemunas flows, There the new furrow The wild tractor driver steals deep. Next to the Nemunas It was already dawn, Bright paths lead us to the future. The works by Balys Dvarionas are primarily characterized by simplicity and sincerity. His style and the basis of creation are characterized by classical perception and construction of music. The composer is a classic in his harmonious language, prone to romanticism, often with non-functional chords of impressionist consonance. The construction of sentences and larger musical structures is also classical. Due to the

frequent use of folk motifs and their repetition, most of the composer's works are close to rhapsody. The structure of the works lacks the development and processing of compositional techniques, especially counterpoint, or motifs. Nevertheless, the poverty of musical form development is outweighed by rich musical logic and musical content: catchy melodic line, meaningful harmony.

### AUDIO MAP OF THE MOVIE - CINEMA MUSIC TYPES USED

The soundtrack of the film is analysed chronologically according to three different features of typological music: the nature of the sound source, relation to the image (the dramaturgical significance of the scene influenced by the music), and its place in the foreground or background. These are the essential elements that characterize all the acts of cinematic music, on the basis of which cinematic music can be analysed in the context of its typology (Kučinskas 2011: 35).

00:00:00–00:03:00 // A non-diegetic (outside of the movie world) musical introoccurs which at 00:01:13 turns into a diegetic, objective, visible movie music when the main character of the movie – Vilius begins to sing. Based on the verse of Justinas Marcinkevičius, the song by Balys Dvarionas performed by the main character of the film reveals his emotional state and attitude towards social life choices (Soviet propaganda) (Mikonis-Railienė 2015: 90):

The caring sun does not spare its rays for me I can work, I can sing, so what else may I need?

Neither children, nor wife tra lia lia lia Live as you wish with the song tra lia lia lia Friends far away, friends nearby, friends everywhere tra lia lia lia

In the song we can hear typical of the composer's creative style simple harmony and colorful instrumentation. The musical melodiousness is closely related to the intonations of Lithuanian folk songs (as we will see in the examples below).

00:08:02-00:09:16 // Performed by a chorus of girlfriends accompanied by an accordion, a diegetic, objective, invisible (after 5 seconds - visible) music is heard in the film - the wedding song "Oi užkilokit vartelius" (Oh, Close the Gate) which greets Nijolė and Aloyzas on their arrival to the wedding. In this scene we observe two types of counterpoint music: in the visual context the music is counterpoint paraphrasing - it stylistically enhances the visible image (the newlyweds are greeted with a wedding "folk" song), however, in the context (knowing what happened in the previous scene) of the film dramaturgy dominate the features of counterpoint music - Nijolė no longer wants (and has never wanted) to marry Aloyzas, especially when she fell in love at first glance with Vilius. In the background of all the surroundings and the music being played, Nijolė's radically opposite feelings and desires become obvious, being accentuated by music that does not match her feelings.

00:12:27-00:17:27 // One of the longer musical acts in the movie is the village dance scene following which starts a fight between Vilius and Aloyzas. The scene begins with a diegetic, objective, exterior foreground music (an accordion and an orchestra of several string instruments playing, Nida residents dancing in circles), and, as the conflicting relationship between Vilius and Aloyzas develops, the music often shifts to a diegetic, objective, invisible background music. In this scene, by using intonational, tune and rhythmic means of musical expression, Balys Dvarionas develops the melodies of folk music intonations which illustrate the typical landscape of the Lithuanian countryside. A striking example of parallel music – the visible images of folk dances are enhanced by music enriched with the imitations of Lithuanian folk music intonations.

The scene is immediately // 00:17:35-00:19:07 // followed by a fight scene between Vilius and Aloyzas for Nijole's attention. A previously diegetic, objective, visible / invisible external music is replaced by a jazz intonation-driven, non-diegetic (outside the film world), invisible music, the musical expression of rhythm and harmony (atypical for the film's musical field) of which is dictated by a repeated as a refrain Aloyzas's saying "thank you very much" which starts

with the first sounds of the musical act. The previous music performed by several violins and an accordion in this scene is replaced by a jazz-style illustrative music which is close to American films of the sixties: percussion and piano driven fast-pace, melody development by clarinet and the variational principle, sequential development of musical form (when a musical entity of a certain volume is sequentially developed). Such a folkstrot type counterpoint of a musical act (when fun, moody, variational music is played during the fight) highlights the apparent comic nature of the scene itself. Music for such a serious event as fight produces an opposite effect of frivolity. This musical act shows Balys Dvarionas' ability to create / imitate music of certain styles and periods. The imitation of other musical styles and genres is also characteristic of the composer's work (as evidenced by the music that is often heard in the film and which is close to the Lithuanian folk intonations but without any direct quotation or reproduction of any original melody).

00:19:50-00:22:00 // It is a non-diegetic, subjective foreground musical act that combines several different scenes, at the beginning of which, following Nijolė's escape from shooting with Aloyzas (demonstrating doubts that they are still fiancées), a rapid movement developed by recurring sounds of string instruments (illustration of action – running) – the leitmotif of "Nijolė's choice" is heard. With evolving dramaturgy of the film, when Nijolė expresses her doubts about her personal and social choices, the music shifts from accompaniment to pathetic - lyrical development of a clear

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melody (one of the two leitmotifs occurring in the film). Developed by a group of string instruments, the theme of Nijolė's "doubts" at the culmination of the film transforms into the love motif between Nijolė and Vilius, which is then developed by the entire orchestra. The musical act itself in its form is complete and melodically illustrative, always remaining as a non-diegetic foreground or background music.

00:22:00–00:22:59 // A non-diegetic foreground music illustrating the job of fishermen is heard, which // 00:22:59–00:24:36 // switches to a non-diegetic foreground music represented by an idyllic scene of the family which in its gentle contrast to the situation highlights the comic nature of the scene (the wife takes a bottle of alcohol from her husband and pours it into the sink). As with Nijole's "doubts" (later the love theme), this scene also shows that all personal relationships between a man and a woman in the drama of the film are illustrated by the melodies of string instruments.

00:26:04-00:27: 52 // In this scene, as it turns out after a few seconds, a diegetic, invisible, objective music is heard from a record-player and becomes visible. Music is rather important in the dramaturgy of the film: "After all, fish can be caught at night with light and at daytime with sounds1". Illustrating boats at sea, a slow polka rhythm is substituted by a melodic tango. Due to its idyllic imagery and musical expression means, it should seem as an example of counterpoint music at first glance, however, the rhythmic and scenic harmony of the music yields the impression of parallel music. The music further enhances the emotional expression of the scene: a quiet and idyllic day at work.

00:28:30–00:31:40 // A major turning-point in the dramaturgy of the film is the love motif developed by string instruments during the meeting of Nijolė and Vilius. Initially, the music begins as a non-diegetic foreground music, which, following the development of the dialogue between Nijolė and Petronelė, turns to the background music which is more of a parallel type as it reinforces the love born between Nijolė and Vilius (Ūbis 2013).

00:34:50-00:36:19 // When Nijolė's father refuses to take her aboard a ship, "Nijolė's choice" leitmotif which was first played // 00:19:50 // (when Nijole escapes Aloyzas during the photo shoot) occurs once again. This non-diegetic leitmotif played in the foreground is associated with Nijolė's disappointment, the unfulfillment of her dreams (to go fishing with men). Occurring for the second time, the leitmotif has a clear three-part structure in which we hear lyrical intonations developed by a group of string instruments. In the middle of the musical act we hear a tonal change (c-Es). This form and tonal development principle of musical material is characteristic of most of the composer's works.

00:41:33–00:45:10 // It is the scene which starts out with a non-diegetic background fisharmonia – a musical presentation of Aunt Petronėlė (Macaitis 2003). The counterpoint of the musical type evokes the irony of the character: the Aunt who is harming others is presented with a liturgical, quiet-sounding melody performed by a fisharmonium (an instrument used in liturgical rites)

(imitation of a slow-paced canon). However, as the music combines different themes and Aunt Petronėlė hurries to hand in Vilius' love letter to another girl (specially for Nijolė to stay with her nephew Aloyzas), we hear a non-diegetic foreground music which emphasizes movement with a fast paced and active rhythm (dominated by an arpeggio performed by string instruments in the foreground. This kind of music which mimics a detailed action and movement in the scene, is called *mickey mousing* (by the name of Walt Disney's cartoon hero Mickey Mouse) (Cooke 2008: 75). Just as we see in the scene, Aunt Petronėlė's rush - cycling is simulated with an accurate change of the pace of music. Such an imitative – parallel type of music further enhances the comic nature of the scene. This is one of the most striking scenes in the film, in which the illustration of music (melodic montage) provides an example of artistic musical synchronicity. The whole musical act which lasts almost four minutes is of irregular rondo form: A-B-C-A-B. In Part A, the tune of a fisharmonium represents Aunt Petronėlė's scam in the context of a nondiegetic movie plan music, in Part B we hear Aunt's rush elucidated by an arpeggio of string instruments, which is presented by a non-diegetic foreground parallel music.

00:47:24–00:48:17 // For less than a minute sounding a non-diegetic foreground parallel music simulates Aunt Petronėlė's idea of handing Vilius' love letter meant for Nijole to another girl, Marijona, to seduce Vilius. The recurring sounds by wooden wind instruments, the fast-tuned melody, as in the previous

scene, primitively illustratesthe actions of Aunt Petronėlė's character.

00:50:57-00:53:33 // It is the scene of Viliu's deception in which Marijona presents herself as the recipient of the letter addressed to her. The scene is meant to evoke Nijolė's jealousy. Everything is illustrated by the turbulent either foreground or background, non-diegetic, synchronic music performed by string and wooden wind instruments. Vivid is the musical function of paraphrasing, when music in the scene enhances its emotional content (Nijolė 's running through the dunes is accompanied by a fast-paced music of string instruments, while Marijona's manifestation in the scene - by sarcastic syncope motifs performed bywooden wind instruments).

00:57:09-01:00:00 // A diegetic, objectively visible foreground song "Macnas, macnas marių vandenėlis" ("Strong, strong water of the Lagoon") (Jasinskas 1982: 111) is heard, which is one of the film's most prominent musical acts performed by a male ensemble in a pub. The intonation of Lithuanian folk songs is precisely simulated with the characteristic dynamic rise of the melody to forte which allows the main characters of the film to express their emotions. In terms of the form structure, the song is as simple as the harmonic features (tonal plan of the whole song: g–B–g). The primitive rhythm and the narrow melodic range characteristic of Lithuanian folk songs has made the song popular in the social life of Lithuanian people. Later, intonation snippets of this song as a non-diegetic background music will be heard in the scene of drunken Aloyzas on the seaside.

01:01:36–01:03:09 // The secondary theme of love between Marijona and the fisherman Mikas occurs initially as a non-diegetic foreground, but later turns to a non-diegetic background music, which, applying the principle of synchronic music development, highlights the parallel function of cinematic music – lyrical and cheerful *staccato* passages performed by wooden wind instruments in the third octave illustrate the feelings of both lovers.

From // 01:03:21–01:04:31 // to // 01:05:11–01:06:00 // in two different scenes with a drowning man, a non-diegetic background music is heard. The anxious, recurring melody by cellos enhances the impression of danger and anxiety.

01:20:23–01:21:44 // It is a short fragment of a non-diegetic background mu-

sic that illustrates Aloyzas' good mood before proposing to Nijolė. Such an entertainingly illustrative music as if prepares the viewer for the dramatic climax of the film.

From // 01:22:39 // until the end of the film returns the main love leitmotif of Nijolė and Vilius which sounds as a nondiegetic background, while later as a foreground music. The love leitmotif of two lovers, according to the type of cinema music, provides a parallel reinforcing effectand complements the feelings of the main characters conveyed by emotional waltz intonations. The music of the final scene directly reflects the principles of the pursuit of social realism depicted in the film: the whole scene is filmed from below, showing Vilius and Nijolė moving through the dunes towards a brighter tomorrow.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

43% of the film comprises music. Most of the film's soundtrack consists of a non-diegetic (outside the movie world) background music that illustrates or enhances the aesthetics and sensuality of the displayed images.

Throughout the film, there are four musical acts that are diegetic (part of the movie world), foreground, objective: the wedding song "Oi užkilokit vartelius" (Oh, Close the Gate), village dances featuring a live orchestra, music from a record-player while fishing, and the song "Macnas, macnas marių vandenėlis" (Strong, Strong Water of the Lagoon) in the pub. Thus, the significance of the music itself in the dramaturgy of the film

is undeniable. This is most evident in the music coming from a record-player which becomes the central (comedic) axis of the scene.

The film represents all the main types of cinematic music: diegetic foreground, later background (the wedding song "Oi užkilokit vartelius" (Oh, Close the Gate), the song "Macnas, macnas marių vandenėlis" (Strong, Strong Water of the Lagoon) in the pub, record-player music on the boat), non-diegetic foreground (introduction and end of the film, Aunt Petronėlė's scenes), background (during the protagonists' dialogues, fights between Vilius and Aloyzas) – all the illustrative music that is

not part of the movie world. There are more examples of parallel music (musical intonates which culturally, nationally and emotionally correspond to the contents of the scene and do not contradict it). The most striking and only example of a counterpoint type of music is the wedding song "Oi užkilokit vartelius" (Oh, Close the Gate) at the beginning of the film, which contrasts with Nijolė's inner feelings and desires.

The final result of the film showed that the methods of early Soviet cinematography transferred to the Lithuanian national context were not fully aesthetically – artistically justified. The film "Kol nevėlu" (Until It's Too Late) depicts simplified portrayals of the heroes in an immersive social environment, unprofessionally portrayed through ideological Soviet art cinematic schemes (Mikonis-Railienė 2015: 91). Assessing the overall artistic context of the film's means of expression, Balys Dvarionas did not create a vivid musical dramaturgy for the film.

The composer mostly focused on discrete, complete musical episodes that illustrate the emotional content of the scene but do not create a new musical subtext.

The musical acts of the film are characterized by a homophonic melodic singing and a clear rhythm which gives the audience an emotional associative feeling together with the visual / audible image. However, as the music does not create new meanings (this is best achieved through the leitmotif technique), there is no additional significance to the music. On the soundtrack of the film we hear only one leitmotif (the motif of Nijolė's "doubts") which later develops into the theme of love between Vilius and Nijolė, recurring for the third time in the final scene of the film. Thus, the leitmotif technique remains almost unused in the film, which is the weak side of the film's music, however, the musical means of expression (melody, rhythm, orchestration) achieve quite a strong emotional impact on the viewer.

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### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Crew's response to another fisherman's replica of sounding music // 00:26:55-00:27:10//