

Balkan Sound Identity. The Impact of Kiril Džajkovski's Film Music

Loredana IAŢEŞEN¹

Abstract: *Macedonian composer Kiril Džajkovski's film music is defined by intermedial aesthetics, situated at the confluence of Balkan musical tradition, classical/Western European timbrality and contemporary electronic production techniques. In his compositions that go with cinematographic films such as The Great Water or Dust, Džajkovski creates a distinct sound world marked by stylistic hybridization and emotional expressiveness. An approach that reflects not only the regional specificity of the Balkans, but also a universal view of conflict, memory and identity, thus developing a multicultural musical discourse. By using timbre contrasts, recurring themes and modal structures, the musician creates scores that function not only as a sound background, but as veritable narrative extensions of the film. In his works Bal-Can-Can, The Third Half and Balkan Is Not Dead, Džajkovski proposes a sound dramaturgy that actively takes part in the construction of cinematographic meaning, by intertwining lyrical, epic and satirical registers. His music contributes to the shaping of an audiovisual rhetoric in which the musical element gets symbolic and emotional meaning, supporting or sometimes contrasting the director's intention. The integration of ethno-folkloric elements in orchestral or electronic textures generates an expressive tension between modernity and tradition, between document and fiction. Thus, Džajkovsky's film music can be viewed as both a sound illustration and as a form of critical commentary and emotional mediation between the viewer and the cinematographic narrative.*

Key-words: *film music, Kiril Džajkovski, audiovisual rhetoric, Balkan sound identity*

1. Introduction

In the context of contemporary Balkan cinema (Papadimitriou and Grgic, 2022), film music plays an essential role in articulating cultural identity, historical tensions, and fictional realities, often marked by conflict and reconstruction (Zdravkova Djeparoska, 2020). The Balkan region, steeped in collective memory and socio-political contradictions, often finds artistic expression in a hybrid sound language, a

¹ Assoc. Prof. PhD. George Enescu National University of Arts, Iaşi, iatesenloredana@yahoo.com

blend of tradition and experimentation, of popular melos and modern musical technology (Hjort, 2010).

Trained as an artist in a context marked by post-communist transition and the effervescence of new artistic media, Džajkovski began his career in the 1980s as a member of the Bastion ensemble, pioneers of synth-pop music in the former Yugoslavia. Subsequently, his studies in composition, music production in Sydney, and numerous international collaborations refined his discourse and provided him with a global platform for expression. Subsequently, his studies in composition, music production in Sydney, and numerous international collaborations refined his discourse and provided him with a global platform for expression. What makes his film work special is his ability to turn the soundtrack into a storyteller with an identity-building role, often actively participating in the symbolic construction of the story (Nonevski, 2012).

This paper proposes an analysis of the impact of Kiril Džajkovski's film music on cinematic narrative and on the configuration of a modern Balkan imaginary. Through the study of emblematic films such as *Dust* (2001), *The Great Water* (2004), *Bal-Can-Can* (2005), *The Third Half*, and *Balkan Is Not Dead* (2012), we will examine how music becomes an instrument of emotional amplification, cultural delimitation, and rewriting/reiteration of collective memory. At the same time, we will highlight how Džajkovski manages to construct a unique, recognizable sound aesthetic that transcends geographical and stylistic landmarks.

2. Kiril Džajkovski – between electronic music and traditional roots

Kiril Džajkovski (born 1965, Skopje, North Macedonia) is one of the most prominent figures in contemporary Balkan music, with a career that transcends genres and cultures. His artistic journey reflects a dual identity: on the one hand, he is deeply rooted in the musical traditions of the Balkans, and on the other, he draws on a globalizing aesthetic in which electronic, ambient, breakbeat, and hip-hop music play an essential role. This synthesis contributes to Džajkovski's image as a unique composer in the film music landscape, capable of generating a recognizable soundscape that is also open to innovation (Volnarovski, 2002). His professional training includes an essential period spent in Australia, where he studied composition and music production at the Sydney Conservatory. During this time, he consolidated his technical knowledge and came into contact with Western underground music scenes, particularly the breakbeat movement and rave culture of the 1990s. This experience would be strongly reflected in his later works,

especially in his soundtracks, where rhythmic dynamics and electronic processing are combined with acoustic motifs from the Balkan musical tradition.

A defining element in the artist's work is the use of Balkan folk motifs, treated not as quotations, but as structures reinterpreted and integrated into contemporary discourse. Thus, traditional songs, ethnic instruments (such as the kaval, tambura, or zurla/zurna), and asymmetrical rhythms become an integral part of a fluid soundscape in which the past and present intertwine. His music is often marked by a latent cinematic determination, even outside the filmic context. The pieces composed for concerts or personal albums often contain narrative structures, thematic sequentiality, and an evocative power reminiscent of the language of film music (Melita, 2024). This aesthetic is taken up and refined in his film collaborations. Džajkovski does not conceive of film music as an illustrative background, but as a dialogue partner for the image. In films such as *The Great Water* or *Dust*, music not only illustrates, but also dialogues with the image, fills in narrative gaps, and offers alternative perspectives on the action (Cvijanović, 2012). In addition, what individualises his style is his ability to alternate contrasting expressive registers, moving from the fragility of a minor-key choral structure to the intensity of electronic percussion, without this transition seeming forced. An aesthetic mobility that makes Džajkovski's music extremely adaptable to different cinematic themes/genres – from historical dramas to postmodern satires, from politically charged thrillers to art films.

In conclusion, Kiril Džajkovski is a composer who is today perceived at the intersection between the local and the global, between the traditional and the contemporary. Essentially, we are referring to the stylistic synthesis that will be analyzed in detail in the following sections, in the context of his collaborations with Macedonian and international directors.

3. Music in film: functions, identity, and emotion

In the modern sense, film music goes far beyond its simple illustrative or ambient function. Specialized studies have shown that an effective soundtrack can support or even transform the meaning of the visual narrative. In analyzing Kiril Džajkovski's music, it is essential to consider its fundamental functions, as formulated by theorists such as Claudia Gorbman and Michel Chion: narrative, emotional, identity-forming, and structuring/shaping/constitutive (Gorbman, 1987).

The narrative function refers to music's ability to anticipate or support the development of an action, to emphasize a conflict, or to build the internal coherence of the story. In Džajkovski's case, this function is visible in the way

musical themes are linked to recurring characters or situations, creating a sonic thread that guides the viewer's perception.

The emotional function is perhaps the most obvious—music stimulates empathy, amplifies states such as fear, desire, nostalgia, or hope. Džajkovski exploits this function through the contrast between tonalities and timbres, but also through the unusual superimposition of electronic elements with choral fragments or traditional instruments, generating a specific emotional tension.

The function of identity is particularly important in films from the Balkan region, where cultural, historical, and national conflict is often a central theme. Music becomes a sign of belonging, of collective memory, or of a rupture in identity. Through his use of folk motifs and Balkan modal structures, Džajkovski contributes to the affirmation of a regional musical identity, as opposed to global cultural standardization. Finally, the structuring/shaping/constitutive function refers to the role of music in delimiting narrative segments, marking transitions, and ensuring the overall coherence of the narrative soundscape. Through thematic variations and recurring cyclical motifs, Džajkovski structures his compositions like a symphonic score, in which each repetition brings new meanings (Gorbman, 1987). Džajkovski's music thus operates on multiple levels: as a narrative articulation tool, as an affective element, and as a vehicle of cultural identity. In the following section, we will analyze in detail how these functions manifest themselves in five of the most significant films to which he contributed.

4. The impact of Kiril Džajkovski's film music

4.1. *Dust* (2001, directed by Milcho Manchevski)

Dust is a complex film, built on a non-linear narrative structure, in which temporal and spatial planes intersect: the story begins in contemporary New York and moves to Macedonia at the beginning of the 20th century, during the Balkan Wars. This narrative plurality requires a soundtrack capable of traversing eras, spaces, and cultures (Tängerstad, 2001). Kiril Džajkovski succeeds in providing a sound that, although deeply rooted in Balkan reality, becomes an instrument of temporal and emotional transcendence.

A key element of the music in *Dust* is its controlled eclecticism. The soundtrack combines tense breakbeats with dramatic orchestral passages, interspersed with vocal interventions inspired by the Byzantine and Balkan traditions. This stylistic layering is not accidental, but responds directly to the film's narrative construction. Although each temporal plane has a distinct sonic identity,

thematic coherence is ensured by the repetition of recognizable rhythmic and harmonic motifs.

Džajkovski uses aggressive percussion rhythms and electronic pulsations in scenes that reflect current reality, suggesting urban chaos and the existential angst of contemporary characters. In contrast, historical scenes benefit from a sound palette dominated by acoustic instruments and modal intonations, evoking an archaic world that is both tense and poetic. This sonic contrast accentuates the gap between past and present, but also the internal conflict of characters marked by transgenerational trauma (Homer, 2016).

A notable example is the musical idea associated with the violent character Elijah. His theme is built on an ostinato of distorted strings, doubled by an unstable electronic rhythmic line. As the character transforms, the theme undergoes changes: the harmonic structures become clearer, the tempo stabilizes, suggesting an inner transformation that is expressed not verbally, but sonically.

At the same time, Džajkovski uses sound collage techniques, combining ambient sounds with musical fragments that seem to be drawn from the collective memory. Thus, music not only accompanies the image, but also creates links between identity, space, and history, integrating itself into the film's narrative reconstruction mechanism (Jovanov, 2005).

Dust

Characters-Musical themes – Stylistic Influences - Meaning

Luke	Tense rhythms Ostinato	Western elements	Impulsivity
Elijah – initial description	Marked percussion	Balkan accents	Violence Confrontation
Elijah's metamorphosis	Melodic expressiveness Lyricism	Echoes from sacred music Modal sonorities	Sensitivity Meditative nature
Lilith	Oriental sounds Chromatic harmonic structures	Influences from dance music - tango Oriental music	Sensuality Mystery
Angela (the old storyteller)	Melismatic inflections Thematism with nostalgic expression, acoustic instruments	Stylized Macedonian folklore, Balkan motifs	Role ambiguity Memory, orality and the subjective filter of the story
Groups/fight scenes	Extensive orchestral textures; massive percussion	Interpenetration between Balkan and Western musics	Violence of history, collective conflict, tragic destiny

Fig. 1. Kiril Džajkovski, „Dust”, outline of musical themes, stylistic influences, possible aesthetic meanings

We note that Džajkovski's sound demonstrates that Balkan music has the capacity to transcend "exotic" stereotypes, becoming a universal language for expressing

trauma and transformation. Dust confirms the composer's aesthetic maturity in supporting film projects with complex narrative structures and dense themes.

4.2. The Great Water (2004, directed by Ivo Trajkov)

The Great Water is a historical drama that explores childhood trauma in a political orphanage in post-war Macedonia, after the establishment of the communist regime. The film is imbued with a sombre atmosphere, both dreamlike and claustrophobic, reflecting a reality distorted by ideology, abandonment and fear (Oppenheimer, 2004). In this context, the soundtrack composed by Kiril Džajkovski plays an essential role in articulating the emotional and symbolic space of the narrative. The music is built around obsessively recurring sound ideas, either in monodic accompaniment or choral expositions, perceived as leitmotifs of lost innocence and traumatic silence. The use of children's voices and the involvement of the male choir, treated with a liturgical reverberation, evoke not only the sacred dimension of childhood, but also the silent opposition to the ideological mechanisms of re-education. The use of the choir is particularly significant.

Instead of grandiose orchestration, Tchaikovsky opts for reduced sound textures, in which each sound is loaded with meaning. A central element in the composition is the contrast between linearity/consonance/coherence and dissonance. Seemingly simple themes are often distorted or fragmented by discreet electronic interventions, thus suggesting the rupture between appearance and reality, between childhood and the oppressive system. This technique of sonic "fracturing" becomes a musical substitute for the film's subtextual tension: although silence dominates the interactions between characters, the music expresses what cannot be articulated verbally (Simjanovska, 2011). Džajkovski stated in one of his interviews that he wanted to create a soundtrack that would „envelop the image in a state of floating” (Volnarovski, 2002, p. 5) – a description that accurately reflects the actual sound effect. The music thus supports not only the general atmosphere, but also the inner rhythm of the narrative, serving a contemplative function. It does not intervene to manipulate emotions, but to encourage the viewer's introspection. The impact of this soundtrack is amplified by the expressive economy with which Džajkovski constructs key moments: in scenes of loneliness or dreaming, the music is reduced to minimal pulsations or slightly distorted ambient sounds, which accentuates the feeling of isolation. In contrast, in collective sequences—such as those involving ideological manipulation—the music contains ritualistic, almost hypnotic accents, suggesting the forced uniformity of the individual.

The Great Water**Characters - related musical motifs/themes - stylistic influences - meaning**

Lem Nikodinoski, the resigned child	Theme with lyrical, nostalgic expressiveness Specific timbre: the cello	Minimalism, modal harmony	Childhood drama under the oppression of the system
Isak, the rebellious child	Suspended harmonic structures, avant-garde music	Sound archaism	Freedom, inner strength, hope
The authority, the communist regime	March rhythms, brass band sound	Propaganda music in the style of socialist realism	Oppression, control over the defenseless
Lem's mother (evocation)	Lullaby-like motifs	Inspiration from Macedonian folklore Influences of S. Reich and P. Glass' minimalism	Evocation of the past, lost affectivity
Water, basic symbol	Use of the cyclical principle in motif approach, appropriate timbre		Memory recovery, the spirit of transcendence

Fig. 2. Kiril Džajkovski, „*The Great Water*”, outline of musical themes, stylistic influences, possible aesthetic meanings

Through this soundtrack, Džajkovski not only illustrates a narrative universe, but also recomposes the collective memory of a traumatized space through sound. Music becomes an act of symbolic recovery and a catalyst for empathy, transcending its simple functional role.

4.3. *Bal-Can-Can* (2005, directed by Darko Mitrevski)

Bal-Can-Can is a black comedy with satirical and postmodern grotesque accents, which follows the odyssey of a man searching for his mother-in-law's body in a chaotic Balkan space after the breakup of Yugoslavia, in an imaginary oppressive society. The film demystifies the idea of Balkan heroism and ironically exposes the absurdity of ethnic conflicts, corruption, and nationalism. In such a narrative context, the soundtrack by Kiril Džajkovski plays a fundamental role in setting the dual tone—between tragic and ridiculous, between melodramatic and caricatural (Valcheva, 2010). Unlike *The Great Water* or *Dust*, where Džajkovski explored dramatic and contemplative registers, in *Bal-Can-Can* the composer highlights his ironic side by emphasizing the rhythmic parameter, using elements of drum and bass (D&B), hip-hop, ska, and Balkan brass band music in an explosive mix. The result is a soundtrack that accentuates the narrative disorder and functions as a commentary on the absurdity of the situations. The main theme itself is an example of postmodern pastiche. A simple melodic line, built on the structure of a

chromatic double on D, is superimposed on a chaotic and fragmented rhythmic background, creating an intentional expressive dissonance. This technique becomes essential in supporting the contrasting registers of the film—black humor, visual grotesqueness, and moments of absurd violence.

Also remarkable is the way in which Džajkovski integrates traditional Romani lute music and Balkan brass bands. Unlike the ethnographic or nostalgic uses in other films, in this context, these elements are treated with irony, inserted into distorted digital sound contexts, as in a parodic live mix. Music thus becomes a symbol of Eastern European kitsch, but also a form of cultural self-irony. It is also worth mentioning that in *Bal-Can-Can*, sound also has an internal editing function (Homer, 2016). The rapid transitions between sequences are often achieved through sudden musical changes, in the absence of a coherent narrative thread. This technique suggests the chaos of post-war reality and the fragmentation of collective identity in the former Yugoslavia.

Bal-Can-Can

Characters-related musical motifs/themes- stylistic influences – meaning

Santino, the wandering Italian	Motifs from Balkan folk music ironically reinterpreted	Satire with tragicomedy elements; Influenced by road movies	Santino is trapped in the Balkan absurdity He becomes a spectator and at the same time a victim of the tailspin A symbol of history loaded with traditions that are not justified in the chaotic present
Mother-in-law (transported body)	Silence imbued with the grotesque	absurd humor	Violence, corruption, absurdity
Mafia smugglers	Rhythmic percussion Brass band sounds	Folk band music, Balkan brass, Goran Bregovic influences	Meaning of the absurdity frequently encountered in institutions; Everyday oppression
Bureaucrats, authorities	Parody marches, caricatured mixtures of sounds	Parody of socialist realism and propaganda	Ordinary Balkan satire A fractured space between tragic and grotesque
The Balkan space as a whole (Baba Zumbula, archetype of Balkan folk femininity)	Mixture of folk, brass band and pop music sequences	Postmodern style Pastiche	

Fig. 3. Kiril Džajkovski, „*Bal-Can-Can*”, outline of musical themes, stylistic influences, possible aesthetic meanings

Overall, the soundtrack of *Bal-Can-Can* is an act of controlled disorder, a musical collage that perfectly reflects the schizoid nature of the film. Through sonic irony, pastiche, and fragmentation, Džajkovski offers an acoustic critique of Balkan reality in the reconstruction phase, using the instruments of electronic music and distorted folklore to highlight the absurdity of the world presented.

4.4. *The Third Half* (2012, directed by Darko Mitrevski)

The Third Half is a historical drama inspired by real events, set during World War II and centred on the story of a Macedonian football team which, in a context marked by fascist occupation, becomes a symbol of resistance and solidarity. Against the backdrop of this conflict, an interethnic love story develops between a Christian and a Jewish woman, giving the film a deeply human and moral dimension. It is in this context that Kiril Džajkovski approaches the soundtrack in a serious tone, abandoning the exuberance of the electronic style. The sound of the classical orchestra, the discreet use of folk motifs, and the subtle choral interventions reflect not only the drama of the story, but also respect for the historical tragedy it evokes—in particular, the Holocaust of the Jews in Macedonia. The main theme of the film is constructed traditionally, with the help of a modal melody of lyrical expressiveness, sustained in slow tempo by strings and piano, with the role of evoking the fragility of hope in a context of collective suffering. Džajkovski does not become pathetic, but maintains an expressive restraint that enhances the emotional impact. The music unfolds in a minimalist register, in which pauses play an essential role in building tension (Simjanovska, 2011). A particularly powerful element is the introduction, at several key moments, of motifs inspired by Sephardic Jewish music, performed by female voices or traditional instruments (clarinet, violin). These can be perceived as sonic reminders of threatened identity, inevitable loss, and cultural resistance. The fact that they are not developed thematically, but appear as echoes—as sonic recollections—is another detail that refers to the fragility of the Jewish characters and their imminent disappearance (Georgievski, 2012). Also, in scenes of confrontation and tension, Džajkovski uses orchestral ostinatos with progressive intensifications, a classic technique for building suspense, but applied with finesse. The music does not dominate the image, but accompanies it delicately, maintaining a solemn atmosphere, without any exaggeration.

Overall, the soundtrack for *The Third Half* is one of Kiril Džajkovski's most mature and refined compositions, demonstrating that his versatility lies not only in his stylistic eclecticism, but also in his ability to compose with respect, empathy, and depth for subjects of such gravity.

The Third Half

Characters-related musical motifs/themes- stylistic influences – meaning

Kosta	Motifs with heroic expressiveness	Influences from classical, oriental and Balkan music	Courage in the face of an oppressive system
FC Macedonia team	Rhythmic dynamism specific to brass band	Echoes from dramatic creation	Solidarity, resistance
Jewish community	March music	Klezmer influences	Suggestion of victims of history, persecution, sacrifice
Fascist officers	Solemn theme, use of minor mode, traditional Jewish music	Parody of military marches	Cruelty, political tyranny
Playing field	Percussive rhythm	Emphasis on drama in the film realm	Dignity during war
	Repetitive sound idea		

Fig. 4. Kiril Džajkovski, „*The Third Half*”, outline of musical themes, stylistic influences, possible aesthetic meanings

4.5. *Balkan Is Not Dead* (2013, directed by Aleksandar Popovski)

Balkan Is Not Dead is a historical drama, presented in a poetic manner, set in Ottoman Macedonia at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the last century. The film tells the story of two sisters with opposing ideals—one modernist and revolutionary, the other traditional and submissive—in a context of political, national, and erotic transformation.

The music not only serves as accompaniment, but also becomes a symbol of the narrative, a sonic meditation on femininity, memory, and resignation. Unlike the energetic rhythms of *Bal-Can-Can* or the sober drama of *The Third Half*, in *Balkan Is Not Dead*, Džajkovski creates a fine, almost diaphanous musical texture, dominated by modal-chromatic melodic ideas, unfolding at a slow tempo. The sound is mixed, combining intonations from classical Ottoman music, Balkan traditions, and Western Romanticism, reflecting the hybrid world in which the story unfolds (Djeparoska, 2020). In terms of timbre, we note the use of the violin as a narrative instrument, which, alongside its traditional melodic function, becomes a latent female voice, capable of expressing restrained suffering or repressed desire. In the younger sister's introspective sequences, the music is often reduced to a simple dialogue between the piano and the violin – like a duet of inner silence. In addition, recurring motifs with symbolic meanings are introduced, appearing in

moments of narrative tension, expressed in the female vocal part in sevdah style or a minor theme in irregular meter (aksak), evoking the Balkan folk tradition sublimated into a personal language.

A remarkable aspect of the score is its subtle sonic intertextuality. In certain passages, echoes of old folk songs or Ottoman sacred music can be heard, filtered through a contemporary sensibility, in discreet electronic sounds that do not contrast with the historical atmosphere, but rather symbolically update it. Džajkovski thus builds a bridge between the past and the present, between a repressed feminine world and a memory that refuses to die. In the film, silence is as important as words, and the music fulfills what the dialogue refuses to articulate: hidden passions, stifled desires, ritualistic resignations. The soundtrack not only supports the image, but becomes a poetic act in itself—a sonic elegy for a vanished world and its forgotten voices (Cvijanović, 2012).

<i>Balkan Is Not Dead</i> Characters-related musical motifs/themes- stylistic influences – meaning			
Andja (passionate sister)	Motifs with lyrical expression; Timbre of chordophones (violin in particular) Romantic music	Late Romanticism Balkan influences	Desire for freedom, for escape from conventional space
Duko (quiet sister)	Solemn music, slow tempo; Use of the low range	Influences from archaic folklore	Relationship with the valuable past; respect for traditions;
The young Ottoman officer	Melismatic sonority; oriental music;	Ottoman music	Clash of cultures; the forbidden attraction
Balkan area	Collage with taraf music and traditional choral fragments	Re-evaluation of Balkan folklore from a modern perspective	Collective identity

Fig. 5. Kiril Džajkovski, „*Balkan is Not Dead*”, outline of musical themes, stylistic influences, possible aesthetic meanings

With this work, Džajkovski confirms not only his technical refinement, but also his capacity for aesthetic empathy: music that is profoundly masculine in other creations becomes feminine, restrained, almost transparent here, perfectly supporting the director's vision of a film about female silence in Balkan history.

5. Conclusion: Kiril Džajkovski – Sound architect of contemporary Balkan cinema

Kiril Džajkovski's film music constitutes an aesthetic and ideological discourse in itself, capable of shaping the emotional space of the story and critically intervening in the construction of Balkan cultural identity. His stylistic versatility, coupled with remarkable thematic coherence, makes Džajkovski one of the most relevant voices in Southeast European cinema in recent decades.

Analyzing the soundtracks of the films *Dust*, *The Great Water*, *Bal-Can-Can*, *The Third Half*, and *Balkan Is Not Dead*, three fundamental directions of his artistic impact clearly emerge. The reconstruction of collective memory through sound becomes the process through which Džajkovski manages to activate profound registers of historical consciousness. Whether evoking the Balkan wars (*Dust*), the traumas of totalitarian regimes (*The Great Water*), the Holocaust (*The Third Half*), or the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (*Balkan Is Not Dead*), his music emotionally and identitarily reconstructs lost or forgotten spaces, giving them a vivid presence in the contemporary imagination. Irony and critical attitude from a cultural perspective through pastiche and collage – in films such as *Bal-Can-Can*, where Džajkovski uses musical language to ridicule identity clichés and deconstruct stereotypes about "Balkanism". In this direction, he aligns himself with a postmodern aesthetic in which collage, hybridization, and fragmentation function as mechanisms of artistic subversion. In order to construct a contemporary Balkan language – without falling into ethnic pastiche – Džajkovski develops a sound aesthetic deeply influenced by regional traditions, but expressed through synthetic means (chamber, orchestral, electronic, or ambient music). This *mélange* becomes a recognizable stylistic code that crosses the boundaries of films and contributes to the shaping of a regional cultural identity in the European cinematic space.

Ultimately, the impact of Kiril Džajkovski's film music lies not only in the compositional quality of his works, but also in the way they become voices of a region marked by history, conflict, and the search for meaning. The artist does not impose a sound image of the Balkans, but listens, interprets, and reimagines a collective memory that is in constant transformation. We thus perceive his music not only as an illustration of films, but as the backbone of a contemporary Balkan aesthetic, in which history, irony, and humanity coexist in a fragile but profound balance.

References

Chion, Michel. 1994. *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*. Columbia University Press.

- Cvijanović, Irina. "Travelling Concepts in Balkan Electronic Dance Music." <https://norient.com/academic/balkan-electronic-dance-music>
- Georgievski, Nenad. 27 October 2012. "Kiril Džajkovski: West Meets East." <https://www.allaboutjazz.com/kiril-dzajkovski-west-meets-east-by-nenad-georgievski>
- Gorbman, Claudia. 1987. *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music*. Indiana University Press.
- Hjort, Mette. 2010. "On the Plurality of Cinematic Transnationalism." In *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*, ed. by Nataša Đurovičová and Kathleen E. Newman, 12–32. New York: Routledge.
- Homer, Sean. 2016. 13 October 2016. *The Founding Trauma of National Identity in the Films of Milčo Mančevski*. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/270262> (accessed 10.07.2025)
- Jovanov, Petar. 2009. "Balkan and Popular-Classical Hollywood Styles as a Transnational Flexibility Aesthetic for Film-Music," pp. 1–22. https://www.academia.edu/49151323/Balkan_and_Popular_Classical_Hollywood_Styles_as_a_Transnational_Flexibility_Aesthetic_for_Film_Music
- Melita Milin, Post-Yugoslav Musical Landscapes: Restarting Musical Communications after the Wars. IMS-RASMB, Series *Musicologica Balcanica* 5, 2024. e-ISSN: 2654-248X. <https://doi.org/10.26262/smb.v0i5.10403>
- Nonevski, Vangel. 2011. "Recycling as a Model for Participatory Local Culture: Re-thinking the Skopje Cultural Brand in the Context of Primitivism," pp. 27–48.
- Papadimitriou, Lydia, and Ana Grgic (eds). 2022. *Contemporary Balkan Cinema: Transnational Exchanges and Global Circuits*. Edinburgh University Press. <https://edinburghuniversitypress.com/book-contemporary-balkan-cinema.html>
- Simjanovska, Violeta (ed.). *Re-thinking Local Cultural Policy: New Identity and New Paradigm*. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Violeta-Simjanovska/publication/333080111_Re-thinking-Local-Cultural-Policy-new-id/links/5cda8b03458515712ea9640d/Re-thinking-Local-Cultural-Policy-new-id.pdf
- Tängerstad, Erik. 2001. *When the Story Hides the Story: The Narrative Structure of Milcho Manchevski's Dust* <https://manchevski.com/docs/monograph/en/219-239> (accessed 10.07.2025)
- Valcheva, Violeta Marinova. 2020. *Narratives of Post-Communism: A Critical Investigation of Balkan Cinema in 1990–2010*. <https://www.academia.edu/44680616/> (accessed 10.07.2025)
- Volnarovski, Petar. March 2002. *Interview with Kiril Džajkovski – Magical Chaos and New Temptations*. <https://blesok.mk/en/sound/reviews->

sound/interview-with-kiril-dzhajkovski-25/

Zdravkova Djeparoska, Sonja. 17 May 2020. *Macedonian Cultural Plurality at the Crossroads of the Balkans: Drama, Music and Dance*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/arts9030085>, pp. 1–14.