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Sounds real: music and documentary

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Abstract

This article examines the way in which music has featured in documentary films and programmes. The conventions of restrained use to cue mood and theme are explored, using examples and the recommendations of manuals. Across the varieties of documentary output, the article notes how the dominance of journalistic and observational formats has, for different reasons, tended to place music in the margins. Drawing on an example from the classic period of documentary film-making in Britain, it points towards a more expansive use of music in a complementary relationship with images. A number of general theoretical points about the specific properties of the documentary image and its relationship with music are raised and recent examples of successful innovation discussed. The article ends by suggesting that there is more scope for aesthetic development in music–image relations than has often been recognised and that some of the established inhibitions about mixing 'fact' with 'emotion' need to be reviewed.

Within the aural profile of television, music plays varying roles and functions, quite apart from its vital job in signalling programme identity through signature title tunes. These functions include generating *thematic* support for what is on the screen – indications of historical time, of geographical place and of appropriate mood being prominent – and providing *formal* support for programme organisation, pacing and the shifting intensities of portrayal. In all these modes of application, the way in which rhythm, tempo, harmony, melody, etc., feed into contextual, associative patterns of cultural meaning will be a matter for careful production judgement, however 'intuitively' exercised. Clearly, a challenge is posed for analysis in tracing the specific dynamics of this process across its diverse formal and contextual factors (Tagg 1987 poses the terms of this challenge most suggestively from within a semiotic perspective).

In this article, I want to concern myself largely with the varied function of music within factual programming. In particular I want to look at that range of factual programmes still identified loosely and sometimes nervously as 'documentary', despite the further strain placed on this leaky category by recent developments in 'reality television' (Dovey 2000 provides a good critical review). How does music figure within television's documentary aesthetic and, as the whole area of factual programming undergoes shifts of form and function, in what ways might the mode of its employment change? Given the lack of writing on this topic to date, an exploratory and provisional approach seems appropriate.

Music and the documentary aesthetic

In assessing the use made of music in documentary production we have to recognise from the outset documentary's widely varying profile and emphases. It is a

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genre of inquiry and argument, of observation and illustration and, particularly in the last few years, of diversion and amusement. Within British television, a strong journalistic dimension to documentary emerged quite rapidly in the early 1950s, as the medium became a primary source of national news and public knowledge. This contrasted sharply with the promotional and propagandistic uses to which cinematic documentary was often put during the 1930s and 1940s. It is perhaps not surprising that the more the representational scheme of a documentary is framed by rationalistic imperatives and concern about 'balance', the more likely it is that music will seem extraneous if not wholly suspect, an importer of unwelcome emotion and feeling. But the history of documentary's musical relations is not simply a matter of its proximity to the journalistic. For perhaps the biggest broad movement in international documentary since the 1950s has been that influenced by the 'vérité' and 'direct cinema' traditions of sustained observational film-making. These have often embraced a degree of depictive purism that places question marks alongside anything likely to adulterate a direct relaying of the primary events, circumstances and interactions before the camera.

Taken together, then, what we might call *journalistic rationalism* and *observational minimalism* have acted to keep many producers (and quite possibly sizeable sections of the audience) concerned about the risk of a musical ingredient somehow subverting programme integrity. There has been work outside of these protocols of course, including various kinds of expansive, more freely expressive reportage and dramatised productions. In these, music has continued to be important.

It might be worth noting here the basic differences between musical accompaniment to fictional narratives, on the one hand, and to documentary-style programmes on the other. These have to be treated as indicative rather than definitive, and they collapse altogether in the case of drama-documentary productions, but recognition of them is analytically useful. Musical soundtrack in scenes of acted narrative and dramatised setting, perhaps underneath dialogue, guides us in our imaginative response to a fictional world, a world that it is the rhetorical project of the film or programme to encourage us to be drawn within. The music works to position us in terms of this diegetic containment. However, documentary's images, interviews and commentaries work largely within the terms of display and exposition. Our involvement here is different from the way in which we are spectators to a 'visible fiction'. We may be the addressees of direct, spoken address, images may be offered to us as an illustration of explicit propositions, we may be cued to watch sequences as witnesses to the implicit revelation of more general truths. In this context, musical relations are likely to become more self-conscious, and less intimate, than when watching fiction.

Some indication of how the use of music is viewed from within the perspectives of documentary production can be gleaned from the latest edition of what is undoubtedly the most widely used production manual. This is Michael Rabiger's *Directing the Documentary* (Rabiger 1998). In his bullet point notes on post-production, Rabiger comments as follows:

- Music should not inject false emotion.
- Choice of music should give access to the inner life of a character or the subject.
- Music can signal the emotional level at which the audience should investigate what is being shown (Rabiger 1998, p. 310).

What we see here, I think, is clearly both a sense of risk and of possibility. Music

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is regarded as primarily emotional in its effects, either by way of signalling appropriate levels of emotion or, more indirectly, by providing support for an interiority which cannot itself be visualised or perhaps even spoken ('inner life'). There are some awkward questions raised by this, certainly. How are we to judge the 'falseness' of an emotion and by what independent means will the conditions of 'inner life' be available to producers so that they may be secure in indicating it musically? But questions of documentary integrity are notoriously difficult to resolve cleanly by sole resort to evidence lying outside of individual creative judgement. In the light of what I shall say below, it seems to me particularly appropriate that the third rubric uses 'investigate' rather than simply 'respond to'. An invitation to some kind of participatory dynamic, not a conditioned reflex, appears to be part of the plan, at least in this account.

In pursuing my brief exploration into music and the documentary aesthetic I shall draw on a number of examples, some of them recent. However, I want to start with a consideration of how music figures in one of the classics of the British documentary tradition – Humphrey Jennings' 1941 film *Listen to Britain* (Crown Films). Although it is an example drawn from documentary cinema, it seems to me that some aspects of the way this film works have a very useful bearing both on practice and on potential in television.

Listen to Britain and the arts of looking

The film that finally became *Listen to Britain* started out on the drawing-board as a film about music and the military, potentially organised around the idea of marching tunes. The final version, a film offering different sights and sounds of wartime work and life in Britain over a twenty-four hour cycle, departs radically from this initial plan but preserves the emphasis on music (see Vaughan 1983). Throughout its length, the film 'finds' its music from marching bands, dance bands, canteen concerts, orchestral concerts, small groups of singers (fireman, soldiers and children) and different radio programmes. Since these are almost all sourced within the film's visual presentation, they form part of its invitation to 'listen to Britain'. They are offered as Britain's own sounds, not an added soundtrack, but they are expanded across scenes other than their source scene. Between the music, a range of other sounds is heard too. These are the overheard sounds of work and play, of aeroplanes, of trains, of factories and of fragments of casual conversation in a variety of settings. Perhaps the most radical element of the film is that it completely eschews commentary. It proceeds entirely through its succession of linked images, music and sounds, organised within a subtle and always implicit sense of relationship and development.

What does this emphasis on the hearing of music and sounds but not words mean for the way in which we watch the film, for our experience as viewers? I think the answer here is that it greatly intensifies our engagement with the images. It helps provide the resources for a viewing disposition allowing us to respond fully to the charge of meanings in each composition and actively to read the screen not only in the detail of the shot but in its relationship within an associative sequence. Music saturates the images, informing them by fusing its meanings with their own, and at the same times it bonds the shots together through its own aesthetic continuity. It frees them from the literalism of commentary and underwrites the possibility of delivering surprise and juxtaposition as well as of expected con-

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nections. Through listening to Britain, we are enabled properly to *look* at it. For this to work, what we are offered visually must have sufficient resonance and depth to hold active attention without accompanying speech. This is partly a matter of generating a formal interest (through such factors as framing, composition, lighting and movement within the shot). But it is also, in close combination, very much a matter of *what* is shown and the wartime viewer's social and personal relation to the depicted sights and the connoted themes. In Jennings' film, the contemporary audience's ability to connect directly and powerfully with what they saw, as elements of a common present and of shared hopes and anxieties, could be assumed. Clearly, these conditions cannot be met so easily if at all with other kinds of topic, intended audience or viewing situation.

We can also ask some closer questions about the form. What would be the effect were Jennings' images to be shown with actuality sound but either with no music at all or with music only within those shots depicting its source? First of all, I think screening the images unaccompanied would have critically depleted the contemporary audience's experience, reducing its emotional fullness and pushing it too far towards a communicative uncertainty. The codes for watching silent depictions are relatively undeveloped in Western culture. Watching a real event in silence is one thing, the existential fact of *being there* closing the potential distance between self and circumstance. Moreover, the silence is a motivated part of the watching itself. Watching a silent representation involves a very different relationship. Even watching on television a minute's silence being observed at the start of a football match carries an awkwardness for the viewer which is distinctive to the secondary status of the experience and to the fact that it is the representation, not us, which initiates the silence. There are other, cognate, experiences we might want to consider, for instance a visit to an art gallery or a photo exhibition. Here, however, the silent contemplation of the exhibits is accompanied by purposive movement through the physical space of the gallery; though it may be silent, the experience is partly one of motivated behaviour. Once again, the silence essentially belongs to us, not the depiction, from which no sound can be expected. The post-sound technology screen offering its *deliberately* silent images to a static audience poses a challenge to comfortable viewing relationships. It raises questions about the informational yield, aesthetic satisfaction and directed thoughtfulness that the image track can successfully generate within the viewer on its own. Even the silent cinema used inter-titles and, often, live accompaniment as a partial 'solution' to this. Silence presents the possibility of an embarrassing insufficiency of meaningfulness and a more embarrassing uncertainty about whether this insufficiency is essentially in the work or in the viewer. One very basic function of music, then, is to reduce the risk of the attention frame slipping towards *too much* self-consciousness and loss of focus in this way.

In *Listen to Britain*, restricting the music to source-scenes only would clearly be better than the complete loss of musical accompaniment. However, it would occasion a radical loss of continuity and of cumulative force across the film's design, marking a separation of scenes and settings instead of using form to strengthen thematic interconnection. The duration of many scenes, wonderfully constructed though they are, would be seen to out-run their perceived interest even by an audience for whom they were thick with wartime significance.

Of course, *Listen to Britain* is not the only film of the British Documentary Movement to use music imaginatively. Other classic works such as *Coalface* (GPO

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Films, 1935) were in many ways more inventive in this respect, using special compositions to work, often dialectically, with the images (see the discussion in Corner 1996). However, they also used a commentary too, thus stabilising their audio-visual aesthetic around the words of an information flow directly addressed to the viewer. In *Coalface,* Benjamin Britten's score is used to suggest machine noises related to the visual portrayal and to fit in with, and further emphasise, the speech rhythms of the commentary. This, in addition to performing the more conventional functions of enhancing the viewing experience, signalling shifts of mood and giving a strengthened continuity and development. Its percussive and dissonant modernism would provide a challenging aural input on its own, but in combination with the mechanistic energy of the film's images it forms an integrated experience.

Listen to Britain is unusual in the trust it shows in supporting images through music alone and also, in some scenes, in supporting the music through the images. That is why its visual experience is so distinctive. Key scenes here include shots of a canteen full of workers singing along to Flanagan and Allen on stage, of female lathe operators joining in with the rendition of 'Yes, My Darling Daughter' coming over the Tannoy and of a National Portrait Gallery performance of a Mozart piano concerto performed by an RAF orchestra (with, pointedly, Dame Myra Hess as soloist). The latter is played across shots of the Queen and various members of the concert audience (predominantly armed service personnel) as well as across street scenes and panoramas of wartime London. The example of this film, though distinctive to a period both of cinematic and social history, is one that can help us in thinking more creatively as well as more critically about television practice and its continuing possibilities.

'To document': subgeneric variety and audio-visual codes

The imperative 'to document' is a broad one, admitting a wide range of approaches and making the generic idea of 'documentary' resistant to clear codification. What counts as 'documentary' has been, since the 1930s, very much a pragmatic matter of particular purposes and opportunities, informed by contemporary developments in audiovisual technology and culture. In Britain, a decisive shift in the general profile of documentary occurred with the development of national television services in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Documentary in effect 'migrated' from cinema to television, taking some key personnel with it. It was now predominantly conceived in terms of programmes addressed to homes rather than films addressed to the darkened auditorium. Its defining, although by no means exclusive, function also shifted. From being a project of national publicity and celebration it became increasingly characterised as one of reportage, drawing selectively on the established traditions of radio journalism and concurrent developments in television news. Both the shift from public to domestic address and the shift away from the publicity mode carried implications for the auditory profile by which the genre as a whole was characterised. One factor here was the move towards a quieter, less declamatory mode of address, with a reduced commitment to affective impact. This clearly had consequences for the future use of musical soundtrack.

In looking at how music has been employed across television's documentary output, two axes of documentary type can be useful guides, however approximate they may be and however much the one needs often to be mapped on to the other. First of all, there is the axis running from 'serious' to 'light', an axis regularly subject

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to changing criteria and one which has been made newly prominent in the schedules by the last decade's developments in 'reality television'. Secondly, there is the axis from 'Art' to 'Record', to use the terms that I have found more generally helpful in thinking about documentary practice. Along this axis can be plotted a number of issues to do with authorship, self-consciousness, stylistic range and what we can call the particular 'reality claim' of the programme (see Winston 1995).

In relation to the first axis, a strong tendency has been for music to be employed more frequently the 'lighter' the topic and/or treatment. Right from the 1950s, this can be seen in documentaries seeking to place a comic, sentimental or lightly ironic framing on their subjects. So for instance, a programme on the job of street cleaning in London (in the series *Look in on London*, ATV 1956) has an occasional soundtrack of jaunty, banjo music accompanying its images of refuse barges and the industrial riverside. The music is used formally, to punctuate the development of the account, but also thematically. It offers a cue both for reading location (the East End, working-class settings) and for reading tone (informative but relaxed and slightly amused). Placed across sections where the commentary is minimal or temporarily absent, it provides a pleasing context of sound within which to attend to the images in the spirit of informative diversion (for a full analysis of this programme, see Corner 1996, chapter 4). Unlike in *Listen to Britain*, there is little symbolic density or resonance sought in the crafting of the shots, so they are even less able than in the earlier film to support an unaccompanied viewing.

As a documentary topic and approach becomes more serious, a matter of issues and problems, of controversy and argument, then there is likely to be a more strategic kind of attention paid to the 'mood cueing' that music brings. There is also likely to be more uncertainty about the *kind* of music that should be used, should it be considered at all. The possibilities offered by classical works are likely to be found in some cases more appropriate than popular forms. Brief passages, perhaps just a phrase, can reinforce a more sombre and contemplative viewing experience but they still need to be used with care and sparingly. Jazz is interestingly placed here. Within British television, scores in the John Dankworth orchestral idiom are used in the late 1950s and 1960s to connote 'the city' and sometimes 'youth'. A typical scene might have bluesy saxophone-led phrases over a shot of a London night scene, borrowing the American connotations for a wider resonance. Yet problems of class are raised by the use of Jazz, since it has never been a popular working class form in Britain. For a period, Jazz was a preferred music for mapping the indigenous documentary subject within an essentially cosmopolitan, 'noir-ish' view of urbanism and its new restlessness.

In relation to the second axis, that between art and record, the tendency here has been for music to be used more extensively in those programmes which operate confidently within a sense of themselves as artefacts, as authored 'works'. This need not mean a claim to high aesthetic status, it simply indicates a level of self-consciousness about the crafting and styling of the account, the degree of creative and imaginative freedom exercised in its construction. Clearly, *Listen to Britain* worked strongly within a version of this mode of documentation, as did many films from the British Documentary Movement.

One relevant example from the television of the 1950s is Denis Mitchell's *Morning in the Streets*, made for the BBC in 1959. Essentially an impressionistic portrait of aspects of life in northern working-class communities, the film varies in tone between a relaxed whimsicality and a serious sense of constraint and of hope.

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Its extensive use of different musical material is doubly licensed by the frequent lightness of tone, as positioned on my earlier axis above, and its clear status as an *auteur* piece (a status confirmed in its winning of the Prix Italia in the following year).

As well as the line of 'audio-visual essays' in this broad vein, continuing through to current schedules, there are other stands of documentary that have exercised a creative licence as 'art' more freely than mainstream output. Here, biographical documentaries, with their directly personal focus, have drawn extensively on music to establish both tone and circumstance. Dramatisations of all kinds (including reconstruction 'emergency' series like the BBC's *999*) have often been keen to use it in order to support their attempt at offering some of the narrative development and emotional intensities associated with fiction. Archive series, committed to a grounding in 'record' but also often involved in kinds of imaginative projection, have needed it not only to sustain and to shift mood but also to help fill out a basic communicative profile otherwise depending extensively on silent footage and commentary. For a rather similar reason, wildlife series and the increasing range of popular science and history series, both using lengthy sequences without significant actuality sound, have resorted to it more frequently over the last decade. Against such exercises in directorial styling and affective address, we can place the modes of reportage and observation noted earlier.

Within the formats of documentary reportage, the news-based protocols of journalism have tended to place the use of musical soundtracks as an intrusion in programmes offered essentially as professional reporting and analysis.[1] This is so both at the level of form (a well organised report does not need any extra dynamics) and of theme (what to feel should be a matter of individual viewer reaction to what is shown and said). In the latter case, a risk of manipulation, and perhaps a breach of impartiality requirements, has also been perceived. This is particularly so in those sequences of a programme where interview testimony and/or visual evidence is being placed within a framework for assessment on a matter of established controversy. At points like these, the journalistic function is at its most accountable, not simply documenting but organising the terms of a conflict of opinion. Both the established professional broadcaster codes as well as institutional protocols and (in some cases) national legislation are at issue here.

An example can be taken from a study I carried out with colleagues on British television and video accounts of the debate about nuclear energy in the late 1980s (Corner *et al*. 1990). One of the programmes we looked at, the last episode in a series of three BBC programmes entitled *Taming the Dragon* (BBC2 1987) examined the safety record of the British nuclear industry in the wake of the Chernobyl disaster. In exploring this record through voiced-over film and interview, it made extensive use of an eerie, slow, electronic soundtrack, connecting the account to recent fictional portrayals of nuclear mishap, including the BBC thriller series *Edge of Darkness*, screened to popular success in the previous year. There is little doubt from the viewing analysis we undertook that this music made a significant contribution to the sense of threat carried in parts of the programme. However, the programme's ostensible journalistic purpose, carried in the commentary and interview structure, was precisely to explore the existence and level of this threat. The addition of such a soundtrack can be seen as working to reinforce a conclusion about nuclear risk that the journalistic discourse was still only entertaining as one interpretation among others. Not surprisingly, in the nuclear industry (and amongst a few of our

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researched respondents) there was some dissatisfaction expressed with this kind of premature closure of judgement, especially when achieved in such an indirect, affective manner. No discussion of audio-visual practices in public information could fail to recognise the real problems posed by cases like this. Whatever the degree of musical inhibition introduced into television documentary practice by journalism across its very wide range of descriptive work, in its core 'forum' functions, as a means of reporting and assessing public dispute, the issue of covert judgement will require continued care.

Within the very different framework of observational filming, there has been a commitment, not to informational impartiality, but to the delivery of a raw viewing experience – the witnessing of ongoing action and overheard speech in the most direct of modes. Here, the apparent spontaneity and naturalism of the approach, the very artlessness of its rhetoric, has worked against the employment of musical soundtrack. The inhibitions here have not been grounded in ideas of propriety or legal requirement, like those of journalism. They have been seen as an essential part of successful recipes for generating and sustaining the effect of 'directness'. It is significant, for instance, that even *Big Brother* (Endemol Entertainment for Channel 4, 2000 and 2001), the most innovative and successful factual entertainment format of the last few years, preserves its naturalistic address by using music only for title sequences and break points.

Re-imagining documentary: new spaces for music?

I have set out a situation in which the use of music in documentary television has been characterised both by its conventional employment as a supplementary, affective stimulant and, often, by a degree of restraint. The twin television emphases on journalistic integrity and on observational directness (the latter reinforced by the raw effect sought by many recipes for 'reality' programming) have, in different ways, positioned music as a potential intrusion. More imaginative forms of reportage (for instance, those based on travel) have introduced it as a device to point up a theme or underscore an irony but they, too, have often been wary of a bolder use. Most frequently, it has been seen as useful in getting the viewer through 'bridging' sequences, including journeys. Again, the advice in Rabiger (1998) is instructive:

> Transitional sequences of any kind can benefit from music, especially if it lifts the film out of a prevailing mood. Music can highlight an emotional change when, for instance, an aspiring football player learns he can join the team, or when someone newly homeless lies down for the first night in a doorway. (Rabiger 1998, p. 286)

As the varieties of audio-visual documentation are further dispersed and hybridised, it would be a pity to see music as *merely* offering a more widely used set of clichés for injecting punctuation, pace and intensity into the viewing experience. With game shows, gardening, holiday and cookery programmes and a whole range of lifestyle output increasingly trading on varieties of the documentary image, this will undoubtedly be one mode of use. Here, the energies of the music sometimes appear to be compensating for the paucity of visual interest and perhaps even the perceived limitations of the speech. Not surprisingly, a number of low-budget and rapidly shot location programmes, especially holiday and sports series, contrive to keep things bright and strong in this way. Philip Tagg (1987) comments illumi-

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natingly on the diverse categories of 'catalogue' music designed expressly to be used in such kinds of professional application.

Other possibilities, however, still remain under-explored – possibilities that would allow a more considered connection with visual portrayal. As in *Listen to Britain*, this is music providing us with the time to *look* properly, giving us a framework in which to gaze and to *think*. To refer back to my quotation from Rabiger, it is music as part of 'investigation'. Such an approach goes along with the use of more generous shot lengths and with restraint in voiced-over speech, at least for given segments. It encourages a more adventurous approach to the television image at a point where the technology can do full justice to audiovisual creativity. This is after decades of development that have tended towards visualisations cut back to the demands of speech and of narrative pace. As I suggested earlier, this bolder musico-visual approach is not just another mode of musical subservience, since there is a clear sense in which our experience of the music itself (whether 'borrowed' or specially written) benefits from the combination. And although the music's generated meanings will tend to fuse with those of the image sequence, the very directness of the approach means that we are conscious of listening to music as well as of attending to the screen. Moreover, the aesthetic options extend well past their cliché instances (e.g. rural lyricism, the bustle of the city) and await further, committed innovation.

One notable, recent example is *Wisconsin Death Trip*, a film made for the BBC2 *Arena* series (and transmitted in 2000) but also distributed to independent cinemas (see the website at www.wisconsindeathtrip.com). Working imaginatively from local newspaper records and photo archives that document one year in the nineteenth-century history of the township of Black River Falls in northern Wisconsin, this programme offers a potent combination of data and mood. A key element in its portrayal of past events, an exploration using archive stills and reconstructed action, is the specially written orchestral score (including work by John Cale). Mixing the rhythms and textures of different American musics, including traditional forms, this provides the essential medium in which the evocative power of the images and commentary works. It opens up the space to look properly and thoughtfully at the visual record in its localised times and places and is central to the film's resonance and success.

Another example comes from the winner of the 2001 Grierson award for the best documentary series, Icon Film's *Indian Journeys* (screened on BBC in April 2000). Throughout this series, music was used effectively in the conventional thematic way to deliver a stronger sense of Indian culture alongside the visuals and the commentary. However, at points, there was also a more prominent role given to it. In the episode following a journey to the source of the Ganges ('Shiva's Matted Locks'), the arrival of the presenter at the source glacier in the Himalayas is initially the occasion both for voice-over and to-camera presentation. But then music (a song) works with the camera to provide a more provocative, wordless, encounter with the scene. The programme slows down, as it were – its busy rhythms of interview, exposition and travel sequence relax to offer a more focused sense of place, space and significance. This is much more than simply a chance to admire the scenery, a touristic moment. It is a chance to take in something of how the setting works as an experience for the visitor, including the pilgrims whose route the programme has followed. It thereby encourages an active perception that allows us, at least partly, to discover and to ponder our own terms of relation to the represented

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inside the terms of the representation. Despite the spectacular landscape, this is the aesthetics of engagement rather than of display. It brings a cognitive enhancement, not just an increased viewing delight.

Such an attempted extension of the visual language of documentary in combination with music, pushes well beyond the experience of the documentary image provided by journalism, by the varieties of *tele-vérité* or even by those transitional moments of music–image combination indicated in Rabiger's account. For many years, the mixing of the creative and the factual on television was viewed with suspicion by those who, unlike the pioneers of documentary cinema, drew on too rigid a sense of demarcation between imagination and knowledge. After this false separation, there has come a kind of false conflation suggested by such terms as 'infotainment'. This is false because it too easily suggests, both for advocates and for critics, that it is only within a limited range of novelty formats that certain aesthetic 'boundaries' can be crossed.

Documentary reportage around controversial issues will clearly continue to want to keep some of its core discourses free of the kinds of prematurely evaluative closure that I discussed earlier. But documentary exposition includes much more than journalism, and even within documentary journalism I believe there is more room for expressive depiction and for the musico-visual exploration of topic than is currently being used.

The real potential that television offers for connecting knowing to feeling, and hearing to viewing, remains larger than we might guess from what is now in the schedules. A more varied, inventive and risk-taking employment of music within television documentary would be a welcome part of the wider and continuing exploration of the role of art in the quest for understanding.

Endnote

1. The way in which news practices influence work in other factual genres is worthy of further research. Of historical interest here is the first of two *Times* articles written about the state of television journalism by the broadcasters John Birt and Peter Jay (Birt and Jay 1975). In it, a tension is noted between the 'newsroom model' and the 'movie model' of current-affairs programming. The authors see the latter as leading to an undesirable emphasis on filmic criteria, such as narrative incident, animated talk and exciting locations, rather than exposition and analysis. It seems clear that music would be seen as a further, diversionary element of the 'movie model'.

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