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**MONOGRAPH
“DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARTISTIC AND SOCIAL EXPRESSIONS THROUGH THE
AMERICAN MUSICAL FILM”**

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Gratitude

In the first place, I would like to give my gratitude to all my family who have supported me and guided me every day to be a better person, as well as all the artists who had inspired me to select this special topic which is rightfully directed to the career that I will take for my future. I would also like to thank my all advisors, including Mr. Francisco López who enlightened my knowledge through this process. Finally, and most importantly I want to thank God and my friends who motivate me to continue chasing my dreams.

Abstract

The present monograph “Development of the artistic and social expressions through the American musical film” is an extended research of the attributes and achievements that possessed the American cinema regarding the musical genre in Hollywood. This work takes into account all the stages of the genre including the most outstanding contributors and projects that have caused an impact on the general public.

The first chapter encompasses the beginnings of the genre, the difficulties, and the strategies they faced to make people get interested in the creation of these films. It is necessary to go back to where the real musical originated, that is, with the appearance of the sound cinema and the suggestive Broadway shows. It also persuades the reader to comprehend the importance of the musicals on society, their characteristics and how they provide influence with their unique style.

As for the second chapter, the rise of the Golden Age is described. Outstanding actors as Gene Kelly and Judy Garland, as well as directors like Vincente Minnelli are mentioned along with their splendid projects that complemented the entire genre and its purpose in cinema. This new age involves many good changes and performances that will never be forgotten, considering popular movies and even greatest numbers as “Singin’ in the Rain”. Furthermore, declines and falls that were generated during this period are expressed, taking into account the procedures and competencies that tried to impede the process of the genre.

In the final analysis regarding the third chapter, a new rebirth of films is made with the modern style and later the introduction of disco music. Hollywood tries a new style and leaves behind the classic one, however, there still were directors who used the traditional model. It gives an explanation of the influences that Hollywood adapted to their cinematographic style, showing the divergence of sing and

dance. At this part, the reader gets deeper into the purpose of the musicals for the given reflection of these artistic creations in the world.

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Introduction

The current monograph that has as its title *“Development of the artistic and social expressions through the American musical film”* is an in-depth investigation of the major moments and achievements that were part of the American Film regarding the extravagant genre in Hollywood, the musical. This project is highly important because it takes into consideration all stages of the genre, mentioning the most relevant collaborators and projects that have brought enormous attention to Hollywood.

The musical genre, one of the greatest exponents of emotions does not deserve to be questioning its worth. This work has as a purpose to leave behind the discredited idea of musical cinema, motivating all those lovers of art to get involved with it, to value the sets and scenarios that are an example of absolute cinema beauty and above all, to comprehend the integrative capacity to include musical numbers in the plots, giving the original soundtracks and songs of the genre the merit they deserve.

For the elaboration of this monograph it has been taken into consideration the following books: *The Hollywood Film Musical* by Barry Grant as well as *The American Film Musical* by Rick Altman in order to analyze the beginnings of the American Musical Film. On the other hand, to understand the subsequent events the book of James Wierzbicki, *Film Music: A History, Hollywood Musicals*, plus the edition of *The Film Reader* by Steven Cohan, and lastly Todd Berliner and Philip Furia with *The Sounds of Silence: Songs in Hollywood Films since the 1960s* have been chosen.

Regarding the context, Hollywood during the process and the recognition of the cinema, witnessed several events according to the social background of the United States, giving way to the projection in musical films of the interests and thoughts that were manifested. Today, thanks to the development and

the strategies that the studies carried out at the beginning, they gave way to the technological narrative social advancement of these contemporary musicals that feed on the first projects.

This monograph includes 3 chapters: “The beginning of the American Musical film” being the first chapter along with its subthemes: The musical film genre, transition from silent to sound film, first musical projects, and primordial themes for the last one. In the second and most extensive chapter, “Golden Age of the American Musical Film”, we get to learn about: The rise of the Golden Age, representatives, essential directors, Arthur Freed and its contribution to MGM, and the impact of World War II. Finally the third chapter, “The Hollywood Renaissance” contains: The end of the Golden Age, from classic to modern style, musical rebirth, relevant projects, and musicals purpose in society.

Chapter I

The beginning of the American musical film

1.1 The musical film genre

With the emergence of sound films, Hollywood was able to bring to the big screen a genre that already existed on Broadway stages, the musical. "The musical is the only genre that consistently violates the otherwise rigid logic of classic narrative cinema" (Grant, 2012, p. 3). According to Grant, the musical genre is a huge development regarding the constant narrative of cinema, leaving behind the traditional production and welcoming a new cinematographic perspective of art.

1.1.1 Importance.

For this reason, the importance of the musical cinema resides in the artistic changes that were brought to the silent classic cinema, welcoming a new era full of different ideologies and techniques which evolved the musical cinema as such. This changed several aspects of American society as well and served as a great base for the following musical projects of the current years.

1.1.1.1 Influence on American society.

As a matter of fact, already in the 1930s, the musical became the audience's favorite genre, due to forgetting the strong economic crisis that was suffering the American society. Altman (1987) expresses: "We have reached a 'place' of transcendence where time stands still, where contingent concerns are stripped away to reveal the essence of things" (pp. 66-67). In this case, Rick Altman recognizes the big step that humans have taken towards cinema, leaving behind all concerns and taking into account the individual expression. This genre had an effective impact in regard of being the main escape route for the majority of the population, encompassing great eye-catching expressions, dances and music which filled people with happiness and separated them from a reality that condemned them; by way of explanation, this genre gave the practice of escapism, serving as a way of relief and distraction to the population. The attribute of this genre is to rely on the lyrics of those songs that the

film includes, and in this way, provide an alternative and escapist vision of reality in regards to the search of love, success, wealth and popularity.

1.1.2 Characteristics.

The musical film is a cinematographic genre that results from the harmony of music, dance, and comedy, whose fundamental characteristics are based on the imagination, eroticism and the sense of the show. It exhibits features such as choreography, scenarios, and dances as referents of the similarities between the musical cinema and the theater. It also analyzes how the narrative structure of a musical script is very similar to a theater script, based on the way it handles the introduction along with the production of songs, and the wonderful projection of dancing.

As Grant (2012) explains: “In turn, many performances, choreographers, composers, lyricists, and directors moved from musical theater to Hollywood musicals after the arrival of sound” (p. 11). As stated by Grant, a close relationship is generated between the two production systems, the musical cinema and theater, therefore, making the representatives of the theater move to the musical cinema, finding a new way of teaching the world their talent.

1.2 Transition from silent to sound films

Since the beginnings of the cinema scientists endeavored to bring sound to screen, uniting the phonograph technology to the silent film. However, it was not possible to maintain the synchronization between image and sound. This great technological transformation took place in the United States. The first public exhibition of projected sound films came about much before the synchronization was possible, at the Universal Exhibition in Paris of 1900. This was possible thanks to an improved system based on the cylinder. However, some problems still were intervening as the quality of the sound which was very low and the synchronization was impossible since the sound and the image were recorded and played on separate devices.

1.2.1 Changes and difficulties.

"Plenty of work has been done on this transitional period of film history, but most of it concerns technology, distribution, and reception." (Wierzbicki, 1996, p. 5). James Wierzbicki acknowledges the principal aspects that were taken over this important phase for the cinematographic industry, recognizing them as the key to this beneficial advance.

Several innovations were made including the first loudspeaker and sound amplifier, however, the sound film was not fully completed until the late 1920s, when the first films with fully synchronized sound were projected. In 1924, Warner Bros adopted an expensive type of film production, in which they would use sound as a means to develop the company with sound-on-disc systems. Sound-on-film would come to be superseded in sound-on-disc by a series of technical disadvantages of the latter. During that period, Warner was confronted by his real competitor Fox Film Corporation, which in 1925 increased the budget of his feature films and built a chain of movie theaters. Following the initiative of Warner Bros and Fox Film Corporation, the rest of the Hollywood studios did their best to convert to sound and came to get all the Hollywood production in sound by 1930. Cohan (2002) states that:

When the era of sound conversion is remembered, it now almost goes without saying that the musical was introduced with a bang as the genre that best showed off and surprised then delighted audiences with the new Vitaphone technology, (sound played on disc in synchronization with the image). (p. 3)

Cohan, through his perception, takes into account the Vitaphone technology, which successfully marked and paved the way for the musical film, that is to say, companies started to get recognized by bringing a new genre that would have a great impact on the audience.

In 1927, a group of powerful Hollywood producers met to collectively select a single provider for the conversion of sound, among them, Paramount, Universal and PDC. The same year, Fox premiered his

first Movietone original film: Sunrise (F.W. Murnau, 1927) which had a soundtrack composed of music and synchronized sound effects. In 1928, they began to commercialize feature films with soundtracks through several studies. They were based on silent tapes to which a musical band was added to attend to the public's taste. Warner premiered his first fully spoken film, called Lights of New York (Bryan Foy, 1928), due to its release, the other producers accelerated the rate of conversion to the new technology; thus, Paramount premiered spoken films like Beggans of Life (Williams A. Wellman, 1928) that only had a few lines of dialogue.

Warner Bros, Paramount, Fox, MGM, and RKO were the 5 essential companies that successfully contributed to the musical film along with this revolutionary technology, benefiting the country's economy at its best until the intervention of the federal government (Cohan, 2002). According to Steven, these five Hollywood producers took a very important role during the first steps of the Musical Film, providing good advantages for the new composition and production of American musicals. During this phase, certain problems were trying to be solved until the 1930s, the cameras were noisy at that time, so they designed a kind of soundproof booth to not pick up the exterior sound, however, there were a necessary series of lanes to move them, causing problems in mobilization. The sound technicians were forced to eliminate the superior microphones and depend on those who were hidden in the scenery. Moreover, the microphones did not have a very wide capture range, reducing the mobility of the actors, and giving an unrealistic silence in the rest so that certain characters could be heard clearly. Later, all this was solved with the invention of some casings for cameras that eliminated the unfit sound, and the introduction of the so-called boom microphones that could move with the actors.

1.2.2 Causes.

The technological advances of the American cinematographic industries were due to three main causes: The search of an innovation that would provide a competitive advantage on other companies; secondly the sound is essentially considered as a means to obtain a unique product, and lastly the cooperation of several companies to aim the achievement of the technological advancements in the cinema. As with any technological change, many expenses were incurred within the production, but later it was shown that the investment was worth it, since the success of the technology produced a sudden reaction in the whole industry. Hollywood was forced to create strategies for the birth of this genre, the tendency was to add sound to those films that have a greater chance of commercial success. The strategies consisted of hiring specialized people in the field, taking into account the directors, sound technicians, and supervisors of the work.

1.2.3 Consequences.

The introduction of sound in the cinema changed from the mode of production up to the experience of the public. Among the most significant changes, the need to match the image with the sound is taken into account first, since a standard speed was established. Montage sound was increased, so the participation of the director was reduced in this phase, he had to start working on another film while the previous film was still being mounted. The silent films reflected conversations, like the most internal thoughts and motivations of the characters; on the other hand, sound films required dialogues, taking more attention from the public.

As a result, they found an inconvenience that they did not have to deal with previously; many actors of Hollywood lacked good voices and their transition to sound cinema reduced the career of a good part of them. Many of the stars of the silent era were considered outdated, even those who had the talent to succeed. "The stars don't know how to speak and writers don't know how to write dialogues" was

written by The Nation, not only some actors lost their jobs, but also many orchestras; now that the movies had pre-recorded music, live music was no longer necessary, so only specialized rooms still had orchestra. In 1930, the silent cinema had practically disappeared and the desperate search for talent for the new type of cinema propitiated the rescue of the stars of Broadway that would happen to become stars of the genre.

1.3 First musical projects

The earliest musical films were, in essence, great magazines in which they collected various performances without plotlines played by the stars of Broadway at that time. The sound and musical cinema were completely established with the premiere of "The Jazz Singer", on October 6, 1927, in the Theater Warner from New York, as the public began to reject the silent films and demand the "all talking, all singing, all dancing". The film managed to get the attention of the rest of the producers, who decided to rush with this clever strategy due to the greatest success that Warner obtained with this film. The jazz singer is not strictly a sound film, but rather a hybrid between mute and sonorous since it only contains several musical performances and two synchronized dialogue scenes. With this film and the later ones, Hollywood limited itself to transfer to the cinema a genre widely accepted by the spectators.

1.3.1 Development.

Regarding the first musical project, songs and dances were completely integrated within a musical argument, in this case, "The Broadway Melody" in 1929, which was also the first Musical of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. This was the first sound film, and also musical, in receiving an Oscar for Best Film, having songs composed by Arthur Freed. In the first musicals, musical numbers appear throughout the film in the form of an essay and at the end as a theatrical show finished; this was a way to justify its presence in the film.

1.3.2 Broadway.

In the light of the Broadway musical is, to a large extent, the origin of the cinematographic musical genre. The musical cinema wanted to immediately acquire the most prominent professionals of the Broadway stage. Dancers, choreographers, stage designers, costume designers, singers, musicians and lyricists who were successful in the New York theaters since the late nineteenth century, putting their art at the service of cinema, where they found a new way of expression, having different scales of plane and spectacular framings, like those designed by the choreographer and director of theater and cinema, Busby Berkeley. Coming from where many of the professionals who made it possible for the musical cinema to settle quickly, it makes sense to configure a musical subgenre known as musical backstage.

1.4 Primordial themes

Generally, the theme of musicals revolves around a love story, which is an essential element for the type of musical comedy. The combination of dance and realistic interpretation is necessary for the fusion of rhythm and realism of the musical. Musicals depend on parallelism and the causal reactions that are created by the formation of the couple and integrity of the characters leading to the conclusion of the history. In the musical, continuity is established between realism and rhythm, between dialogue and music. Conflicts exist only to be resolved, therefore, a message is reflected to the public creatively and uniquely, conveying hope as a way of escapism.

Chapter II

Golden Age of the American Musical Film

2.1 Rise of the Golden Age

The 1930s are considered the beginning of "The Golden Age of the American Musical Film", covering a variety of musicals and stars of the genre. Music arrangers, dance choreographers and songwriters emerged. What mostly, as mentioned earlier, they moved from Broadway to Hollywood.

2.1.1 Advances.

The Cinematic Musical Comedy emerges in 1933 thanks to Busby Berkeley and Fred Astaire with "42nd Street", from the first and "Flying down to Río" from the second. During the years that he worked for Warner Bros Entertainment, Berkeley innovated the most dazzling musical numbers of the history of cinema, because he developed a montage capable of summarizing a long history in a few minutes, including the incredible choreographies and the scenery depending on the point of view of the camera, breaking with the frontality and unity of the theater. Also, Fred Astaire takes an important role within this period with the "Freed Unit" along with his projects and the creation of a visual style outside the theater, but his function was developed in front of the cameras relying on his skills as a professional dancer.

Moreover, at this stage the producer that will dominate the genre will be the Metro Goldwing-Mayer in 1939 with "The Wizard of Oz" and the incorporation to the Berkeley studio, from Warner Bros.

Meanwhile, in the 50s, the musical experiences several difficulties in productions due to war, this is how a real trend is integrated since the population was increasingly concerned with social problems.

2.1.2 Outstanding projects.

Until the early 50s, many musical projects had a great impact on the audience and are still recognized to these days. Among the most famous projects, we can take into account "The Wizard of Oz" by Victor Fleming along with the actress of Judy Garland. The project is recognized as the greatest

musical of all time due to its use of Technicolor, the composition of wonderful songs as “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” and a beautiful storyline with its message. In this period the colors favored the scenes, giving a new artistic expression that illuminated movie theaters.

Another important film is “Singing’ in the Rain” even though it was released nearly at the end of this era, is one of Hollywood's best known musicals. Besides having an extraordinary cast with amazing actors as Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds, Cyd Charisse and Donald O'Connor, it also contains all the necessary elements to succeed in the musical genre: a love story, comedy, and mythical musical numbers located at a very specific time in the history of cinema: the transition from silent to sound film, with the idea of performing a musical about the beginnings of sound. Betty Comden and Adolph Green worked on the respective script focusing on the actors of Donen and Kelly. Within this musical we find outstanding songs like “Make’em Laugh” from Freed and Nacio Brown or ”Mouses” from Green and Comden with the collaboration of Roger Edens. The rest of the soundtrack was previously written by Freed and Brown, but it is the song "Singing in the Rain" that gives the film its name. This project had several arduous rehearsals for filming due to the wonderful choreographies that required various skills from the actors.

Another well-known musical and also under the collaboration of Gene Kelly is the case of "An American in Paris" directed by Vincente Minnelli. The idea of making this film was by Arthur Freed who attended a concert in which a symphonic poem called An American in Paris by George Gershwin was performed. Freed thought it was the perfect title for a movie and asked the lyricist for the rights. Together with Gene Kelly, it was decided that the director of this film was Vincente Minnelli. The purpose was to recreate Paris according to the idea that the Americans had of the city, and for that purpose, the decoration was used to replace the royal city. Gene Kelly chose Leslie Caron to play this role, as she did with most of the songs. The result was a film that conveyed a new conception of the

musical. It won the Oscars for best film, best original screenplay, best color costumes and best color decoration.

2.1.2 Social messages.

Besides the artistic expression through musicals, several messages were also reflected in films, taking into account the events that people went through, and the individual expression represented by the actors. According to critics as the case of Grant (2002), musicals provide an optimal connection of mental and physical life, respectively of mind and body, giving a state of fulfillment. In agreement with Grant, musicals are a way of integrity for humans, presenting vivid ways of society as well as emotions through specific manifestations.

As an example, we can count on the musical "42nd Street" which was shot in 1933 during the great depression and perhaps part of its success lies in it, since the film had a certain dose of realism that connected the public in order to show the economic hardships that were affecting people, even in the world of entertainment.

In fact, it is quite common to find in these films dialogues in which the link between the works of these artists is underlined. Nor is the presence of introductory texts that highlight the work of the figures they revere and their contribution to the country that discovered them. It must be taken into account that many of these films were shot during World War II or in the postwar period, which intensified the patriotic component.

"Yanki Dandi" is a good example of that. Filmed just when the US declared war on Japan, the film seeks to lift morale to a country that had just suffered a hard and unexpected blow. This is clearly manifested in the use made of several Patriotic songs by Cohan like "You're a Grand Old Flag" or "Over There." For the first time, an American president, in this case Franklin D. Roosevelt. Faced with this risky decision, it was decided that only his back be shown to the spectators.

"New Moon" of 1940 is another narrative musical with a social class message, it is about the love between a slave and a free girl of high class. This slave is captivated by the french's, based on the historical context is about the French revolution in 1789 with the French ships heading to the route of New Orleans. Altman (1987) states that:

Instead of focusing all its interest on a single central character, following the trajectory of her progress, the American film musical has a dual focus, built around parallel stars of opposite sex and radically divergent values. This dual-focus structure requires the viewer to be sensitive. (p. 17)

As expressed by Altman, this dual-focus was done in order to get to the public, provoking feelings and a new perception of each spectator through the narrative. All these musicals had an important message or objective to portray depending on the social context, just like that, actors and directors had the possibility to express their feelings on a film, serving as a way of solace during rough times.

2.2 Representatives

Within the classical musical cinema, great actors intervened, who helped the genre to flourish during the Golden Age. They gave the huge potential to the cinema with their fantastic talents presented on the big screen. Among them: Gene Kelly, Judy Garland and Fred Astaire with Ginger Rogers.

2.2.1 Gene Kelly.

Since childhood, he showed a lot of passion for dance. His mother was the one who conveyed Gene and his four brothers such passion, coming to create a group called "The Five Kelly". After disbanding the group, he and his brother Fred continued to dance and prepare choreographies under the name of "The Kelly Brothers".

At the age of 21, he began acting in night clubs with his brother Fred. His family opened a first dance academy in Pittsburgh, and later another in Johnstown, where Kelly worked as a director and dance teacher. When the dance academies began to succeed, Gene Kelly decided to enter fully into the entertainment world and moved to New York trying to get a new job as a choreographer.

In 1938 he acted as a dancer in “Leave it to me!”; a year later his great opportunity came to work as a choreographer in a series of three functions for the summer theater in Westport. Later, he participated in “The time of your life”, a five-act play by William Saroyan. During the play, Arthur Freed met Kelly and offered him the chance to go to Hollywood; nevertheless, Kelly rejected him because he did not consider himself proper for the role. This would not be the last chance, because in 1941 Hollywood calls him again; and although this time he did accept, Kelly was required because of a bureaucratic error. The third opportunity opened his doors. This time it was David O. Selznick who offered it; however, Selznick never got to use Kelly in a movie. It happened that in those days Arthur Freed was looking for a protagonist for his new movie "For me and my Gal" and someone told him about a boy who was in Selznick's studios. The negotiations found no obstacle and Kelly ended up signing a contract with MGM. In 1943 Kelly became the protagonist of the musical "Cover girl" and was his first important role. A curious fact is that he participated in the American army during World War II. The most prominent years of his artistic career were reflected in his participation in several musicals, including "Summer Stock", "The three musketeers", "On the Town", among others. In 1951, he would remain a year and a half in Europe preparing a film that he would direct himself, "Invitation to the dance". The studio was able to appreciate Kelly's creative talent and provided him with greater freedom that resulted in two great successes: An American in Paris by Vincente Minnelli in 1951 and Singing in the rain co-directed by Stanley Donen and Kelly himself. Soon after, he would perform "Brigadoon" an excellent musical in a difficult time for the genre. In the 60s, he dedicated to direct comedies, except for the musical “Hello Dolly!”. Among his awards, he won a special Oscar for his contribution to musical cinema.

2.2.2 Judy Garland.

Judy Garland, also known as Ethel Gumm was a great American actress and singer. She achieved international fame thanks to her roles in musical and dramatic films. She was one of the mythical stars

of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer for her famous performances, such as the movie "The Wizard of Oz," "Meet me in St. Louis" and "A Star is Born." It was one of the best voices in Hollywood, therefore, one of the most popular of the Golden Age of musical cinema. It was the famous interpreter of "Over the rainbow," one of the two songs that represented the Cinema alongside "Singing in the Rain" by Gene Kelly.

Ethel Gumm grew up in a family devoted to the show since her parents Frank Gumm and Ethel Milne along with his brothers were dedicated to musical theater. When she was still a child, her mother encouraged her to create with her sisters the female ensemble called "The Gumm Sisters Kiddie Act" where she danced and sang. Ethel Milne, realizing the incredible talent her little girl possessed, quickly took her to Hollywood. It was at this stage when little Frances changed her name from Ethel Gumm to Judy Garland.

Despite the fragility of her life always to the limit as she grew up, with psychological problems, addictions and financial disturbances, she managed to interpret important characters through her acting skills who were suitable for the genre. She was married to film director Vincente Minnelli, with whom she had a daughter, also an actress and singer Liza Minnelli. She is ranked among the 10 Greatest Female Stars in the history of American Cinema by the Institute of American Film.

2.2.3 Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

They became one of the couples most loved by the public, it is not possible to talk about the history of cinema if Astaire and Rogers are not mentioned. The tuning and synchronization of both on the dance floor, complemented by the art of filming, and the fusion of the melodies of music, reached an incomparable artistic beauty in the cinematographic world. With the collaboration of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers the musical became one of the most recognized genres. They starred in a series of films which turn out to be unforgettable and essential. The chemistry that occurred between the two artists

managed to be magical and romantic. All this began with “Flying to Rio de Janeiro” in 1933, where Astaire and Rogers debuted as dancers stealing with great ease the prominence of Joel McCrea and Dolores del Río thanks to the art of their dance. After the premiere, everyone started talking about these new dancers, and the RKO understood that they were the key to the musical cinema. In this way, they shared several musical titles with a similar function. These were projects that wanted to engage and encourage the viewer in the 30s, while getting rid of any dramatic or plot aspiration. In fact, once both begin to move the legs, everything else is relegated to a secondary level for the public.

After "Flying to Rio de Janeiro", "The Gay Divorcee" was released that left much of the footage to comedy. In 1935 two films arrived, "Roberta", with the esteemed collaboration of Irene Dunne, and especially 'Top Hat', being the latter, with music by Irving Berlin. Fred and Ginger in "Follow the Fleet" considered the best in the series, as it stands out for the magnificent number "Dancing Cheek To Cheek", known by the majority, without neglecting the "Piccolino" dance. The director of the film was Mark Sandrich, head filmmaker of both, and he showed his good craftsmanship, despite being eclipsed by the illustrious protagonists.

Later they would continue with the films "Follow the Fleet", again with scores of Berlin; "Swing Time" in 1936, with the great direction of George Stevens; and in a year later the admirable musical of 'Crazy Rhythm', with melodies of the Gershwin brothers, highlighting some such as, “Let's Call the Whole Thing Off”, or “They Can't Take That Away From Me”. As I have pointed out before, in ‘Crazy Rhythm’, Astaire plays Petrov, a dancer wanting to leave the ballet for more funky melodies. The series of the two artists would close with "Carefree", and "The Story Of Vernon And Irene Castle", thus concluding with a long stage without collaborating. The reunion was obtained with "The Barkleys of Broadway" in 1949, where Ginger was chosen to replace Judy Garland, who had achieved a great victory with Astaire in "Easter Parade". “The Barkleys thus celebrates Ginger Roger’s return to

musical comedy after a series of straight dramatic films, suggesting that the only way she can succeed with an audience is by dancing with Astaire in musicals” (Cohan, 2002, p. 38). In this way, we comprehend the importance of their relationship in the musical genre, being the two of them essential support for each other.

2.3 Essential directors

The great musicals would not have been realized if it were not for the direction and agility of the creation of the directors. Among the most prominent we find Busby Berkeley, Vincente Minnelli and Stanley Donen.

2.3.1 Busby Berkeley.

Born in the same year as the Lumiere brothers made the first film exhibition in 1885, Busby Berkeley seemed to be destined to devote himself to the world of entertainment. The fact of having participated in the I World War, where he had to supervise the physical exercises of thousands of men, it inspired him to direct his dancers in his future cinematographic work.

At the end of the war, he got a job on Broadway, where he acted in comedies and was in charge of some simple choreographies in theaters. As time passed, those choreographies evolved to complicated dances to the rhythm of jazz. His great opportunity came when Samuel Goldwyn required him to direct the choreography of “Whoopie!” in which Busby Berkeley demanded to also direct the camera.

Berkeley believed that the camera should be dynamic, so he rejected place several around the stage to use a single camera that moved among the dancers, thus making it part of their show. He dared to shoot from totally unusual angles for the time, with very imaginative travelings.

The era of the 30s, working for Warner, was the most important of his career, getting to release "The 42nd Street" in 1933. He was hired by the Goldwyn Mayer Metro in 1939 for that he participated in movies like "Babes in Arms", "Strike Up the Band" or "Babes of Broadway". Berkeley's cinema was only fertile at one time, the 1930s and 40 mainly. In 1949, he repeated his formula in "On the Town"

with the participation of Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen; by then Berkeley's monumental musical paintings were considered an ancient anachronism. Shortly after he left the film world and although in the 60s he returned, he only did so sporadically to direct "Jumbo" in 1962.

2.3.2 Vincente Minnelli.

Considered the father of modern musicals. He was born in Chicago in 1902 in a family of Italian origin that was linked to the world of entertainment; his parents directed a small family show called "Minnelli Brothers Dramatic and Tent Show," in which Vincente performed with only four years. In 1920 he devoted himself exclusively to photography, but years later (between 1933 and 1935), he became artistic director of the Paramount Theater in New York and the Radio City Music Hall, directing some Broadway musicals. In 1937 he made his first works in the world of cinema for the Paramount. However, his career would not take off until MGM producer Arthur Freed convinced him to direct musical films such as "Harmonies of Youth" and "Babes of Broadway." His debut as a solo director came with the movie "Cabin in the Sky" (1943), which gave the impression of a Broadway show, since for the first time a director imposed his sensibility on a film. The film was a great professional and personal success. During the filming, he met Judy Garland, his future wife with whom he had a daughter, also an actress and singer Liza Minnelli. The clock confirmed Minnelli as one of the most successful directors at the time. In addition, the MGM decided to control a little more their next works and thus made a new version of "Madame Bovary" a romantic drama in 1949. Some time later he found the community as another of his great abilities. In the 50s he shot "Father of the Bride", which became a worldwide success. A year later, he made a sequel called "Father's Little Dividend." Once he had regained his prestige, he continued with the musicals coming to perform "An American in Paris" with Gene Kelly, which earned him an Oscar for best film in 1952. After this classic, he begins to alternate musicals with films of other genres like "The Bad and the Beautiful,"

which reflected an innovation in his filmography, since it was shot in black and white, renouncing color as one of the principles of an artist. A year later he returns to the musical with "The Band Wagon", one of the biggest box office achievements in Minnelli's career. "Shine on Your Shoes" in The Band Wagon demonstrates Astaire's ability to adapt his dancing to any occasion and any audience, as he incorporates the shoeshiner into his performance" (Cohan, 2002, p. 37). The success of the film is understood thanks to the talent of Fred Astaire that led to the creation of an excellent film, resulting in benefit for Minnelli as a director.

Over the next few years, he would continue with his strategy of combining musicals with other genres, so he would make films such as "Brigadoon", "Kismet" and "The Long Long Trailer". In 1956, he faces another of his most memorable films, in this case, "Lust for Life", a biopic of Van Gogh where Minnelli merging his own pictorial style with that of the Dutch painter. During the 60s, Minnelli continued to make quite commercial comedies but of little artistic interest. His career ended with musicals such as "A Matter of Time" a posthumous film with his daughter Liza.

2.3.2 Stanley Donen.

Stanley Donen is considered one of the great masters of cinema musical. He was born in 1924 in South Carolina. From a young age, he became interested in musical cinema, admired Fred Astaire and decided to take dance lessons, following his dreams while refusing to continue the family business. At age 16 he graduated from the University of South Carolina and moved to New York in search of work as a dancer. Years later he would make a sort of parody of his life in the number "Broadway melody" which tells the story of a provincial who travels to the city in search of success.

In 1941 he got a role as a dancer in the play Pal Joey, which starred Gene Kelly; soon a great friendship arose between them that led them to carry out numerous projects together. He later dealt with the choreography of "Beat the band", where he was met by Arthur Freed who offered him a

contract with MGM as head of choreographies. His first film a director was "On the Town", co-directed with Gene Kelly. Together they would re-shoot musicals as excellent as "Singing in the rain" and "It's Always Fair Weather" years later. Both would be able to completely renew the invoice of the musical cinema, breaking with all the existing schemes to date in the genre. His first solo directed film would be "Royal Wedding" with Fred Astaire; and after finishing his collaboration with Gene Kelly, he would perform such splendid titles as: "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers" and "Angel Face". At the end of the 50s, when the musical genre touched its decline, it was dedicated to comedy and among them "Charade". At the same time, he received an honorary Oscar for his career in the musical world.

2.4 Arthur Freed and his contribution to MGM

Arthur Freed was a film producer and Jewish lyricist born in Charleston, in the United States. He entered the world of entertainment when he was very young. He began playing the piano in the vaudeville and after meeting Minnie Marx, Freed sang along with his children, "The Marx Brothers". He soon specialized in writing song lyrics, collaborating with musicians like Harry Warren, with whom he composed years later songs from movies like "On the Town"; but the collaboration with more potential would be with Herb Brown, a composer with whom he created songs for music magazines, reaping successes together throughout his career.

In 1929, Irving Thalberg hired both of them to compose the soundtrack of the first MGM musical, "The Broadway Melody," which included the hit "You were meant for me". When the golden age began, Freed and Brown composed songs for the MGM films. And in 1938, Freed worked as an associate producer on The Wizard of Oz, in fact, it was he who proposed Judy Garland as the protagonist. In 1939, Louis Mayer hired him as a producer of musical films, being responsible for his own unit, the so-called Freed Unit. He produced 40 of the greatest musicals of the MGM, being his first solo title as producer "The sons of the show". There is no doubt that the MGM of the 40s and 50s

represents “the Golden Age” of the musical genre; His greatest successes were magnificent productions at Technicolor with the collaboration of the most powerful composers of the twentieth century. The work of Arthur Freed was decisive for the renewal of the genre with respect to the musical of the 30s, which differentiated between plot and songs.

2.4.1 Freed Unit.

The Freed Unit brought together the most skilled people in the field of musicals and made them collaborate in the execution of their films; This was possible because of his ability to identify talent by giving his artists unusual freedom for the time. He included musicians-producers on the MGM sets like Roger Edens; directors like Busby Berkeley, Stanley Donen or George Sidney; choreographers like Robert Alton and Charles Walters; screenwriters like Irving Brecher or Adolph Green; and actors and actresses like Judy Garland, Dan Daley, Howard Keel, among others.

He also helped many artists such as Vincente Minnelli, Debbie Reynolds or Gene Kelly; and attracted many others from other producers as Fred Astaire. His team produced a steady stream of acclaimed musicals by both the public and critics. With him as a producer, the most glorious titles of the 50s were made; which won an Academy Award for best film with “An American in Paris”. However, at the end of the 50s, traditional music began to lose power due to the appearance of rock. MGM was forced to disintegrate its musical unit. In this way, the most glorious stage of the genre concludes, which owes much of its strength to the figure of Arthur Freed and his work as a producer and composer.

2.5 Impact of World War II

In 1945 the Second World War ends and brings enormous changes to the industries of many countries, which have been highly affected during the war. A year later, the benefits of Hollywood cinema were recognized. Having no competitors made Hollywood take control of the international film industry. The rest of the countries didn't have the means to produce their own films and had no choice but to consume

Hollywood cinema. However, its benefits will last very little because they had to face two unexpected problems: political pressures and the unfortunate economic crisis.

Hollywood during the war had connections with the United States government, making propaganda films until 1945. At this stage, independent producers emerged, created by relevant actors and directors of the moment, so that producers could take more risks while creating films and have much more freedom. Among these producers, we find Liberty Films, International Pictures, Alfred Hitchcock Production or Cagney Production and many others.

When interests did not come together between industry and government, it was decided to take out the law against Studios called The Paramount Judgment. All these measures meant a crisis over the studios. The law was a ruling of the supreme court due to the lawsuit against the five major producers: Paramount, MGM, 20th Century Fox, Warner Bros, and RKO, including three small companies: Columbia, Universal, and United Artist that formed the system of studios. The producers were accused of monopolistic practices, their objective was to keep independent productions away from the commercial rooms and that is why these small companies tried to attack this system. The key to the film business was through exhibition and distribution. In this way, the public did not have many alternatives, and external competitors had to overcome those difficulties in order to make their productions profitable. The three small companies are also accused of having complicity with the Great Studios in their policy of marginalization of independent producers. The Paramount Judgment caused a fatal crisis for the studios, but not for the American industry in general. The only beneficiaries of this law were the independent movie theaters.

Few years later, the film industry in several parts of the world suffered an economic crisis, which led to the disappearance of the great Hollywood studios and caused damage towards the musical cinema in 1947. The crisis of the System of Studios was due to two essential factors such as the change of

interests of the spectators, and the creation of a new device that will become the main competitor of cinema at that time, known as the invention of television.

2.6 Strategies and consequences.

The Hollywood industry to act in response to the new demands, followed a series of ideas. First, the number of premieres decreased, so that the necessary means to create great shows were concentrated. This is especially reflected in the musical genre since the number of films produced decreases evidently from the second half of the decade of the 40s, but those works that arrived at the cinema used to be super productions with high production value.

Another important factor when producing a movie was realism, but not necessarily applied to the background of movies but aesthetics. For the cinema to feel more connected to life, it needed three elements; one of them was color since life develops in color, therefore, more realistic for spectators. From the '50s onward Technicolor will be perfected, making its use generalize over time and almost half of the films at the end of the decade were in color.

The second element was the search for a wider viewing surface. In this regard, they will begin to develop large formats with a panoramic vision that is more similar to human vision. The industry tried to find a system as close as possible to what we see with our eyes, giving rise to large formats that expand the possibilities and the surface of the image. The last element was the spatial sound, which is more realistic and is of much better quality than the previous systems.

Failures of years ago had occurred primarily because production costs could not be amortized. All these improvements, especially the use of color in the films are going to be identified with a series of genres but especially with the musical genre that was one of the pioneers in using the Technicolor with the movie "The Wizard of Oz".

Chapter III

The Hollywood Renaissance

3.1 The end of the Golden Age

Towards the end of the '50s, the realistic perspective, the social arguments and the great appearance of rock and roll were taking over the Hollywood producers; the traditional musicals began to dissipate and lose power of convection, as fewer people went to the theaters, and the idea of dreaming of a world full of happiness and colors was less striking. As time went by it became more complicated to make a film that opted for fantasy and imagination, with dreamy and triumphant characters that were credible.

The expensive equipment that made possible the regular realization of musical tapes dispersed and as of this moment, only a few titles manage to achieve success, but most of them remained as poor attempts to recreate the great Hollywood successes of times gone by. The fantastic "Golden Age" of American musical cinema had come to an end.

3.2 From classic to modern style

While the '50s were years of optimism and especially conformism, years of belief in the American dream, colors, and smiles that flooded the cinema screen, the following decade gave worldwide the sensation of crisis, doubt, and social and political instability.

However, technical advances were made that favored the prosperity of the cinema of the time and allowed better accessibility, lower costs and filming facilities. As a fact, there were less sensitive films that required less light, lightweight cameras and therefore easy to handle, with another series of formats and progress. As a consequence of the historical context in which the world is immersed, at the same time, several trends such as Surrealism in Europe and German Expressionism appeared, which influenced the new Hollywood style. These trends introduced a series of changes into the world of art, aesthetics, styles, and attitudes that could never be disregarded.

The new ideological and social character implants a different creative theme, more in line with the historical reality that is lived. In this way, the old musical spirit barely manages, except in certain exceptions, to survive as a refugee in its idea of entertainment, ostentation, and exhibitionism. The new productions of the 60s, on the other hand, seek impact through elements endowed with a different thematic sensitivity. Now, through music and dance, what is sought is to create a story in which human and social conflicts are also narrated.

In accordance with Mundy (2006), in the early 60s, the classical musical era, composed of high-budget musicals would be replaced by a new individual perspective. While the classical cinema was established by a system of conventions that in turn constituted the cinematographic tradition, on the other hand, modern cinema was formed by the contributions of individual artists that offer specific elements from their vision of expressive possibilities of cinematographic language. In this way, modern cinema has settled a strong rupture of tradition, which arises from the imagination of individual artists. A clear example of this is "West Side Story" in 1961, a kind of musical version adapted from the tragedy of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" in which love, juvenile delinquency, and racial problems constitute the true plot.

3.2.1 New modern view.

The musicals that had masterfully followed the motto of Broadway Melody "All talking, all singing, all dancing" made the mistake of separating both disciplines and making it a risky division that took a long time to completely merge again. In the 60s, it is the song that prevails. The musical that had always been cheerful began to manifest itself with serious and even extremely dramatic brushstrokes. On the other hand, it deals with more complex and less simple stories, which makes this type of cinema more complicated, because normally the musicals had a simple argument so that songs and dances can be included easily and thus do not complicate the story further. As an instance among

these, the musical "Camelot" in 1967 tells the story of King Arthur and his court, from its beginnings to its fall becoming complex enough to add songs and dances, even so, the film comes out completely successful.

Even so, some of the musicals of the 60s were made by old survivors of the MGM, especially Vincente Minnelli, and the always creative, Gene Kelly who remained more traditional and despite the audiovisual demands of the Americans at that time, got nice results as with his comedy musical "Hello Dolly!" in 1969. However, it was Minelli who demonstrated great skills to join the new era and the formal innovations as presented in "On a Clear Day You Can See Forever" in 1970 that continues to surprise today. Above all, a fact that calls attention to this period is the relaxed musical performances where the actors, rather than singing, recited their songs, but it was precisely that simplicity that provided the greatest attraction.

3.3 Musical rebirth

The genre experienced a new rebirth, with "Saturday night fever", "Grease", "Cabaret" and "All That Jazz" underpinned already in the postmodernity of the late 90s." The films sought to touch the fiber of the public, move them more than ever and excite the viewer with the idea that dancing is for everyone: you will fight and get your dreams, a prototype somewhat closer to the "Golden Age" than to modernity. But unlike their predecessors, these stories are about humble and young characters who try to carve their future, and this time the musical cinema denounces the rhythm of disco music. "Cabaret" in 1972, played by Liza Minnelli and winner of eight Oscars. The aesthetic served as an inspiration to create "Rocky horror picture show" in 1975, an eccentric musical of horror and sex, which produced a surprising effect; people went to the movies disguised as their favorite characters and sang the songs during the screening of the film. One of the greatest advances in the genre during this period was his attempt to win over the youth audience, incorporating pop-rock music after the Beatles.

The musical cinema began to develop excessively simplified youth themes, where there was no longer sadness or joy for marriages between young people, but eager to enjoy and have fun. They were accompanied by songs and performances more appropriate for spectators of mature age, although they wanted to stage the adolescent life. The danced musical suddenly reinvented itself. The fashion created by movies like "Saturday Night Fever" spread throughout Europe and the United States. The new dance style would become the most prominent element of the genre, unlike the 60s where singing was the one that prevailed.

Considering racial issues, the first musicals had barely recognized black folks. The new musicals, on the other hand, attempted to at least place the subject within their cultural context. The excellent "Black Joy" in 1977 concerning the life of immigrants in a London neighborhood, and "Thank God It's Friday" that portrays a Friday night at a Hollywood nightclub, once again linked music with black artists.

Both "Saturday night fever" and "Xanadu" expose disco music as a powerful weapon, as it is distinguished as the means to eliminate social differences and inequalities. The first used splendidly the dance scenes to solve these kinds of problems, allowing them to be controlled by skills that everyone was capable of. The second offered a certain sense of cultural harmony in its final vision of the disco as a place free from any kind of prejudice.

This decade is a change for cinema in general, classical cinema has died and modern cinema claims its place, and the brutal competition with television does not make things easier. As regards the musical genre, its decline is reaffirmed. From this moment, it will be the dance that regains prominence, leaving the songs in second place.

3.4 Relevant projects

In this period we can highlight the award-winning best film "My Fair Lady" featuring Rex Harrison and the famous Audrey Hepburn, interpreter of "Breakfast at Tiffany's". It tells the transformation of a humble street florist in London of the early twentieth century, Eliza Doolittle into a lady of high society.

If we speak of popular names this time in terms of interpretation, the name that stands out is Julie Andrews, who embodies among others the eternal "Mary Poppins" and "The Sound of Music".

Berliner & Furin (2002) claim that:

These musical forms left little room for the sophisticated and casually spontaneous songs that had emerged out of the old Hollywood. Such songs had started to sound quaint, ever since mainstream popular music had been given over to rock and other idioms. (p.23)

In this way, Mary Poppins became part of the new Hollywood along with the integration of different music styles, as well as portraying very moral messages for the audience like the role of women at that time with the song "Sister Suffragette".

"West Side Story" was also a well recognized musical that reflected the rise of gangs in America as well as the arrival of immigrants in the United States. "The 'Dance at the Gym' sequence in West Side Story, a key moment for emphasising the tensions between the warring gangs, the American Jets and the Puerto Rican Sharks feels natural within the context of 1950s American 'Youth' culture" (Padley, 2015, p. 4). In general, it was an example of a lively and dramatic musical, open to reality and the street, modern in its choreographic and musical approaches.

In 1977, "Saturday Night Fever" was released, the popular musical narrative that called many young people who were reflected in having a poorly paid job and spending everything when night comes. The disco music of the "Bee Gees" put a musical background to the film with songs like "Stayin Alive"

"Saturday Night Fever" and especially the magnificent "How Deep Is Your Love". Travolta liked the genre and a year later starred with Olivia Newton-John the most outstanding film in the musical genre about high school boys "Grease" (1978) that will never go out of style.

3.5 Musicals purpose in society

Musicals along history have changed according to the public's perspective and interests, getting influenced by the social environment and problems that arise awareness in society. Every little change in the public impulses directors to engage more in filming, in that way creating new methods that can attract people. A prominent example is the use of technology. Cable, and satellite television and video in the 80s, DVDs and other digital technologies in the 90s encouraged the public to go less and less frequently to movie theaters. Therefore, the film industry restructured its organization and commercial strategies, and to attract the public, mainly young, resorted to special effects and more attention towards customers.

The purpose of these musicals, besides causing emotion and a great impact on the viewer, is to reflect all those messages and thoughts that were part of humanity in that era. We can interpret musicals as a way of expression, thanks to their creation people have felt identified or moved by the different perceptions of art. Nothing has a greater capacity for abstraction than a song or a movie, there are two of the main escape routes for the majority of the population.

The musical cinema is very lively and is constantly renewed so as not to fall into oblivion again. Songs and dances are instruments as valid as any other to tell a good story, where instead of a monologue it is preferable to include a song for its vibrant, emotional and original power towards the audience. This genre must be taken into account and appreciated for its complexity, its evolution over the years and its ability to develop important theoretical reflections and practical achievements in terms of film staging.

Conclusion

At the end of this monograph, it is concluded that:

1. The Hollywood Musical film is an artistic movement that has served as a great influence on society. Directors, actors, producers, and everyone involved in the creation of these films have contributed to the genre and made it the most essential and recognized one for the United States.
2. The need for entertainment that prevails in all aspects of the society of the US manages to devote itself and reach one of its greatest exponents in the halls, filling one image after another with elaborated choreographies, unforgettable melodies, and masterpieces that will last forever.
3. These musicals along history have changed their aims and social projections regarding the general public and their interests, taking into account the individual expression. The purpose of these musicals, besides provoking emotions and a great impact on the viewer, is to reflect all those messages and thoughts that were part of humanity. Along these lines, it has served as a means of escapism in the face of the drastic situations that the population has had to endure.
4. Every change in the social environment impulses directors to engage more in the process of filming valuing the problems and individual thoughts in order to capture and reflect them on screen. Everything that surrounds the human being is a source to be captured on the big screen of Hollywood.
5. The musical cinema is constantly renewed so as not to fall back into oblivion as it happened at the end of the last century, the studies seek new strategies and ways to attract the public through established advances. It's the feelings that drive people to watch these movies full of wonderful scenes.

6. The musical genre strikes for its complexity and art involved in films, as well as its evolution over the years, its ability to develop important theoretical reflections and furthermore, the achievements in terms of cinematographic and technological advances for cinema.
7. Nothing has a greater capacity for abstraction than the artistic expression in movies and songs. These two are the main escape routes for the majority of the population, causing the emergence of emotions on them.

Recommendations

- It is recommended through the reflection and analysis of the American musical to take into account the artistic side of these films, the beautiful and authentic songs, choreographies and the narrative that is reflected through the characters and the stories that unfold. In this way, letting people to generate a positive perspective about this genre.
- At the same time the reader is persuaded to understand the complexity of the plots and how they relate to the events that took place in the different stages of the US. It is taken as an educational way to be able to analyze the different behaviors and primary desires of the human being through musical art.
- The actors must also be recognized by the reader, and how they contributed to the real talent of Hollywood with their magnificent performances, dances and songs that filled all people with enthusiasm. Through this, those who wish to understand more of the history of cinema will be able to recognize the best actors, directors and important roles.
- The reader can expand their knowledge through this monograph. Those who wish to pursue careers related to audiovisual creation and art, this research will support them for their upcoming work and projects.

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