

---

## Paradise Music—Music in Paradise

### Abstract:

The presentation examines how film music constructs the cultural imagery of angels, paradise, and Arcadia by drawing on universal religious traditions, Romantic aesthetics, and long-standing artistic symbolism. Across Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and global popular culture, angels are imagined as ethereal, beautiful intermediaries, while paradise is associated with harmony, nature, and music.

Romantic philosophy—especially Schopenhauer and the early German Romantics—established music as the most direct “language of feelings,” a notion that shapes modern cinema as a form of *Gesamtkunstwerk* in which music plays a central expressive role. Historical depictions, such as medieval angel-musicians and Renaissance pastoral imagery, created visual and sonic templates that contemporary films continue to adapt.

In film scoring, the “heavenly” sound is conveyed through recognizable musical devices: vocalise, flowing textures without clear meter, avoidance of rhythmic drive, and pastoral or archaic instrumentation. These elements evoke timelessness, purity, and otherworldliness. Case studies in cinema music such as *The Secret Garden*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *Les Choristes* demonstrate how these techniques signal idealized spaces or angelic beings.

The presentation concludes by questioning whether music still retains its privileged status in the 21st century amid cultural simplification and whether the boundary between sacred and popular music is shifting.