

CHAPTER 2

The 'Cinematization' of Sound Cinema in Britain and the Dubbing into French of Hitchcock's *Waltzes from Vienna* (1934)

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The project of investigating the history of interaction between British and French cinema brings out important film-historical phenomena ordinarily occluded in much film studies research, in which national cinemas are studied in isolation from one another. In examining British and French film together, it becomes possible to see how national film cultures entail a significant transnational dimension enabled by the circulation of films made elsewhere and then imported in. In the preceding chapter, for example, Vincent Porter details how French films became the major foreign-cinema presence in Britain in the 1930s, thereby altering the aesthetic context for some British movie audiences. Other cases in which French films provided a key reference for British audiences are discussed in chapters by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and Melanie Selfe, for example. This chapter on the French-dubbed version of Hitchcock's *Waltzes from Vienna* can be said to consider the other side of the equation, as it were: the presence of British films in France. Its emphasis, however, is not on how British films affected cinema in France but rather on a different facet of the transnational film trade, whereby the export of films changes not only the cinema of the target country but that of the source country as well. My concern, in short, is with how the endeavour in Britain of producing films for export affected the British film style itself. The following analysis of *Waltzes from Vienna* focuses on the specifics of the dubbed version and how the anticipation of its making conditioned Hitchcock's work on the original British film.

The emphasis on the details of style and technique is animated by a broader hypothesis concerning how the project of preparing films for foreign-language export in the early 1930s shaped film style generally, and in Britain specifically. This

hypothesis concerns a basic factor behind the style of *Waltzes from Vienna*: the producer's intent with respect to distribution. Sound films made for export in the early 1930s, in many cases, were made differently from films intended for domestic release, thus affecting film style generally, and in ways commonly recognized in the transatlantic film community at the time. In 1930 an editorialist for *The Bioscope* captured the dynamic of the situation by proposing that as long as British films were made mainly for domestic release, a theatre-inspired aesthetic would endure as the British cinema's main style option; on the other hand, insofar as British producers aimed for export, the 'cinematization' of British film style would result (Lipscombe 1930). The editorialist doubted that the British film industry would become a film exporter at the level of the industries in the United States and Germany, but the cinematization to which he referred soon began as the latest American and German multitrack technologies and methods were adopted in British film studios such as the Shepherd's Bush facility of Gaumont British where *Waltzes from Vienna* was planned and shot (Anon. 1932a).

Dubbing as a Transnational Practice

The use of multitrack technology in the shooting of *Waltzes from Vienna* enabled preparation of an 'international version' of the film, whose dialogue track could be manipulated apart from its music and ambient effects. The separation of sound into separate tracks not only let Hitchcock explore new possibilities with respect to film music, it also facilitated the film's life as an export commodity by allowing the crew at Jacques Haïk's studio in Courbevoie, where the dubbing of *Waltzes from Vienna* was undertaken, to preserve the intricacies of the film's music track while otherwise changing the film substantially – changes extensive enough to reduce the film's running time by one-third. Beyond replacing English with French speech, the changes included eliminating certain shots, scenes and song sequences, as well as rearranging the order of scenes. In addition, to match exactly the actors' lip movements to the duration of the dubbed speech, frames were extracted from, and probably added into, numerous shots.

But the analysis cannot stop at what occurred in France at Courbevoie since much of that was contingent on work undertaken months earlier in England at Gaumont British's Shepherd's Bush facility, where *Waltzes* was scripted and filmed. Moreover, *Waltzes from Vienna*, though not itself a dubbed film, exhibits a host of stylistic peculiarities linked to dubbing practice in the early 1930s. One can begin with decisions in framing and cutting consonant with recent dubbing-related changes in American filmmaking, as in the dozens of shots in *Waltzes from Vienna* in which actors' lip movements are concealed in ways designed to ease the voice-synchronization work undertaken months later in Courbevoie. In this respect *Waltzes from Vienna* was typical of dubbing practice at the time. Though nominally a postproduction activity, dubbing depended crucially on decisions made in planning and shooting (Le Verrier 1931). Complicating the situation was the fact

that by 1933 dubbing of sufficient quality typically took place in a country other than the one where the film was planned and shot, thus requiring the film's producers to anticipate modifications that might or might not be performed later on by agents operating independently in other countries. In assessing dubbing's stylistic impact, at least two phases of work on the dubbed version of *Waltzes from Vienna* require analysis – one of which occurred in England and the other in France – and both of these invite contextualization relative to film-technical developments in the United States and Germany, the two film-producing countries at the time most oriented toward the making of films for export.

***Waltzes from Vienna* as a Sound-film Experiment**

The sophisticated soundtrack of *Waltzes from Vienna* merits emphasis in light of the film's low status in critical writing on Hitchcock. Nearing the end of his long and productive career, Hitchcock, in a famous interview with François Truffaut, disparaged *Waltzes from Vienna* as a low point, labeling the film 'a low-budget "musical without music" that had nothing to do with my usual work' (Truffaut 1975: 91). Anyone searching for information on *Waltzes from Vienna* will encounter Hitchcock's damning comment, which still echoes through much of the critical writing on the director. One exception to this critical trend has been Charles Barr, who regards *Waltzes from Vienna* as a breakthrough film in Hitchcock's use of music. Hitchcock had adopted recorded music effectively in earlier sound films, Barr observes, 'but it is not until *Waltzes from Vienna* that music becomes a serious structural element' (Barr 1999: 127–31), deeply integrated into the film's visuals and narrative logic. Echoing Barr's assessment is critic Jack Sullivan, who details how the film's use of music – its narrativization of music, one might say – anticipates many features that would come to define the soundtracks of Hitchcock's later and more celebrated films (Sullivan 2006: 20–30). The positive evaluation of *Waltzes from Vienna* advanced by Sullivan and Barr finds corroboration in a 1934 interview with the director, who stressed the film's value as a film-music experiment: '*Waltzes from Vienna* gave me many opportunities for working out ideas on the relation of film and music. Naturally every cut in the film was worked out in the script before shooting began. But more than that, the musical cuts were worked out too' (Hitchcock 1995: 244).

The film's music track is indeed complex and carefully edited, the preplanned use of multitrack technology allowing Hitchcock to achieve a variety of effects difficult if not impossible to reach otherwise. Exemplifying music-image integration are scenes showing stages in the composition of the 'Blue Danube Waltz' in which Hitchcock and Gaumont's British music director, Louis Levy, extract from the great Strauss tune myriad narrative implications for the film's image track. One such scene, singled out for praise by critics at the time for its use of music to suggest a character's thoughts, depicts Schani's visit to the pastry kitchen, where the film's nondiegetic score suggests that Schani hears in the bustle of the bakers' activity the rhythm needed for his waltz-in-progress. Also notable are the many moments when

orchestral music provides mickey-mouse mimicry of the narrative action – as when Prince Gustav, dreaming he is fighting a duel, tosses and turns in bed, his wild gesticulations punctuated by the orchestra's violin section. In mobilizing music for dramatic and comic effect, Hitchcock's collaboration with Louis Levy, the film-savvy musical director responsible for the score for *Waltzes from Vienna*, was essential (Levy 1949). With Levy involved in the project from the planning stage, Hitchcock was able to design the image track with a clear knowledge of what would happen musically, thus making possible the tight synchronization of sound and image needed for the film's stylistic embellishments.

The music technique of *Waltzes from Vienna* thus inclines in the direction not of theatre-affiliated films made for the home market – "musicals" which interpolate "numbers" rather than employ music', as Hitchcock put it – but of the sophisticated cinematic operetta (Hitchcock 1995: 242). The top export genre of the time, the operetta included the Chevalier-MacDonald vehicles directed by Lubitsch for Paramount, as well as many European-made films – from the films produced by Erich Pommer in multiple languages for Ufa in Germany to the musicals directed by René Clair at the Tobis studio near Paris. These music-defined films required special technical expertise as well as careful planning. A related attribute of the film operetta, likewise evident in *Waltzes from Vienna*, was a sophisticated self-awareness regarding its own artifice, manifest in comic moments when the material conditions of the film's making, ordinarily a subliminal force, surface in the film's story-world in the form of jokes and gags alluding to the technology behind the film. Pertinent to the topic of dubbing is the scene in *Waltzes from Vienna* featuring the comic, long-take performance of the servants playfully translating a conversation between the Countess and Prince Gustav. The latter remain off screen, on opposite sides of the room supposedly, while the amorous servants in between, framed in a two-shot, kiss and fondle each other while mockingly 'dubbing' their masters, mistranslating each line of speech.



Figure 2.1: *Waltzes from Vienna* (1934). This shot shows servants in the act of translating their off-screen masters and is among several in *Waltzes from Vienna* that seem to allude to the ultimate production of a dubbed version of the film.

Dubbing Practice in France

Waltzes from Vienna marks a crucial dubbing-related change in sound-film technique: the adoption of multitrack sound technologies. The change began in 1930 as Hollywood shifted away from foreign-language versions and towards dubbing as the main means of preparing films for export. The change would have been difficult to predict in early 1930, when dubbing was often characterized as useless for preparing films for foreign-language release. In February a British journalist reporting from Hollywood commented as follows: "Dubbing" is becoming more and more a thing of the past [for foreign-market distribution], and after experience with the showing of "dubbed" versions all over the world it is becoming recognized that this is merely a makeshift method' (Belfrage 1930). Change was underway, however, and dubbing technique, spurred by work at Metro Goldwyn Meyer (MGM) and Paramount, was evolving rapidly. By the summer of 1930 these Hollywood studios, soon joined by others, began phasing out the making of separate foreign-language versions in favour of exporting the Hollywood originals in dubbed form. The new dubbed movies, moreover, were received well in France, a country where they had done poorly previously (Lehmann 1931; M. 1931; Morierval 1931). French audiences in the provinces, in fact, were reported to prefer dubbed imported films over subtitled (Anon. 1933b).¹ Paramount's studio in St-Maurice-Joinville had previously been used to make French-language shorts and features; however, in 1932 it was also given over to the dubbing of films shot in the United States.

In 1932, the 496 films distributed in France included sixty-six that had been dubbed (Anon. 1932b). At the end of 1933, as American films were increasingly released in dubbed form, the number of dubbed films circulating in France had doubled, and would continue to climb over the next years: 'The import [into France] of dubbed films has increased from 143 in 1933 to 251 in 1935', reported *Sight and Sound* (Anon. 1936, p. 5).² The increase followed a French law passed in October 1932 requiring that the dubbing of films for the French market take place in France. The law had a significant impact on the French cinema by stimulating the quick development in Paris of a thriving dubbing industry. In the summer of 1933 dubbing-related work was estimated to provide employment to some 4,000 French people, including some 1,200 dubbing 'artistes' (T. 1933; Anon. 1933a; Anon. 1934a). During the summer of 1934, the trade journal *La Cinématographie française* reported that fourteen studios devoted solely to dubbing and postsynchronization were operating in the Paris area (Anon. 1934b).

At this point, with dubbed imports more popular in France than subtitled original versions, dubbing acquired new status as a form of employment – notwithstanding hostility in France towards dubbed movies from critics and film producers. A report on the Paris situation in the German publication *Film-Kurier* characterized 1933 as a turning point in dubbing's history in France, where until very recently, dubbing had been seen as the lowest sort of film work; now, however, '[i]t has suddenly become fashionable for popular, recognized actors to do the dubbing. The wages for this work, of course, have increased' (Anon. 1933b). With name

actors performing the dubbing, it had become possible at this point, a French journalist noted (Richard 1935), to speak of 'dubbing stars' [*vedettes du doublage*], actors who enjoyed a modest celebrity from their work dubbing imported films. Dubbing's improved status is reflected in the credits of *La Chant du Danube*, which lists the French actors who did the dubbing in the same font size used for the original English actors. An additional title page lists the technical crew, identifying prominently the authors of the French continuity, song lyrics and dialogue along with the sound engineer and editor.

Cross-Atlantic Connections

The producer responsible for the French-dubbed version of *Waltzes from Vienna* was Jacques Haïk, a key figure in the French dubbing industry of the time (Anon. 1932d) and also a frequent collaborator with British film companies. Haïk's business connections in England dated back to 1910, when he first entered the film industry as a teenage employee of British companies (Anon. 2008a). In 1929 Haïk established himself as a leader in France's nascent sound-film industry by financing the making of one of the first French-language talking films: the shipwreck epic *Atlantic* (dir. Jean Kemm, 1929), filmed in England at the Elstree studio of British International Pictures in separate versions in French, English and German (Clarrière 1930a). Besides coproducing British films Haïk also dubbed various British films for French release (Anon. 1932d). In 1931 Haïk and Adolph Osso were described in the London-based trade weekly *Bioscope* as the two French producers who had made 'serious efforts' since the coming of sound 'to cooperate with British production firms and studios' (Clarrière 1931).

Haïk's role as a leading French producer, exhibitor and distributor of sound films ended in 1933 when he was unable to sustain his costly luxury theatres in the face of a steep decline in ticket sales. In March 1933, Haïk turned over the management of the theatres to Gaumont-Franco-Film-Aubert (Choukroun 2007: 172). Haïk soon secured new bank loans, however, and in 1934 formed Régent Film, a smaller firm whose principal production activity during its five years of existence was the shooting of some one dozen films as well as the dubbing of various foreign films into French. In mid 1940 Haïk, a Jew targeted by fascists and Nazis, fled France after producing the anti-Hitler film *Après Mein Kampf mes crimes* (dir. Alexandre Ryder, 1940), returning to his native Tunisia where he hid during the war (Anon. 2008a).

The majority of the dubbed films prepared by Régent Film were probably from the U.S.A., since in the mid-1930s U.S. films made up over 70 per cent of the dubbed films circulating in France. All the same, the number of dubbed films from England increased during this time, climbing from eleven in 1933 to nineteen in 1935 (Choukroun 2007: 190–1). *Waltzes from Vienna* offered significant commercial potential for the making of a French version since it was based on a major stage production that had opened in Paris in October 1933 (Anon. 2008b) after successful runs in other European cities including Vienna (1930), where it had premiered, and London (1931). A French stage adaptation, called *Valses de Vienne*, opened in Paris

in October 1933 while Hitchcock was shooting *Waltzes from Vienna* in England. By purchasing Hitchcock's film for French adaptation Haïk stood to benefit from publicity related to the current stage production in Paris.

Haïk's project as a producer of dubbed films was contingent on double-bill exhibition, which became common in France in 1932 as the economic depression cut deeply into the movie box office, and the large cinemas – including the Rex and the Olympia, two major Parisian houses owned by Haïk until his financial crash in 1933 – began struggling to draw people in (Morel 1932; Choukroun 2007: 157, 163–5). The prevalence of the double-bill format in France over the following years explains the peculiar running time of *La Chant du Danube*, which clocks in at a mere fifty-one minutes versus the seventy-six minutes of *Waltzes from Vienna*. In France dubbed films were typically slotted into the opening half of the double bill, a purpose for which 'films de moyenne métrage' – medium-length films such as *La Chant du Danube* – were more useful than conventional features (Anon. 1932c; Rose 1937: 73–4).

What Was Removed from the French Version?

The question of how the French dubbers managed to chop from *Waltzes from Vienna* an entire twenty-five minutes – roughly one-third of the film's total running time – involves considering how Haïk had sized up the commercial potential of Hitchcock's film for the French market. The availability of both the English and French versions of the film allows for the identification of the cuts, which fall into two basic categories: whole scenes and sequences, on the one hand, and individual shots, or bits thereof, on the other. The scenes and sequences come in two blocks. The first begins in the orchestra's rehearsal hall, where Rasi (short for Teresa), played by music-revue star Jessie Matthews, tries to help Schani by delivering to Johann Strauss Sr her copy of Schani's 'Blue Danube' score. When Rasi's claims for Schani's greatness are dismissed out of hand by Strauss Sr, she bursts from the rehearsal hall in tears. In the next shot Rasi runs up to the camera and freezes in close-up just as Schani can be overheard performing his waltz-in-progress for the Countess, Rasi's rival for Schani's affections. Rasi next confronts the couple and learns that Schani has dedicated the waltz to the Countess. This sequence of three scenes, pivotal to the romantic triangle of the British film, is omitted entirely from the French version.

The second deleted section lasts a full eleven and a half minutes and makes up almost the entire ending of *Waltzes from Vienna*. This section begins almost where the French film ends: at the conclusion of Schani's victorious 'Blue Danube' performance at the St Stephen's festival. It then continues through several short scenes leading to a clandestine meeting between Schani and the Countess, interrupted once more by jealous Prince Gustav. Next comes Rasi's reconciliation with Schani, and a short coda featuring the older Strauss, who adds 'Sr.' when signing his autograph for a young fan, thus acknowledging for the first time his son's achievement as a musician. This block of scenes, the coda excepted, is entirely missing from the French version, in which the festival performance leads immediately to Strauss Sr's act of signing the autograph.

Making sense of these two massive cuts requires factoring in a further editorial choice by Haïk's team: a rearrangement of the plot via a shift in the placement of a sequence of three scenes: (1) the rehearsal hall scene in which Strauss Sr humiliates Schani in front of the musicians; (2) the scene at the Countess' when she and Schani sing the pop tune 'Like a Star in the Sky', intercut with Rasi, telepathically singing the same tune in a distant garden; and (3) the first of the scenes where the Countess and Schani are confronted by the sudden arrival of Gustav. The same three-scene sequence occurs in the French film, too – but much later. In the English film, it begins roughly one-quarter of the way into the film's running time, whereas in the French version it occurs almost halfway into the film. In stressing the filial conflict at the expense of subplots involving secondary characters such as the Countess, Haïk's team approached the editing of *La Chant du Danube* in line with the prevalence in French films of the 1930s of narratives centered on powerful fathers or father-like figures (Vincendeau 1989).

Besides the excised and reshuffled scenes, the French film differs from the English one in a further respect: its scenes are often shorter as a consequence of the removal of whole shots as well as pieces of shots. Intriguing from the standpoint of dubbing technique are the partial excisions, as in the sequence of three scenes beginning with Schani's squabble with his father in the rehearsal hall, which ends with Schani quitting the orchestra. In *Waltzes from Vienna* these scenes add up to some eight minutes and forty seconds of screen time, whereas in *La Chant du Danube* they work out to seven minutes twenty seconds – almost one minute-and-a-half less.³ Sequences in both versions contain the same thirty-three shots. In the French version, however, the shots are often shorter. The insert of Jessie Matthews performing 'Like a Star in the Sky' counts as an extreme case: the shot lasts forty-five seconds in the English film but only five in the French version. This excision is consonant with the handling of Matthews' other singing performance, the early music-lesson scene when Rasi sings 'With All My Heart' while Schani accompanies on the piano, which was cut entirely from the French version. A rising star in Britain, Jessie Matthews was at this point apparently unknown in France – a circumstance *La Chant du Danube* probably did little to change.

A further dubbing-related stylistic quirk is the many jump cuts in *La Chant du Danube* resulting from the removal of a piece of a shot. The extraction of frames from, as well as their addition to, dubbed films was common practice in the 1930s for fixing synchronization errors. As explained in the London-based *The Bioscope*: 'If a player takes nine frames to pronounce a word and the actual speaker takes eleven, two extra frames are spliced in and vice versa' (Anon. 1930b). Close-ups especially raised difficult synchronization problems (Autré 1932; Turpin 1935). To bring dialogue into synch in a feature film could involve shuffling ten thousand frames or more. A report in *Variety* noted that '[i]n one experiment by RCA 16,000 different frames were shifted, it is understood, in getting the desired result' (Anon. 1930a). This figure works out to over eleven minutes of screen time – roughly 13 per cent of the total running time for an average feature film of the time.⁴ Haïk, a few years before founding Régent Film, had contracted with RCA to outfit his studio, which

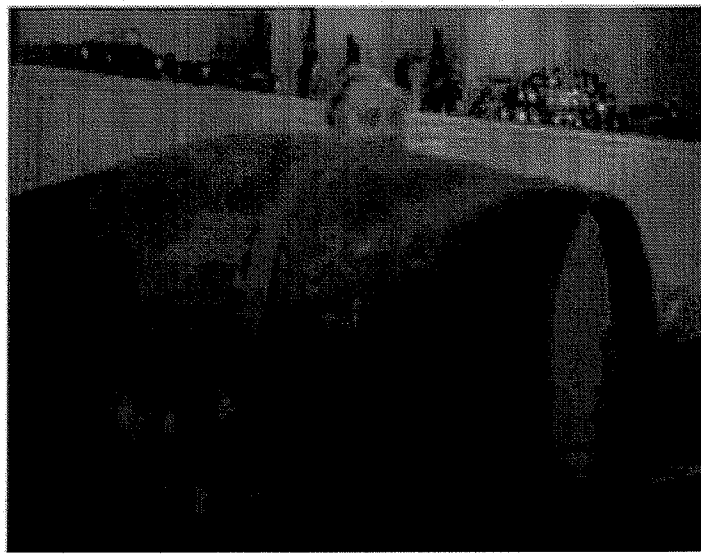


Figure 2.2: *Waltzes from Vienna* (1934). This shot is among numerous shots in the film whose compositions are contrived to conceal the actors' lip movements and hence facilitate the film's eventual dubbing.

raises the possibility that the RCA people had introduced the frame-shifting technique to Haïk's team.

La Chant du Danube includes at least six dubbing-related jump cuts, by my count. Certain of the cuts involve enough frames to be easily detected by the viewer. An example occurs in the scene in the Countess' bedroom, in the two-shot showing the maid, angled toward the camera on frame left, and the Countess on frame right, visible in silhouette only. The dubbers reduced this shot's duration by more than half – from fourteen seconds down to six. Also noteworthy is the shot's peculiar mise en scène, whereby the Countess, the main speaker, is hidden behind the curtain through the entire shot. This sort of framing, whereby the speaker's lips are concealed, surfaces in dozens of shots in *Waltzes from Vienna*. In the early scene showing Schani's arrival at the dance school, for instance, a shot depicts the faces of the women peering silently through the window and toward the camera. In the next, reverse-angle shot, however, in which the women are seen from behind, they chatter away. Later, Gustav's short conversation with the servant he has thrown down the stairs is depicted in a shot in which Gustav is shown at the stairway's top, visible below the knees only, while the servant is at the bottom, the back of his head peaking into the frame. Recall, too, the strange shot of the servant at the St Stephen's festival who speaks while concealed behind a massive beer barrel.

Such shots are easy to dub and they prepare the viewer for other moments when voices come untethered from lip movement, thus naturalizing the technique. Filmmakers other than Hitchcock had already gone down this path, as is suggested in a report in 1933 in the *New York Times* on Fritz Lang's work on his film *M* (1931) in anticipation of the eventual making of an English-language version:

In making this picture Fritz Lang, believing that it would have a wide circulation in English-speaking countries, took into consideration the fact that the English voices would have to be dubbed, therefore he avoided close-ups of actors talking to the audience, and some scenes were produced

specially for the dubbed version. The characters in speaking sometimes hide the movements of their lips, either by lighting a cigar or by turning their heads (Hall 1933).

What Lang had done in 1931 with *M* could be said to have become standard practice in transnational cinema by 1933 and the shooting of *Waltzes from Vienna*: as multitrack technologies and techniques became standard in studios in Britain and other countries, films were shot in ways which would ease the dubbing later on at other studios in other countries.

In crafting their films in light of an eventual dubbed version, Lang and Hitchcock acted in accord with methods of framing and scene construction that became standard in Hollywood in 1931 when multitrack sound was introduced throughout the studio system. Before then American films routinely depicted speaking actors in ways emphasizing the legibility of lip movement, with speech always sourced in the image. Once the Hollywood majors switched to dubbing as the main means of preparing films for foreign-market release, however, a new approach was instituted. At MGM, for instance, it was decided for the 1930–1931 film season that '[l]ong and medium shots will be tricked so that at no time will the lip movement be discernible' (Anon. 1930b).

French journalists in the summer of 1931 noted in recent dubbed films from Hollywood the new approach to shots with synchronous speech. An article in *La Cinématographie française* reported that American filmmakers now favoured 'shots depicting actors whose lip movements were not visible' (Anon. 1931). Exemplifying the 'nouvelles versions européennes' was *Cœurs brûlés*, the dubbed version of Paramount's *Morocco*: 'when one hears an actor speak one is shown not this actor but the actor who listens and whose demeanor is necessarily mute' (Morierval 1931). Whatever Hitchcock's intent regarding his work on *Waltzes from Vienna*, the peculiar framings were consonant with current export-film practice.

Conclusion

The project of investigating British and French cinema in terms of their interaction with one another can entail encountering phenomena, such as dubbed films, that are difficult to grasp within the familiar national cinema framework of film studies. With respect to the preceding examination of the dubbed version of *Waltzes from Vienna*, two concluding remarks suggest themselves. The first remark concerns obstacles to research stemming from the difficulty of finding dubbed films for examination. My analysis of *La Chant du Danube* together with reports on dubbing in the contemporary film-industry press concern what I take to be typical dubbing practice. But despite dubbing's great importance to movie culture worldwide, where dubbed cinema is the norm for hundreds of millions of filmgoers, copies of dubbed films are extremely hard to come by. Archives do not make it a priority to restore them, it seems, and DVD producers, who have created wonderful multiple-version editions,

appear uninterested in including dubbed versions on DVD releases. I have examined some four hundred feature films of the early 1930s so far and *Waltzes* was among the tiny handful I could find in both original and dubbed form. If DVD copies of dubbed films were readily available it would be very helpful, though better yet would be original 35mm prints. Working from my bootleg DVD copy of *La Chant du Danube*, I found six dubbing-related jump cuts. But viewing the film on DVD allows one to detect only examples involving blatant excisions. Slight editing jumps or instances in which frames have been added into a shot are likely to be detectable only through examining a 35mm print of the film on an editing table. In sum, until more dubbed films from the period turn up and are examined, the study of the history of dubbing practice must rest content with findings based on a few rare films.

The second concluding point pertains to methodological challenges deriving from the dispersal of dubbing-related activity across two studios in different countries, so that the dubbing occurred in a country other than where the film was planned and shot. This dispersion of activity across national borders raises complications for the historian of style, who traces a film's style and technique back to causes and conditions in specific places and times. What complicates the study of a dubbed film such as *La Chant du Danube* is that in investigating causes it can be difficult to know where to stop. Important aspects of the style of *La Chant du Danube*, to be sure, trace directly to work undertaken at Courbevoie, where the dubbing was performed, the scenes rearranged, and so on. But to make sense of *that* requires looking into work months earlier in the Shepherd's Bush studio of Gaumont British, where Hitchcock's film was planned and shot in a manner allowing its dubbing later on in France. These activities of planning and shooting in turn appear to have been anticipated in U.S. practice over the preceding few years, when multitrack technologies were introduced, adapted and standardized in Hollywood for dubbing purposes. One can also cite the contemporaneous commercialization of dubbing-related synchronization devices in Germany such as the Rhythmograph (Wedel 2002). In any case, dubbed films such as *La Chant du Danube* amount to transnational phenomena and as such require the exploration of how they affected – and were affected by – circumstances in at least two countries, both source and target.

Notes

1. This piece reports on the findings of a poll of French film viewers taken by a 'large regional daily'.
2. These figures can be compared to those cited in the Carmoy Report and quoted in Choukroun (2007).
3. The figures are as follows. For the English version: 3.45 for the rehearsal-hall scene, 3.17 for 'Like a Star in the Sky' and 1.45 for the scene with Gustav, the Countess and Schani. For the French version: 3.45, 2.10 and 1.35. In both films, the first scene contains seventeen shots, the second five and the third thirteen. The performance of 'Like a Star in the Sky' runs 2.10 in the English version and 1.06 in the French.
4. This figure derives from an examination I made of sixty-seven synch-sound feature films from Britain, France, Germany and the U.S. released in 1930.

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