> In programme music . . . the return, change, modification, and modulation of the motifs are conditioned by their relation to a poetic idea. . . . All exclusively musical considerations, though they should not be neglected, have to be subordinated to the action of a given subject.[14]

Program music was subservient to the external subject. It followed a theme, or related to a story or character. Liszt saw that there had been no real place for narrative in symphonic music. In opening up such a place, he prescribed from the beginning that the music should be understood through its program, or in other words through its literary referent. And it was the referent that was most important.

Not only did the subordinate position of the music cause discomfort for musical purists, but the use of that music could be troubling in another sense. Liszt defined a program as a

> preface added to a piece of instrumental music, by means of which the composer intends to guard the listener against *a wrong poetical interpretation*, and to direct his attention to the poetical idea of the whole or to a particular part of it.[15]

The symphonic poem declined as modernism challenged these very ideas. We have already considered how the aesthetic musical avant-garde rejected the subordination of music to narrative, opting instead for the notion of music's abstraction and independence. The same is true of the political and ideological critics who rejected the rigid parallelism of correct poetical interpretations. We see then how extramusical determinants contributed to the eclipse of program music, which coincided not only with the rise of the Vienna school, but also with modernist decenterings and deconstructions of meaning. More moderate critics too may have felt that it was finally impossible to merge the formal requirements of the two forms. "The natural architecture of music was not that of poetry."[16]

The dilemmas of program music in the twentieth century take on a special interest and pertinence to this study, since it shares the very incompatibilities and compromises engendered by using music underneath film images—underneath being the standard position of film music in commercial narrative contexts. Is there a solution?