

The idea of renaming the title seems to have come to Eisler shortly after the recording on 23rd December 1941. In early 1942, he reported to Theodor W. Adorno: "The 'rain' has rained rather nicely. It is now titled *Fourteen Ways to describe Rain*."¹⁵ The music over the new opening credits present a sound symbol played by flute, clarinet, violin and violoncello in sustained minims. It embodies the aspect of melancholy that is the connotation of the concept 'rain' projected with the title words. Furthermore, the twice repeated evocation of the name of 'Arnold Schönberg' (through the tone series the German nomenclature of which is A – D – eS – C – H – B – G) announces the programme of the sound film experiment of the *Fourteen Ways to describe Rain*: Modern music – in particular, the twelve-tone technique of the Second Viennese School, from which also Eisler came – will be demonstrated in its suitability for the film. As Eisler states in *Composing for the Films*: 'The picture about the rain seemed particularly suitable for this because of the experimental character and the lyrical quality of many of its details, despite its thoroughly objective treatment.'¹⁶

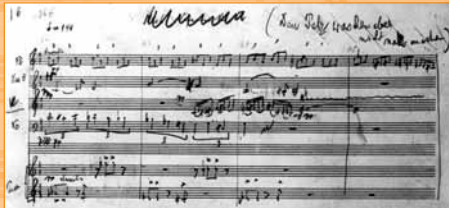
No. 2) The 1st way to describe rain – in the autograph score, Eisler notes 'Sun (Introduktion) Sequenze [sic] I': Music to the shots 1-14 in the Lichtveld version of RAIN (1-4, 6-9, 11-13, 10, 14-15 in the MoMA version).¹⁷ In *The Camera and I*, Ivens says he intended 'to catch' on film 'the rich strong enveloping sunlight before the rain.' In doing so, he not only carefully photographed the 'nuances in light quality', but also 'emphasised [them] in movement.' 'The sharp dark shadow of a foot bridge rips across the wide deck of a boat passing swiftly underneath. This movement is cut off by immediate contact with a close-up of another boat moving in an opposite diagonal across the entire screen.'¹⁸ In an analogy to such cinematic means, Eisler employs strong contrasts of light and dark as well – e.g. the deep solemn piano entry in measure 14 or, as it were, the 'tooting' cello entry in measure 27, each synchronous to cuts in the film and subsequent to a transparently bright, filigree music texture. Furthermore, there are the sharp contours of figures such as those of the flute in measure 31 and 35-37. They can be discerned as the musical counterpart of the sequences explained by Ivens, in which shadow images rush over boat decks (Lichtveld version: shot 9 and 11, MoMA version: 11 and 13). Both times the end of the eloquent flute figure is supposed to mark the cut to the next shot.

No. 3) The 2nd way to describe rain – in the autograph score, Eisler notes 'Sequenze [sic] II Wind in Beginning (off [sic] Rain naturally)': music to the sequences 15-40 in the Lichtveld version of RAIN (MoMA version: 16-41), explicated in great detail in the appendix to *Composing for the Films*.

Nos. 4-7) The 3rd-4th way to describe rain – music to the shots 41-89 (MoMA version: 42-71, 73-74, 76-92), i.e., according to the autograph score, to the sequences 3-6 and 7a-7b. Eisler had this part recorded by means of a click track with continuous 10 frames per click, equalling a metronome tempo of 144 bpm. As aforementioned, the music is closely oriented to events in the film, however much it seems to be conceived according to purely inherent construction principles of form, twelve-tone organisation, melodics, harmony, and rhythm. Thus the music supports the perception of continuity, cuts and caesuras as well as characteristics



Three little girls under a cape, their legs skipping in the rhythm of raindrops © Joris Ivens Archive / EFJl

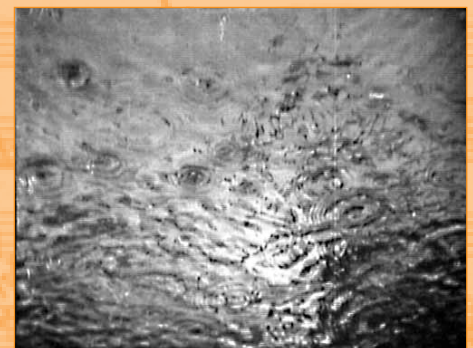


Autograph score of the beginning of the '5th way to describe rain': 'Wash the fur, but don't get wet'. © SAdK, HEA 160 fol. 9v

of montage, structure, cinematic rhythm and pictorial details. This produces a breathtaking audiovisual interaction between the swift, flexible, extremely virtuosic and elegant music and the series of spectacular shots partly highlighted by Ivens himself. E.g., the legs of 'three little girls under a cape' skip 'in the rhythm of raindrops'¹⁹, which can be seen splashing in myriads into a canal in the previous shot. Eisler underscores the analogy of raindrops and skipping leg movement by having a flute solo played a soft delicate staccato figure over the shot of the girls while during the previous raindrops shot, this flute figure accompanied a fragmentary clarinet melody as well as the splashing raindrops of the coupled seconds in the piano. So in the autograph score, Eisler's humorous note 'Wash the fur but don't get wet', remarked in parenthesis above the 5th way to describe rain (no. 6), obviously refers to the shot of the girls.

The correlation between film and music is particularly effective in the 3rd way (no. 4 in the score). This has also been demonstrated recently by Christian Kuntze-Krakau based on Heller's accurate reconstruction of this part. For the illustration of the increasing rain, Ivens employs brief shots such as a seagull fluttering off the canal, an opening umbrella, a closing dormer window, a woman impatiently beckoning over the sheltering tram, two men pushing a cart in a hurry etc. and alternates them with views down onto rainy canals and puddles. Eisler reveals this editing principle through a strophic Scherzando in which the 'Gigue-like melody verses' (Kuntze-Krakau) in the flute, clarinet, and the cello are contrasted by piano figures linked to splashing raindrops from the previous section of the score. 'The beginning and ending of the piano entries is each synchronous to film cuts.'²⁰

Nos. 8-9) The 7th-8th way to describe rain – music to the shots 90-101 (MoMA version: 94, 93, 95-104), i.e., according to the autograph score, to the sequences 8 and 9. These two closely interwoven ways were synchronised by means of a click track at 16 frames per click, equalling a metronome tempo of 90 bpm (the tempo of 88 bpm marked in the sheet music of the *Fourteen Ways* represents the closest value on the Mälzel metronome scale). The corresponding film part is a sequence in which Ivens deals with the 'umbrella' theme in all varieties. Parts of this sequence are some of the most



RAIN

famous shots of RAIN – the bird's eye views of the square at the Amsterdam stock exchange building with people crowding under their black umbrellas 'even as on a hot summer's day flies revolve around a sugar loaf', to use a metaphor from Nikolaj Gogol's novel *Dead Souls*. Through a more moderate tempo and lengthy melody arcs, Eisler clearly set off this umbrella intermezzo from the dynamic character of the previous 'way', where a Sonatina accompanied scenes of people in the rain carrying on with their ordinary pursuits of life, among which a series of tram shots (above the 6th way in the autograph score, it is remarked: 'or the art of being seen as respectable in the rain NB: 'respectable' is meant in the musical sense').

No. 10) The 9th way to describe rain – music to the shots 102-114 (MoMA version: 106-118), i.e., according to the autograph



Tossy Spivakovsky