



TEIGN SCHOOL MUSIC

Y8 Cycle 2 Knowledge Organiser: FILM MUSIC



FILM MUSIC

Exploring Film Music: We will look at and play famous film themes. We will explore how music is used in film and create our own music to a film extract.

The Role of Music in Film

Film Music is a type of **DESCRIPTIVE MUSIC** that represents a **MOOD, STORY, SCENE** or **CHARACTER** through music, it is designed to **SUPPORT THE ACTION AND EMOTIONS OF THE FILM ON SCREEN**. Film Music can be used to:

- Create or enhance a mood (though the **ELEMENTS OF MUSIC**) ->
- Function as a **LEITMOTIF** (see below)
- To emphasise a gesture (**MICKEY-MOUSING** – when the music mimics actions on screen e.g. cartoons – Roadrunner falling off a cliff)
- Provide unexpected juxtaposition/irony (using music the listener wouldn't expect to hear giving a sense of uneasiness or humour!)
- Linking scenes providing continuity
- Influence the pace of a scene making it appear faster/slower
- Make extra income/money (released as a **SOUNDTRACK**) – sometimes a song, usually a pop song is used as a **THEME SONG** for a film.
- To set the geographic location (using instruments associated with a particular country) or historical era (using music 'of the time').

Leitmotifs

LEITMOTIF – A frequently recurring short melodic or harmonic idea which is associated with a character, event, concept, idea, object or situation which can be used directly or indirectly to remind us of one not actually present on screen. Leitmotifs can be changed through **SEQUENCING, REPETITION** or **MODULATION** giving a hint as to what may happen later in the film or may be heard in the background giving a “subtle hint” to the listener e.g. *the “Jaws” Leitmotif*



Potted History of Film Music

Early films had no soundtrack (**“SILENT CINEMA”**) and music was provided live, usually **IMPROVISED** by a pianist or organist. The first **SOUNDTRACKS** appeared in the 1920's and used existing music (**BORROWED MUSIC** – music composed for other (non-film) purposes) from classical composers. In the 1930's and 1940's Hollywood hired composers to write huge Romantic-style soundtracks. Today, film music often blends **POPULAR** and **CLASSICAL** music together in a flexible way that suits the needs of a particular film.

How the Elements of Music are used in Film Music

PITCH AND MELODY – **RISING MELODIES** are often used for increasing tension, **FALLING MELODIES** for defeat. **Q&A PHRASES** can represent good versus evil.

DYNAMICS – **FORTE (LOUD)** dynamics to represent power; **PIANO (SOFT)** dynamics to represent weakness/calm/resolve. **CRESCENDOS** used for increasing threat, triumph or proximity and **DECRESCENDOS** or **DIMINUENDOS** used for things going away into the distance. Horro Film soundtracks often use **EXTREME DYNAMICS** or **SUDDEN DYNAMIC CHANGES** to ‘shock the listener’.

HARMONY – **MAJOR** – happy; **MINOR** – sad. **CONSONANT CHORDS** for “good” and **DISSONANT CHORDS** for “evil”.

DURATION – **LONG** notes often used in Westerns to describe vast open spaces and in Sci-Fi soundtracks to depict outer space; **SHORT** notes often used to depict busy, chaotic or hectic scenes.

PEDAL NOTES – long held notes in the **BASS LINE** used to create tension and suspense.

TEXTURE – **THIN/SPARSE** textures used for bleak or lonely scenes;

THICK/FULL textures used for active scenes or battles.

ARTICULATION – **LEGATO** for flowing or happy scenes, **STACCATO** for ‘frozen’ or ‘icy’ wintery scenes.

OSTINATO – rhythms for repeated sounds e.g. *horses*. Repetitive motifs to hold suspense.

Film Music Key Words

LEITMOTIF – short motif used to identify a character/object or mood.

MICKEY MOUSING – Where music mimics an action on screen

DIEGETIC MUSIC – Music that appears to originate from something on screen. It can be heard by the characters

e.g. *a car radio, a band in a nightclub or sound effects.*

NON-DIEGETIC FILM MUSIC – Music which has been composed to accompany events on screen but which visibly is not part of the action. It can NOT be heard by the characters only by the audience – also known as **UNDERScore**.

SOUNDTRACK – The music and sound recorded on a motion-picture film. The word can also mean a commercial recording of a collection of music and songs from a film sold individually as a CD or collection for digital download.

STORYBOARD – A graphic organiser in the form of illustrations and images displayed in sequence to help the composer plan their soundtrack.

CUESHEET – A detailed listing of **MUSICAL CUES** matching the visual action of a film so that composers can time their music accurately.

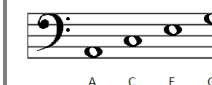
ARTICULATION – Staccato (spiky) or Legato (Smooth)

CRESCENDO – Getting louder
Notes on the **LINEs** of the **BASS CLEF**



Green Buses Drive Fast Always

Notes in the **SPACES** of the **BASS CLEF**:



All Cows Eat Grass

Film Composers and their Soundtracks



Hans Zimmer
The Lion King
Gladiator
Dunkirk
Blade Runner 2049
No Time to Die



John Williams
Star Wars
Jaws
Harry Potter
Indiana Jones
Superman, E.T.



James Horner
Titanic
Apollo 13
Braveheart
Star Trek II
Aliens



Klaus Badelt
Pirates of the Caribbean.
Often works with Hans Zimmer