

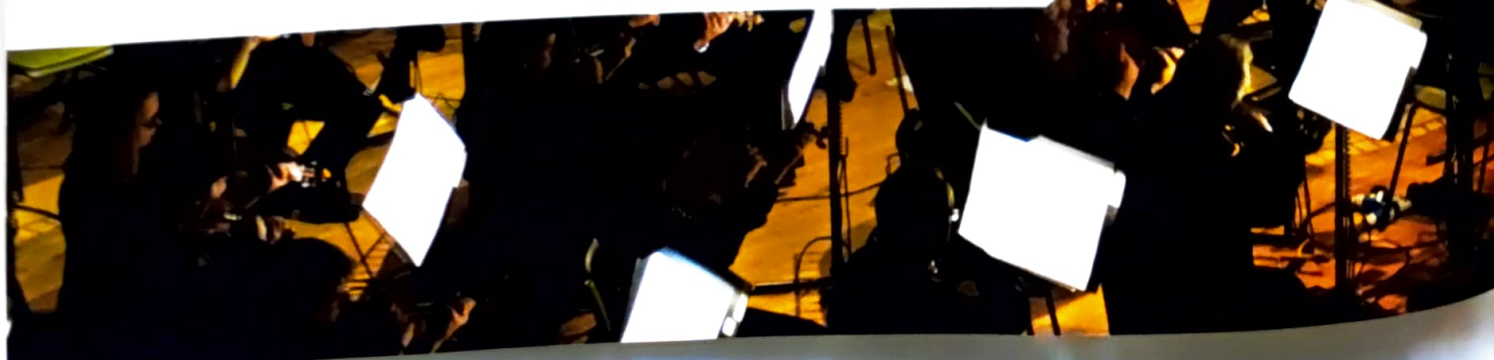


Music as storyteller and mood enhancer

SOUND AND VISION

Film has always been associated with music. Even in the days of silent movies, musicians would provide a live accompaniment to the film being shown in the cinema.

Music, whether composed specifically for a film or taken from elsewhere, is vital to the mood and atmosphere of a scene.





The composer's expanding market

In recent years, music composed for video games has become far more sophisticated, and now successful composers write music for both film and video games.

Music for video games used to be entirely generated by the computer's basic sound card (think of the original *Super Mario Bros.* theme), but now soundtracks are recorded by some of the world's most prestigious orchestras. Some orchestras perform entire concerts of film and video game music.

Film and video game music incorporates many different styles of music and approaches to composition – we will investigate the most important features of film and video game music by studying selected examples. These features are:

- How music relates to the mood or emotion being displayed on the screen.
- How significant characters in a film are represented by specific musical ideas.
- How music mirrors specific actions and creates dramatic effects.

The ability to describe and explain the music used in films, and to comment on the effect the music has, is an excellent way of

demonstrating your understanding of music. Apart from being a valuable skill, it will really help in your listening exam, so we will focus on listening and analysis in this Area of Study. You will also get the opportunity to perform some film music, and compose your own.

How film music is created

Here is a typical order in which a film soundtrack might progress:

- The composer enters the process during the editing of the film, after the scenes themselves have been filmed.
- The composer and director will discuss which scenes require music (the **cues**), and what it should sound like.
- The composer will write the music, perhaps using a **sequencer** (such as *Logic Pro* or *Cubase*) to ensure the music fits with the action on screen.
- If live musicians are required, either the composer or a separate orchestrator will then take the music, and write it out for the orchestra or group of musicians who are going to play it.
- The musicians will record the score, using a **click track** to ensure the music matches the action exactly.

If you search online for 'Thomas Newman Notes On A Score', you will find an excellent documentary on the process of creating the score for the film *WALL-E*.

FILM MUSIC TERMS

The music composed specially for a film is often referred to as a **score**. The term **soundtrack** also includes any additional music – such as a famous pop song played over the end credits.

The term **cue** is used to describe an individual section of music taken from a film or game soundtrack (e.g. the opening titles music for *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, or the music for 'The Battle' sequence in the film *Gladiator*).

You won't be tested on these terms during your exam, but they may be useful to know for any class discussions on film music.

Choose a film

Find a scene from a favourite film that has an orchestral soundtrack. Create your own version of the grid below, and fill in the relevant boxes.

The questions in italics may help you get started, but don't rely on them - there may be other musical features that are more relevant to the story.

Ask a friend to do the same, or choose a separate clip, and compare your answers:

Element	Musical features	Link to the story/mood
Melody	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Is there a melody that relates to a character on screen?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ e.g. the trumpet melody represents the hero of the movie
Tonality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Is the music tonal or do the harmonies clash?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ e.g. the dissonant harmony creates tension
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Are there noticeably different sections in the music?</i> 	
Instruments and timbre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Is there an instrument that dominates the music?</i> 	
Texture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Is the texture thick or thin? Is it polyrhythmic or polyphonic, or is it quite simple?</i> 	
Tempo, metre and rhythm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Is there an ostinato or steady rhythm?</i> 	
Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Are there differences in the dynamics, or is the volume all at the same level?</i> 	
Use of technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>Is the music 'modern' and electronic, or does it use acoustic instruments (or both)?</i> 	

The more film music you study, the more detail you will be able to add to tables like this.

The theme from *Halo*

***Halo* (full title *Halo: Combat Evolved*) is a video game that was first released in 2001. The series has become one of the most popular and best-selling video game franchises of all time.**



The original *Halo* game is set in the 26th century and involves exploring alien lands and artificial worlds. Our hero (and central character) is a soldier fighting against an alien race, which is intent on the destruction of humanity.

The soundtrack was written by two composers, Martin O'Donnell and Michael Salvatori. Like many video game soundtracks, it combines live instrumentation with synthesised and sampled sounds.

We will construct two grids based on the main title music, called 'Halo'. It is available on the album *Halo: Original Soundtrack*, and can be found on YouTube by searching 'Halo Theme Song Original'. Follow the music and note the musical observations.

The original *Halo* score features several different percussion instruments, including timpani.

The music has been divided into two sections:

- 0:00-0:32 - opening section
- 0:33-1:30 - main section.

Opening section (0:00-0:32)

Element	Musical features	Link to the story/mood
Melody	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Vocal melody is legato and mostly moves by step, rising and falling. ■ Melody is similar to plainsong. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Gives a sense of floating (in space?). ■ Melody sounds 'alien', from another time or world.
Tonality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Long 'drone' notes provide harmony. ■ Has a minor-key feel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sounds 'other-worldly'.
Instruments (and timbre)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Male choir singing to 'ah'. ■ Low strings or synthesised strings. ■ Some cymbals and drum rolls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lack of words gives a sense of calm. ■ Give a sense of a grand scale. ■ Add tension.
Texture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Two parts: low strings and choir. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Give a sense of a grand scale.
Tempo, metre and rhythm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Slow tempo. ■ Difficult to hear pulse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sense of stillness.
Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Quiet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sense of floating and stillness.
Use of technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Synthesisers and sampled sounds used. ■ Reverb effect used on all instruments (and voices). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Makes the music sound alien. ■ Makes the music sound distant.

Here are some important things to notice:

- The music has three main atmospheric effects - a sense of calm/stillness, a sense of scale/space, and an alien feel.
- The same instrument or part can be described in more than one place in the table.

It might be that one of the exam questions for this Area of Study requires a longer answer. For example, an exam question might ask you to write about the ways in which the music creates the effect of floating in space. Turning these notes into an exam answer is quite straightforward. In the exam there will be a blank page where you can write down notes, before turning them into a detailed answer, like the one below.

You could write:

The music features a male choir singing a legato melody to an 'ah' syllable, at a quiet dynamic. These features give a sense of calm and stillness, a sense of floating in space.

The vocals are accompanied by low string sounds, playing long sustained notes, like a drone. The tempo is slow, and it is difficult to hear a clear pulse. In addition, low synthesised sounds are used, and reverb is used on all instruments, especially the choir. This increases the sense of scale, and adds an alien feel to the music, associating it with space.

Some percussion, such as cymbals, a gong and bass drum rolls, adds to this sense of floating through a huge expanse of space. These are played quietly, and do not create a steady beat. The reverb effect applied to the percussion adds to the sense we are in an alien place.



DETAILS

Remember: the focus is on the *music*. The most important thing is to mention specific musical detail.

Main section (0:33-1:30)

The 'Link' column has been left blank, for you to fill in:

Element	Musical features	Link to the story/mood
Melody	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staccato melody ■ Lots of accented notes ■ Repeated notes followed by accented leaps ■ Fast melodies with a narrow range, movement by step. 	
Tonality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Very few chords ■ Minor key feel ■ Sustained strings provide some harmony. 	
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Begins with percussion ■ More melodies are added throughout the extract. 	
Instruments (and timbre)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lots of percussion, e.g. hand drums ■ Strings ■ Solo female vocalist. 	
Texture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Texture 'thickens' throughout extract ■ More layers are added ■ Layers work together - homophonic. 	
Tempo, metre and rhythm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A driving rhythmic ostinato ■ Rhythm in $\frac{6}{8}$ time ■ Fast tempo. 	
Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mainly loud ■ Gets louder throughout extract ■ Ends very loud. 	

A typical exam question might say, 'This music is the introduction to a battle between humans and aliens, set in the distant future. Describe how the music conveys this scene.' Try to answer that question, using the grid, and remember to group ideas together and focus on musical detail.

Out of Africa

John Barry was a prolific composer of film music, best known for composing music to several James Bond films. He won five Oscars for his work on film scores, including one for the 1985 film *Out of Africa*. The film is an epic romance, featuring beautiful shots of Kenyan landscapes.

As well as the original music composed by John Barry, *Out of Africa* features music by Classical composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (his clarinet concerto). It also includes traditional African songs and music.

Focus study

The music cue we are focusing on is 'Flying Over Africa'.

You can find this on the official soundtrack album, but an extract from the film is available by searching for 'Out of Africa Flying over Africa' on YouTube.

Note the following about this cue:

- Once the music gets going (if you're watching the film), the sound of the plane almost disappears.
- The music, along with the visuals, create a sense of calm and tranquility, contrasting the excitement of flying in a noisy biplane!

CONSIDER THE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

Remember: music is NOT sound effects. Music is melody, harmony, timbre and rhythm. Use the elements of music to reinforce the emotion of a scene.

OUT OF AFRICA ASSIGNMENT

Create a grid for this extract and fill it in. Then answer the following question:

'Describe how the music creates a sense of a calm and wonder during this plane journey.'

See answers on page 175.

Composing task

Try to create a piece of music for one of the following scenes (or create your own):

- A scared person tiptoes through the forest late at night, fearful of what she cannot see.
- A battle scene.
- A medal presentation ceremony.
- A dance scene.

Some ways in which you might use the elements are listed below:

Element	Musical features	Link to the story/mood
Melody	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ascending melodies ■ Descending melodies ■ Large leaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Excitement, action, speed ■ Contemplation, rest ■ Aliens, monsters, distorted things.
Tonality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Major ■ Minor ■ Dissonance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Happiness, optimism, success ■ Sadness, seriousness ■ Fear, pain, anguish.
Instrumentation (and timbre)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strings ■ Brass ■ Percussion ■ Woodwind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Passion, grief ■ Tremolo strings: fear, tension, drama ■ Pizzicato strings: lightness, comedy ■ War, royalty, ceremony, heroes ■ War, movement, fighting ■ Nature, romance.
Texture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Solo line ■ Block chords ■ Multiple layers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Isolation, one single emotion ■ Marching, togetherness ■ Action, speed.
Tempo, metre and rhythm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strong sense of pulse ■ Dance-like rhythms ■ Rhythmic ostinato ■ Irregular metres ■ Rubato/free-rhythm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Purpose, action ■ Party, dance, playfulness ■ Menace, tension ■ Excitement, unpredictability ■ Space.
Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Loud ■ Soft ■ Crescendo ■ Diminuendo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Surprise, power, large things ■ Gentleness, intimacy, small things ■ Emotions intensifying ■ Endings, weakness.

Characters, themes and emotions

Orchestral film music has its origins in Western orchestral music from the 19th century. Composers such as Hector Berlioz and Richard Wagner wrote music to depict specific emotions, stories, places or people.

As part of this music they made use of **leitmotifs**, short musical ideas that represent characters, places, concepts or specific emotions. Film composers use leitmotifs extensively.

A famous leitmotif

The composer John Williams is a master of the leitmotif. Go to a piano and play a long, low E, followed by the F next to it. What creature do you immediately think of?



When John Williams created the leitmotif for *Jaws*, two notes were all he needed:



The way John Williams develops the leitmotif for the shark in *Jaws* is equally impressive. Listen to the first minute of the main titles music for *Jaws*. The track is available on *John Williams - Greatest Hits 1969-1999*, or search for 'Jaws 1975 Main Title' on YouTube.

Note the following:

- A single note plays first.
- The shark theme is stated, followed by a pause. The pause suggests the shark is some distance away.
- The shark theme is stated twice, followed by a shorter pause. The shark is getting closer.
- The shark theme then turns into a two-note ostinato. The shark is very close.
- Over this ostinato we hear a short, **dissonant** horn melody.
- The accents suggest the briefest of glimpses of (or attacks from) the shark.

When the shark theme is played, we know the shark is close. Often, the theme is heard when the shark is not on screen; the music is much more effective at creating fear and tension than any visual cue, such as a dorsal fin peaking above the water.

The leitmotifs of Star Wars

John Williams also wrote the music for the films in the *Star Wars* series.

We are focusing on the first three films released in this series:

- *Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope* (1977)
- *Star Wars: Episode V - The Empire Strikes Back* (1980)
- *Star Wars: Episode VI - Return of the Jedi* (1983)

We are going to look at some leitmotifs from these films, and investigate how they are used to reflect the characters' emotions, moods and situations.

The *Star Wars* theme/Luke Skywalker's theme

The music that opens every *Star Wars* film is actually the leitmotif for Luke Skywalker, the hero of the first three films.

Here is a section of the music:

Musical notation for a section of the Star Wars theme. It consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The melody features a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure, followed by quarter notes. The notes G, C, G, C, G, F, and D are marked above the staff. The G and C notes in measures 2 and 3 are highlighted in yellow. There are three triplet markings (3) under the eighth notes in measures 2, 3, and 4. A final triplet of eighth notes is marked in measure 5.

Luke Skywalker is the hero of these three films, and his theme has several 'heroic' qualities. The tonality is major, the dynamics are loud, and the melody is written for trumpets, which are associated with war and bravery. The triplet rhythm and the rising intervals in the motif emphasise this heroic effect further. There are several large leaps in the melody, such as the minor 7th (highlighted).

Darth Vader's theme

Darth Vader, the principle antagonist of these films, also has a well-known leitmotif, introduced in *The Empire Strikes Back*:

Musical notation for Darth Vader's theme. It consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The melody is in a minor key (G minor). The notes G, A, Bb, C, D, E, and F are marked above the staff. The E and Bb notes in measure 2 are highlighted in yellow. The accompaniment features a repeated ostinato in the bass line. The chords Gm, Ebm, Gm, Ebm, Gm, Ebm, and Gm are marked above the staff.

Vader's theme is another march, but the minor key, the use of chromatic harmony (the Ebm chord) and the low pitch of the accompanying elements create a much more sinister atmosphere. The repeated ostinato (in the lower strings and snare drum) creates a frightening, menacing effect.

The Force theme

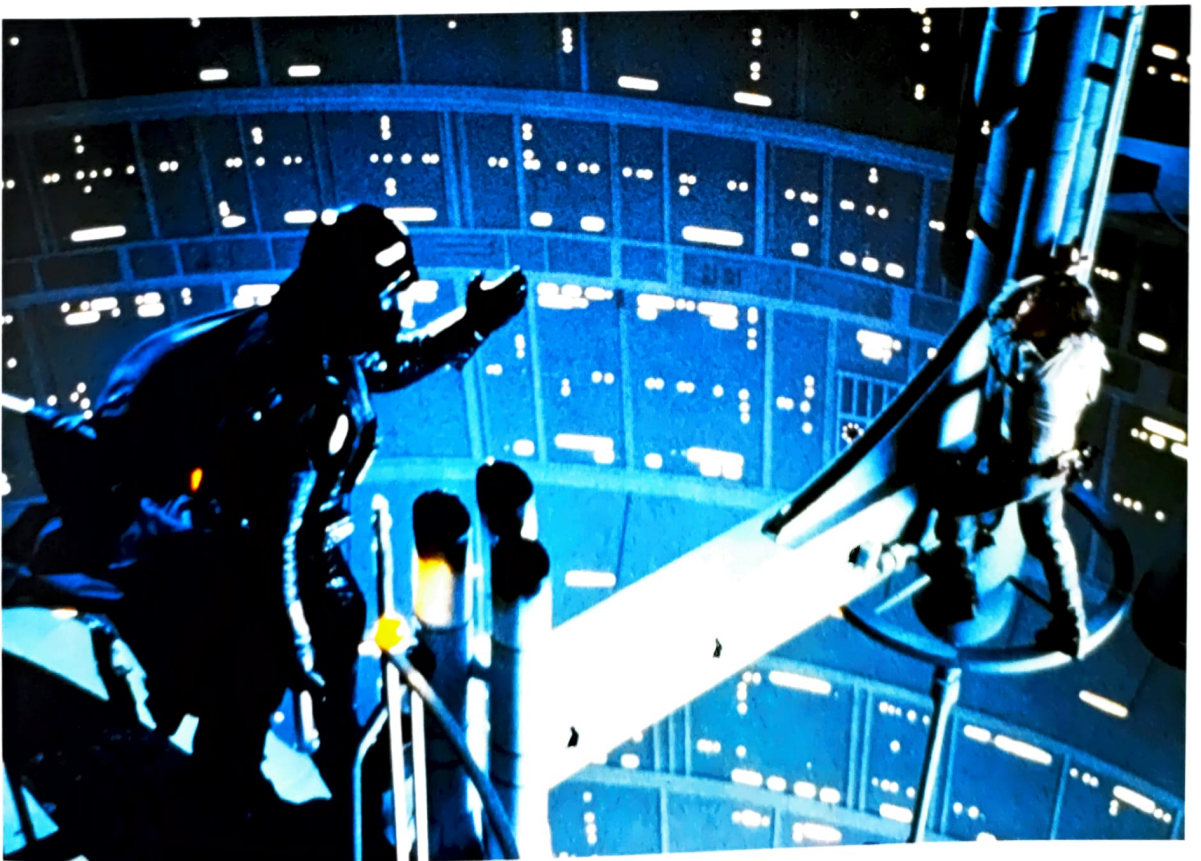
This leitmotif does not represent a character, but an abstract idea. The Force in the *Star Wars* films is a complex 'power' that exists across the universe:

Cm F⁶ G⁷(#5) Cm G⁷sus⁴ G⁷ Cm F G⁷

Cm Cm/B^b A^b Cm/G G⁷sus⁴ G⁷ Cm

Written in a minor key, this theme has a striving, more uncertain quality. The legato melody (played on the horn, then by the strings) rises and falls, reaching its highest point in the sixth bar, before dropping down again.

The harmony is **modal** in places (such as on the F major chord), which creates further uncertainty. The dynamic changes throughout the theme, with the second half being louder (and with a thicker texture) than the first half. (N.B. This cue is available on the official soundtrack album, titled 'Binary Sunset').



Princess Leia's theme

Princess Leia is a member of the Rebel Alliance (the 'good guys') in the films. Her actions kick-start the whole sequence of events that lead to the destruction of the Death Star in Episode IV. A powerful heroine, she is also a thoughtful character, and her leitmotif reflects this:

Leia's theme features a rising **major 6th** (highlighted), suggesting a mysterious quality to her character. The music moves further and further away from D major as the theme progresses, adding a sense of complexity and mystery.

The theme has a much softer dynamic, and the texture is relatively thin, using just horn and strings. It is also used as a love theme throughout the three films.

Let us now look at how the leitmotifs are developed, depending on the scene the characters find themselves in:

Leitmotif	Situation	Musical features
Luke Skywalker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Luke is on his home planet, helping his family with menial tasks ('A New Hope', 17:16). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A playful version of Luke's leitmotif is heard, suggesting youth and innocence. The accompaniment is light, and the theme is heard on a solo horn, as well as flutes and violins. ■ A little later, at 25:16, a solo flute quietly states Luke's theme as his foster parents discuss his future.

- Luke prepares his final assault into the Death Star, attempting to destroy it against all odds ('A New Hope', 1:55:59).
- A constant crotchet pulse gives the music real drive.
- Strings play a fast ostinato.
- The theme is heard on muted brass, adding to the sense of excitement.
- After his ship has been hit, an 'altered' version of the theme is heard, playing the 'wrong notes', mirroring the damage to Luke's ship.

Darth Vader

- Darth Vader and his army are planning an attack ('The Empire Strikes Back', 19:46).
- Spoiler alert: Darth Vader reveals that he is Luke Skywalker's father ('The Empire Strikes Back', 1:51:19).
- This cue is entitled 'The Imperial March', and is accompanied by a march-like rhythm on the strings and percussion:
- Military-style brass play the main melody.
- A solo horn plays the leitmotif, accompanied by single low notes that are more 'felt' than heard.

The Force

- Luke Skywalker, conflicted, looks out across the horizon as he considers his Jedi training ('A New Hope', 25:37).
- The heroes are honoured for their work saving a planet ('A New Hope', 1:58:29).
- A solo horn plays the leitmotif, before shimmering strings and a harp start to accompany.
- The second half of the leitmotif is played by a full string section, full of gripping emotion.
- A full brass and percussion precedes this military style statement of the leitmotif. This march-like passage uses an accented accompaniment to suggest celebration, rather than mystery.

Princess Leia

- The first appearance of Princess Leia, hiding from her captors ('A New Hope', 6:17).
- A pre-recorded message from Princess Leia is displayed ('A New Hope', 35:03).
- A solo flute plays the melody, accompanied by a sustained chord. Some suggest that this instrument suggests femininity and gentleness.
- Again, solo flute plays an extended version of the theme. Soft tremolo strings accompany this, and the horn joins the melody, just for a moment.

Leitmotifs play a crucial part in film music. They can describe characters, and help chart a character's development throughout the course of a film. Leitmotifs can be used to suggest the presence of a character even if they are not on screen.

THE 'PREQUEL' TRILOGY

A more modern set of three *Star Wars* films - released between 1999 and 2005 - tells the story of Anakin Skywalker's journey to become Darth Vader. Originally an innocent child, his delicate leitmotif reflects this.

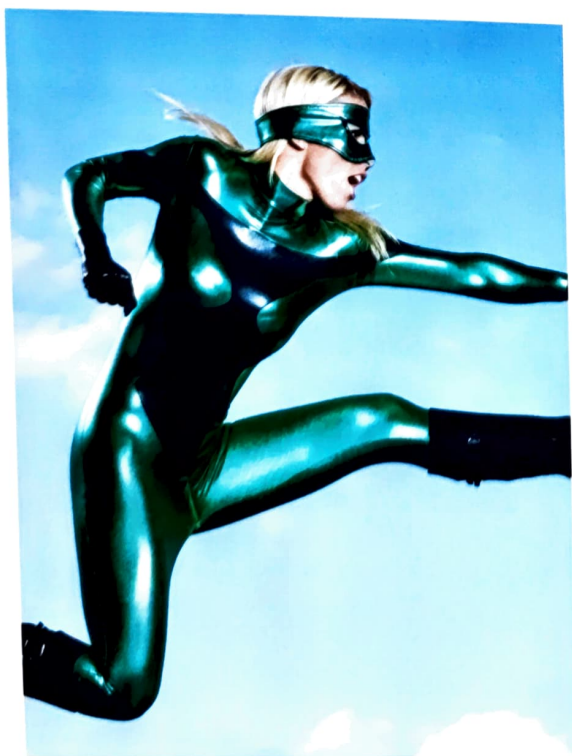
However, when his leitmotif reappears five minutes into the end credits, his future as Darth Vader is reflected in the last few notes of the leitmotif, which uses rhythms and intervals from Darth Vader's theme. Search 'Anakin's theme' on YouTube, or find it on the soundtrack to *Episode I: The Phantom Menace*. The snippets from Darth Vader's theme can be heard from about two minutes in.

Composing leitmotifs

Try composing leitmotifs for one or more of the characters/situations below:

The hero/heroine

1. Construct the leitmotif. This should be a melody that uses even phrases, large ascending intervals, and primary chords.



CHARACTERS

How does a piece of film or game music represent individual characters? Here are some phrases you might adapt and use:

- Brass/percussion suggests the character is strong.
- A flute suggests gentleness or thoughtfulness in the character.
- The theme contains leaps of a 5th, suggesting heroism.
- The use of chromatic notes in the theme suggest the character is evil or mysterious.

2. Write music to suggest the character is winning a fight. Use brass, a rhythmic ostinato and a clear melody and accompaniment texture. (Your melody should be the leitmotif.)
3. Write music to suggest the character is in trouble. Use dissonant or chromatic chords to reflect the tension of the situation. Play around with the theme a little, and try irregular rhythms.

The bad guy

1. Construct a new leitmotif. Use smaller intervals (semitones or minor 3rd intervals will work well), minor chords and chromatic notes.
2. Write music to suggest the character is planning something sinister. Try using dotted rhythms as part of the leitmotif. The rhythms should represent our bad guy's evil mind at work. Use a rhythmic accompaniment, and a clear melody and accompaniment texture.
3. Write music to suggest the character has been defeated. Place the melody at the bass end of the texture, and play a slow version of the leitmotif.

The love theme

A love theme, like the example below, from John Barry's music for the 1980 cult classic *Somewhere In Time*, is another example of leitmotif writing. Here it is used to convey a specific emotion:

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of three staves. The melody is characterized by long, sustained notes and rising intervals, often using triplets. The chord progression is as follows:

- Staff 1: C (C4), Am (A3, C4), F (F4), Dm (D3, F3, A3), C (C4)
- Staff 2: G7 (G3, B3, D4, F4), C (C4), F (F4), Dm (D3, F3, A3), G7 (G3, B3, D4, F4)
- Staff 3: Am (A3, C4), F (F4), E (E4), B7 (B3, D4, F4, G4), G7 (G3, B3, D4, F4)

You can hear it by searching 'Somewhere In Time Original' on YouTube.

Note the long notes and rising melodies, which are musical features of many love themes. Try playing this on a flute (or a flute sound on a keyboard) with **arpeggiated** accompaniment on a guitar or piano.

Synchronising music with action

As well as creating and enhancing mood, and helping to develop characters, film composers often need to create music that closely mirrors the action.

The technique of synchronising action and music is often known as 'mickey-mousing'. The original composers who perfected this technique wrote music for short cartoons, for the Disney and Warner Bros. studios (hence the name, from the cartoon character Mickey Mouse). This practice of choreographing specific movements is now considered quite old-fashioned, and composers tend to mirror the action in more subtle ways.

For an extreme example of music matching every footstep or blink in a cartoon, watch the *Looney Tunes* cartoon 'Chariots of Fur'.

Gladiator, 'The Battle'

Celebrated composer Hans Zimmer wrote the music for the blockbuster *Gladiator*, released in the year 2000.

The opening battle scene (against the Germanic tribes) is one of the most celebrated scenes in the film, and the music cue for this scene (simply called 'The Battle') is equally celebrated.

We're going to watch a section of the film and analyse the music, starting from the point when the first arrow of the battle is fired. (A YouTube video entitled 'Gladiator Maximus Leads His Men' shows this scene in full.)



Time	Action	Music
00:00	The tribesmen fire initial flaming arrows.	A repeated string ostinato creates tension.
00:09	A flaming arrow appears over the forest, in front of the Roman army.	A brass fanfare is heard.
00:18	The Roman horses begin their advance.	A more intense, crotchet ostinato is heard, with a fast string melody 'spiralling' over the top. The music is faster and more 'frantic' as the fighting begins.
00:45	The Romans fire long-distance arrows.	Accented brass stabs accompany this section.
00:58	The Romans begin to march. We see expansive shots of fighting.	The music comprises an exciting ostinato, brass accents and a string melody that moves by step. The music is influenced by a famous piece of music by composer Gustav Holst, called 'Mars: The Bringer of War' from a collection of pieces (a suite) called <i>The Planets</i> .
01:25	Roman horses begin their offensive.	The music is slower, in regular compound time. A melodic, 'noble' tune is heard on brass instruments.
01:57	The tribesmen renew their attack. A complex fighting scene starts.	The 'spiralling' strings and ostinato return.

Avatar

Now watch a similar battle scene from James Cameron's epic *Avatar* (music by James Horner), where the Na'vi and humans are pitted against each other.

The scene occurs 2hrs, 27m and 49s into the film (the chapter on the DVD is called '33 Quaritch Fight'). You may be able to find the scene online by searching 'Avatar Humans Na'vi War Scene' on YouTube.

Create a table like the one on the previous page. Note the time, action and changes in the music. Bear in mind the following things that can cause the music to change:

- The images focus on one particular group (the 'good' guys or the 'bad' guys).
- One group is winning in a battle.
- The battle nears its end.
- Dialogue breaks up the scenes of fighting.
- A prominent character changes the course of the battle.
- A prominent character is in danger.

It's possibly easier to think of film or game music that accompanies battles, chases and other action-filled scenes. However, scenes that are emotionally charged also call for changes in music, if a conversation takes a particular turn, for instance. A table charting the changes in music can be made for almost any film scene containing a music cue.



ADVENT RISING

Listen to two extracts from the score for the video game *Advent Rising* (available on YouTube and on the iTunes store) and answer the following questions:

Extract A: 'Aurelia' from *Advent Rising* (0:00–1:00).

Extract B: 'Canyon Encounter' (search for 'Advent Rising Canyon Encounter') (0:00–1:00):

1. Name the technique used by the strings throughout Extract A. (1)
2. Compare the rhythm of the two extracts. (4)
3. Compare the use of voices in the two extracts. (4)
4. Choose an instrumental family heard in Extract B, but not Extract A, and comment on how these instruments affect the mood of the extract. (2)

See answers on page 176.

Create your own listening questions

It is easy to create your practice questions for film music.

Choose an extract from a film soundtrack (there is an almost unending supply on YouTube) and decide on the overall mood (tense, exciting, sad or triumphant, etc.). Your sample question will then look like this:

Describe how your soundtrack conveys the story and characters on screen.

You can construct an answer based on the grids and techniques outlined throughout this section.

FURTHER LISTENING

Listed below are a few key film and video game composers, and some of their best-known scores. By searching YouTube you can usually find a complete soundtrack, individual music cues or a 'suite' (a specially composed selection of the best bits of a particular film score). Or, you can just watch the film itself!

John Williams:

- *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*
- *Star Wars* (series)
- *Harry Potter* (series)
- *Indiana Jones* (series).

Hans Zimmer:

- *Gladiator*
- *Batman Begins* (with James Newton Howard)
- *The Dark Knight* (with James Newton Howard)
- *Inception*.

James Horner:

- *Titanic*
- *Avatar*.

Michael Giacchino:

- *Medal of Honor* (selected titles from series) (video game)
- *Call of Duty* (selected titles from series) (video game)
- *Jurassic World* (some themes originally written by John Williams)
- *The Incredibles*.