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| **Your article** |
| **Leitmotif** |
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| The term leitmotif (leading/motif) refers to a recurrent, plainly identified musical (melodic, harmonic or rhythmic) idea, theme or phrase which is interlinked with a specific person, condition, notion or location, usually in large-scale dramatic works. Applied in operas, ballets, symphonic poems, film music, and other types of ‘program music,' the leitmotif underlines the spectacle performance, expresses the emotional world of the characters, and establishes the relationship between the narrative parts of the story. Technically, after its first appearance, the leitmotif may resurface either as an unmodified or as a transformed (but always recognizable) musical element through which the audience recalls the initial extra-musical connotation.  Leitmotif is generally associated with the romantic and post-romantic eras of Western music history, especially with Richard Wagner’s operatic masterpieces such as the famous tetralogy of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* [*The Ring of the Nibelung*], also known as *The Ring Cycle*, composed between 1848 and 1874. Some musicologists compare leitmotif with the earlier concept of i*dée fixe* [fixed idea], proceeded from Hector Berlioz’s ‘Symphonie Fantastique’ (“*Fantastic Symphony”*) which was written in 1830. Modern samples of leitmotif-like devices can be tracked in film soundtracks, television scores and computer game music. |
| Further reading:  Brown, Hilda Meldrum. *Leitmotiv and Drama: Wagner, Brecht, and the Limits of ‘Epic’ Theatre*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.  Grey, Thomas S. “Leitmotif, Temporality, and Musical Design in the ‘Ring,’” *The Cambridge Companion to Wagner*. Ed. T. S. Grey. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. xwwwww85-114.  Hacohen, Ruth, and Naphtali Wagner. ‘The Communicative Force of Wagner’s Leitmotifs: Complementary Relationships between their Connotations and Denotations’ *Music Perception* 14.4 (1997): 445-75.  Leavitt, John. ‘Mytheme and Motif: Lévi-Strauss and Wagner’ *Intersections: Canadian Journal of Music* 30.1 (2010): 95-116.  London, Justin. ‘Leitmotifs and Musical Reference in Classical Film Score’ *Music and Cinema.’* Ed. Buhler, James., Flinn, Caryl., and David Neumeyer, Hanover and London: Wesleyan UP, 2000. 85–96.  Reiser, Morion F. ‘Wagner’s Use of the Leitmotif to Communicate Understanding’ *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Music: Second Series*. Eds. Feder, Stuart., Karmel Richard L., and George H. Pollock. Madison: International UP, 1993. 217-28.  Thorau, C. ‘Guides for Wagnerites: Leitmotifs and Wagnerian Listening’ *Richard Wagner and His World*. Ed. Thomas S. Grey. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009. 133–50. |