



ROGER HICKMAN

Reel Music

EXPLORING 100 YEARS OF FILM MUSIC



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EXPLORING 100 YEARS OF FILM MUSIC

SECOND EDITION

Roger Hickman
California State University
Long Beach



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To David and Evan

Thank you for your innocence and the sense of awe and amazement that you bring to the world.

Wishing my grandchildren joyful lives filled with the magic of movies and music.

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PREFACE

Music is all around us. It accompanies many of our daily activities, such as driving, shopping, and exercising, and we use it to enrich a wide range of emotional experiences, from marriages to funerals, religious services to frat parties, political conventions to romantic evenings. But despite its significant role in our lives, music is often heard but not listened to.

The term “listen” suggests the active participation of the verbal mind. Certainly attentive listening adds to the aural experience of music, but discounting the simple act of hearing neglects one of music’s most important attributes—the ability to touch our emotions without engaging our brains. It is this quality that makes music such an integral element of film: music can generate emotional responses while the mind is focused elsewhere, on dialogue, plot, or action. Indeed, music in film has been described as the “invisible art.”

When I ask my students what they think of the music in current movies, many of them just stare back at me blankly. This observation is not intended to be critical of my students, but rather to show how subtly music works within the setting of a movie. So, when I ask students to write about music in film, I suggest that they watch the movie first without paying much attention to the music. After they’ve analyzed what qualities make the film unique, they can then go back and look for ways that the music contributed to those qualities. By refocusing our attention on the music, we can learn more about both the movies we love and the music that drives our everyday lives.

Like any book designed for a music appreciation class, *Reel Music* introduces a number of concepts that can be applied to a wide variety of music. Topics such as themes, thematic transformation, dissonance, timbre, style, and emotions—all part of many musical experiences—may be more readily grasped in the context of a film than with abstract music. Throughout your study of film music, you should ask yourself why the director and composer made certain choices: Were they successful in achieving their goals? What alternatives might they have chosen? In this way, you will expand your critical-thinking capabilities and accumulate tools that you can apply when listening to music of all types.

Since most of the material in this book is organized in a chronological fashion, you will also learn a good deal about film history, including general information on trends and specific information about a number of representative films. In selecting the films for this study, I have avoided defining the qualities of a great film score *a priori* and then limiting the book's scope to reflect my judgment. (It would be easy, for example, for a music historian to focus only on those films that have a musical approach similar to the conception of theatrical music by Richard Wagner.) Rather, I have sought out the most highly regarded films from any given period and examined how they use music. Hence, our coverage includes movies with nontraditional and non-symphonic music.

The foremost goal of this text is to study how music functions in a given film, regardless of its musical style. In the process, you will discover that music establishes psychological moods, guides our emotions, and reveals aspects of an unfolding narrative. By the end of this study, you will have gained a greater understanding of both music and film, and you may never watch or listen to another movie in quite the same way again.

THE SECOND EDITION: WHAT'S NEW?

- Over a decade of movies have appeared since the first edition of *Reel Music* came out. In the final four chapters (films since 2001), discussions focus on rising young composers, important musical trends, and major new film scores. Among the latter are winners of the Oscar for Best Score, such as *Up* (2009), *The Social Network* (2010), and *The Hateful Eight* (2015); Best Picture winners, including *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), *Argo* (2012), and *Birdman* (2014); and box-office hits, highlighted by *Inception* (2010), *The Avengers* (2012), and *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2016).
- The historical overview also extends earlier. The previous edition introduced students to the prehistory of film music exclusively with Richard Wagner. Though it is appropriate to pay homage to this great master of the theater and music drama, the influences of other composers and theatrical dramas should be considered as well. Chapter 4, "Forerunners of Film Music," traces musical conventions to earlier periods of Western music history and describes the influences of and parallels to theatrical genres such as ballet and melodramas.
- The second edition covers significantly more international films. The primary focus is still on Hollywood—the movies that students most

frequently encounter—but these films are now placed within a world context. Among the international films added to *Reel Music* are *La Strada* (1956), *Elevator to the Gallows* (1958), *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968), *Aguirre, The Wrath of God* (1972), *Babette's Feast* (1987), *Three Colors: Blue* (1993), *Spirited Away* (2001), and *The Artist* (2011).

- The number of Viewer Guides has more than doubled, from 24 to 68, expanding the coverage of iconic scenes and allowing for greater flexibility in choosing films to study.
- Each chapter now includes suggestions for discussion topics, activities, and readings. The activities can be completed in class or assigned as outside work. Among the discussion topics are numerous questions that make good study guides and essay prompts for exams.

TEXT OVERVIEW

Reel Music is designed for non-music and non-film majors at the university level. Majors in music and film can also benefit from instruction based on this text, but a strong background in either of the two disciplines is not required. The body of the text can be divided into two uneven sections: the introduction (Part 1) and the historical overview (Parts 2–7). Each part has four chapters.

Entitled “Exploring Film and Music,” Part 1 can be discussed in class or assigned as homework. It is suggested that some class time be spent assisting non-music majors with the concepts of music and how music is used in films. Throughout the text, music examples are included for reference. (For ease of following while listening, I have simplified some of these. The principal theme for *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, for example, is shown with eighth notes rather than the more visually complicated—and accurate—sixteenth notes.) Non-majors are encouraged to follow the notation so they can use this tool in their studies.

The four introductory chapters of Part 1 address the following topics:

Chapter 1 (“Drama and Film”) presents basic concepts and terminology of drama and film.

Chapter 2 (“Elements of Music”) focuses on musical terminology for non-music majors and includes a section on reading music notation.

Chapter 3 (“Listening to Film Music”) examines how music functions in a film.

Chapter 4 (“Forerunners of Film Music”) provides an overview of descriptive music in Western music history, with particular focus on opera, ballet, and melodrama.

In each of the historical units that follow in Parts 2–7, the text divides film music into periods of varying lengths. The divisions between these sections are sometimes delineated by significant technological and historical events, and sometimes by stylistic shifts. Individual chapters focus on trends, genres, composers, or subperiods. The last chapter of each part discusses international films. Numerous Composer Profiles provide basic lists of films, and Close-Up boxes discuss nonmusical issues that may be of interest to burgeoning film connoisseurs.

FOR THE INSTRUCTOR

Film is a temporal art and, as such, occupies time during a lecture. Just as it is difficult to imagine a poetry class in which no poems are read or a music class in which no music is heard, so too is it difficult to imagine this class with no time dedicated to viewing part of a film. How much time to devote to watching films is a decision for each instructor. The Viewer Guides contain timings that will aid the instructor in class or the student at home. Since VHS tapes, DVDs, and online streaming sources (such as Netflix) have minor discrepancies, allow for some variation from the timings given in the book.

This text was created for a semester-long course comprising forty-five hours of lecture time. One could devote a single hour lecture to each chapter, which would allow for exam times and extra lecture time on chapters of the instructor's choice. For those teaching ninety-minute classes, as I do, some modifications are necessary. After completing the discussions of the Part 1 material, a quiz might be appropriate. Thereafter, you can divide the historical survey into two parts (with one midterm and a final) after Part 4, or into three (two midterms and a final) with breaks after Parts 3 and 5.

Variations can be made on this simple outline to devote time to an instructor's area of interest. Since Part 1 is written as a reference tool for students, it may not require as much lecture time. Similarly, the silent era (Part 2) has fewer films with original music and could be taught in less than six hours. The instructor may choose to apply these additional lecture hours to later units, where examples are more abundant. The discussions of music for international films are significantly more substantial, but they are isolated in single chapters. If one so chooses, these chapters can be omitted from a survey.

Film music can provide numerous opportunities for evaluating students' critical thinking, in both class discussions and written papers. Discussions can be lively—almost everyone has opinions about film. Ask your students to talk

about the mood that music creates and how that mood is achieved. Encourage students to use precise terminology in defending their views.

You can challenge students' listening and critical-thinking skills by asking specific questions: Why does the film *Rebel Without a Cause* use dissonant sounds? Why did John Williams choose to feature a solo violin in *Schindler's List*? I have enjoyed many classroom debates over the issue of music in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Show the opening ("The Dawn of Man") as is, without music, and then repeat the scene along with a recording of Alex North's original score. Have them discuss how the music changes the impact and argue about which approach is more successful. With more-recent films, you could ask about the effect of minimalism in films such as *Inception*, the divergent approaches to scoring for the series of *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings* movies, and the differences between the three action scenes featured in the book—*The Adventures of Robin Hood*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and *Skyfall*.

Each instructor will have his or her own ideas about written projects. Try to avoid asking students to write biographies or plot descriptions. The Viewer Guides in this text are not meant to be models for student papers. Encourage them to devise a thesis that they can support in a formal writing assignment. In preparation for their analyses, you might assign the *Build Your Own Viewer Guide* exercise at the end of Chapter 6.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing a second edition is similar to creating a movie sequel: one attempts to retain what was successful, expand on significant threads, and incorporate new ideas that reflect the current time. Foremost I would like to thank the excellent staff at W. W. Norton & Company. Music Editor Maribeth Payne played a central role in the publication of the first edition, and Michael Fauver has guided the project through its revision. My sincere appreciation is also extended to Nelson Colon (photo researcher), Benjamin Reynolds (production manager), Anna Reich and Jillian Burr (designers), Marian Johnson (managing editor), Jodi Beder and Harry Haskell (copyeditors) and Debra Nichols (proofreader).

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1

EXPLORING FILM AND MUSIC



Drama and Film

1



Moving pictures allow for the combination of visual arts with both drama and music, as suggested in this scene from *Singin' in the Rain* (1952).

In the late nineteenth century, technology paved the way for a new type of artwork—moving pictures. Once pictures moved, they occupied time; once they occupied time, the visual arts crossed into the realm of the temporal arts, thereby enabling creative artists to combine visual images with both drama

and music. The complex interconnection of the diverse arts found in movies is a topic that is too broad for this text. Yet the study of film music necessitates an understanding of how music functions within a dramatic framework. Hence, we will consider some of the basic elements of drama and film before proceeding to those of music in Chapter 2.

ELEMENTS OF DRAMA

Most people go to the movies to be entertained. Some prefer action and fantasy, some enjoy comedies and human dramas, and, of course, many simply choose a film depending on their current mood, the actors, and the quality of the production. All of these kinds of movies share one common element—they tell a story. When a movie relates a story, it is considered to be a **narrative film**. There are other types of films, such as documentaries and art movies, but these are beyond the scope of our text. This limitation does not imply that there is less art in these other types. Indeed, some of the most critically acclaimed films are not narratives, and many of these have strong musical support.

Narrative films are the principal product of the modern movie industry. Many of their stories are original, stemming from the imagination of a creative writer. But quite frequently, legends (*Braveheart*, 1995), history (*Bridge of Spies*, 2015), or current events (*Argo*, 2012) serve as inspiration for the storyteller. A substantial number of narrative films are adaptations of existing stories, including novels (*The Great Gatsby*, 2013), short stories (*2001: A Space Odyssey*, 1968), plays (*A Streetcar Named Desire*, 1951), poems (*The Charge of the Light Brigade*, 1936), comic books (*Guardians of the Galaxy*, 2014), and even earlier films (*The Magnificent Seven*, 1960).

Western drama can be described in terms of its basic elements. Since the time of Aristotle's *Poetics* (c. 350 BCE), numerous and varied interpretations of these fundamental qualities have appeared. For our limited purposes, we will discuss five aspects that are frequently associated with drama: plot, character, setting, theme, and mood.

Plot

Stories can be told in a variety of ways. Some simply start at the beginning and continue until the story is over. Others incorporate jumps in time or location that reveal important information about the story. The structure of a story is called the **plot**. The plot provides the basic framework for the drama and for the temporal unfolding of the artwork.

Two basic plot structures are commonly encountered in Western fiction—causal and episodic (TABLE I.1). The **causal plot** contains four principal sections:

- *Exposition*: the background information necessary for the story to unfold
- *Complications*: a series of events stemming from a conflict; each complication leads to the next, generally building in dramatic intensity
- *Climax*: the moment of greatest tension, when the complications come to a head
- *Resolution (or denouement)*: the end of the story, in which the complications are resolved, and the loose ends are tied together

Two of Hollywood's most popular films provide examples of the causal plot: *Star Wars* (1977) and *The Godfather* (1974). In George Lucas's initial venture into the *Star Wars* series, little time is used for the exposition. One could argue that it is given during the scrolled prologue. Once the film begins, the action takes off. The first complication is the attack on the rebel ship by the Imperial fleet. This leads to an extended series of other complications that climax with the destruction of the Death Star. For the resolution, the heroes of the action are honored in a grand ceremony. By contrast, *The Godfather* has an extended exposition that includes the interaction with a Hollywood film director, which is essentially unrelated to the central story. Once the Godfather refuses to help the other mobs to deal drugs, complications build on each other directly until Michael assumes the role as the new Godfather at the climax.

Although the **episodic plot** is similar to the causal plot in a number of respects, the difference between the two approaches is significant. Rather than moving through a series of complications, an episodic plot presents a succession of events that do not build directly from one to the next. These episodes often

TABLE I.1 Traditional plot structures

CAUSAL PLOT	EPISTODIC PLOT
Exposition	Exposition
Complications	Episodes
Climax	Climax
Resolution	Resolution



FIGURE I.1 A scrolled prologue provides the essential background material of an exposition in *Star Wars*.



FIGURE I.2 The Hollywood mansion of a movie director serves as the setting for a portion of the exposition in *The Godfather*.



FIGURE I.3 One episode in *Apocalypse Now* shows a helicopter attack accompanied by the music of Wagner.

function as brief subplots, and their ordering is seemingly random. An example of an episodic plot is *Apocalypse Now* (1979), adapted from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. The beginning and end of this film are clearly connected, but Captain Willard's river journey during the middle of the film contains numerous unrelated episodes. Changing the order of these events would not impact the plot as a whole, which is a clear indication of an episodic story. Narratives involving travel—*Don Quixote*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Huckleberry Finn*—frequently have an episodic structure.

Both of these basic formulas are subject to numerous variations and nuances. Some stories have multiple plots, each with its own structure. **Flashbacks** interrupt the chronological flow of the story, often bringing new insights to the current situation by showing events from the past. A story that maintains a strict chronological timeline is said to have a **linear plot**, while a plot that incorporates either logical or illogical jumps in time is called a **nonlinear plot**. **Epic** stories tend to have a long string of complications that lead to a number of climaxes while conveying a larger story of a person's life or a major event. Another common variation of the standard structure is the omission of the resolution. A chilling effect can be created by abruptly ending at the climax, leaving the audience in shocked disbelief, as in the final moments of *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967).



FIGURE I.4 *Bonnie and Clyde* ends abruptly after the violent deaths of the two protagonists.

Character

The term “character” is applied in a number of ways in drama. In its most general sense, a character is simply someone in a story. The principal character is called the **protagonist**, and it is primarily through his or her eyes and experiences that we follow a story. Many plots involve a principal adversary, called the **antagonist**, who generates a conflict that sets a series of complications in motion. The interplay between these two key figures often creates the basic tension of the story, as in the classic stories of Sherlock Holmes and his archnemesis Professor Moriarty.



FIGURE I.5 *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* (2011). Holmes has been a protagonist in literature and movies for over 100 years.



FIGURE I.6 *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows*. Professor Moriarty, an antagonist, was Holmes's brilliant rival.

For a drama to maintain interest, the characters in a story need to appeal to an audience through their psychological makeup, the conflicts they endure, and the changes they undergo. We admire some characters for being ideal heroes like James Bond, but we are also attracted to other characters that are more like ourselves or people we know. Among the techniques that contribute to characterization in film are the character's actions, physical appearance, and language; the camera technique; and, of course, the music.

Setting

The term **setting**, which refers to both the location and the time frame in which a story takes place, can have an important influence on a narrative. The settings in small towns and suburbia in films such as the *Twilight* series (2008–2012), *Fargo* (1994), and *American Beauty* (1999) contribute to the mood and impact of these diverse stories. In movies such as *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), *Birdman* (2014), and *Do the Right Thing* (1989), the sights and sounds of city life are essential to the unfolding dramas. By way of contrast, the vastness of outer space and uninhabited planets provide stark contrasts for the heroic efforts to survive in *Interstellar* (2014).

Settings can have a strong psychological effect. The differences between Superman's bright Metropolis and Batman's dark Gotham City contribute greatly to the contrasting moods of these movies. Some stories unfold in restrictive settings that create a sense of being trapped, such as the makeshift boat (with a tiger) in *Life of Pi* (2012) and the prison in *Shawshank Redemption* (1994). The terror in *Jurassic World* (2015) is similarly intensified by its setting: an isolated island with nowhere to run or hide.



FIGURE I.7 The natural beauty of Pandora serves as a background to the cruelty of man in *Avatar*.

In some instances, the setting runs counter to the mood or action of the story. War movies, such as *Platoon* (1986), often give fleeting glimpses of the beauty of nature. Similarly, *The Mission* (1986), *Braveheart* (1995), and *Avatar* (2009) juxtapose stunning landscape panoramas with scenes of horrific violence. In these films, this contrast serves as a reminder of the beauty of the natural world, which stands in direct opposition to the cruelty of man.

The time period for a particular story can also be significant. A movie set in a defined historical era is often referred to as a **period**

film, a term that suggests attention to details of costumes, scenery, and manners. Films such as *Amadeus* (1984) and *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) provide us with fascinating glimpses of the past. Plots are sometimes set in historical eras that underwent rapid change, thereby creating a sense of uncertainty and even chaos. Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* (1957) is set during the years of disillusionment following the Crusades, and Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* (1954) takes place during the decline of Japan's feudal system. Similarly, Kirk Douglas portrays one of the West's last cowboys struggling to adjust to modern America in *Lonely Are the Brave* (1962). In all of these stories, the vision of changing traditions has a clear parallel with contemporary American life.

Fantasy films enjoy a wide variety of settings. Some, such as *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), *Avatar* (2009), and *Mad Max Fury Road* (2015), show us the future. By contrast, two of Hollywood's most popular film trilogies are set in the mysterious past. *The Lord of the Rings* takes us to the mythical world of Middle-earth, at a time before the histories of man were recorded. Similarly, *Star Wars*, despite its futuristic images, is set "a long time ago." This simple statement fires the imagination and encourages us to speculate about how these stories connect to our own history.

Theme

A **theme** is the central idea underlying a given story. If the plot gives us the basic actions of a story, then the theme provides us with its intellectual meaning. In *Citizen Kane*, for example, the essential facts of the story are presented in the opening newsreel. But it is the fascinating retelling of the story from five different perspectives that adds details and slowly reveals the principal theme, which is tied to the word "Rosebud."

In this strict literary use of the term, not all films have themes. Some, such as slapstick comedies or light musicals, simply provide entertainment. By contrast, other films may have themes that are too obvious and heavy-handed, and these are often dismissed as propaganda. The racist theme found in *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) mars this otherwise brilliant work of art.

The most highly regarded films tend to deal with serious issues, such as religion, patriotism, and morality. Underneath the hilarious physical comedy of *City Lights* (1931) are the poignant themes of selflessness and the beauty of love. *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962) teaches us about prejudice with a dual story of racism and fear of someone who is different. Among more recent movies, *WALL-E* (2008), *Avatar*, and *Interstellar* (2014) all have strong messages about the future of our planet without serious environmental controls, although their surface content is radically different. Films such as these impart meaningful messages that can have a profound impact on an audience.

Mood

A movie may be funny, sad, whimsical, profound, optimistic, or dark, or possess any of countless other emotional qualities. This quality is called **mood** or **tone**. The mood of the film can run counter to its story and theme. For example, *Django Unchained* (2012) shows excessive violence and deals with serious issues of revenge and slavery. Yet, the overall mood, often supported with Tarantino's choices of music, is generally lighthearted, and the contrast creates what is called black humor.

Directors have a number of tools they can employ to create specific moods. Among the most powerful are the visual elements and music. The overall mood is often suggested at the onset. When a film begins with a title and credits, music and visual elements can anticipate the general tone for the ensuing narrative. The music accompanying the opening credits of *Gone with the Wind* (1939), *Psycho* (1960), and *The Graduate* (1967) establishes appropriate moods for those films. In *Citizen Kane* (1941), the absence of music during the opening credits helps to create a sense of seriousness, which underlies the entire drama.

ELEMENTS OF FILM

The creation of a film occurs in three stages—preproduction, production, and post-production. The preproduction phase, largely controlled by the producer, involves the planning and preparation of the film, and may take several years. Once production begins, the film is in the hands of the director, who oversees the activities of



FIGURE I.8 The formality of the *mise-en-scène* in *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014) contributes to the humorous mood.

the production crew and actors. Of the many varied artistic elements of this phase, let us consider some aspects of cinematography and the related topic of point of view. From there, we will turn our attention to the critical step of editing, which takes place during postproduction.

Cinematography

Photographers take still pictures, and their art is called photography. Cinematographers take moving pictures, and their art is called **cinematography**. Film shares a number of characteristics with both photography and painting. All three present a framed image. In film, the visual element is called the ***mise-en-scène***, a term that is borrowed from theater. This term encompasses aspects such

as lighting, costumes, and décor, the relationship of these elements to each other, and how they are photographed. For the casual moviegoer, visual elements may be secondary to the story, and indeed, they are often intended to be unobtrusive. But visual elements have an enormous psychological impact on the viewer and can play a critical role in the presentation of the plot, the development of the characters, and the perception of the theme.

Like the photographers, cinematographers need to consider the shot's composition, the camera's proximity to the subject, and the camera angle, lighting, and lenses. Unlike their counterparts, cinematographers also need to deal with movement, both of the subject and of the camera. The following are some of the more common terms for movements of the camera.

- *Zoom*: using the lens, the camera brings us closer or pulls us back from an image
- *Pan shot*: the horizontal movement of the camera around a fixed axis
- *Tilt shot*: the vertical movement of a camera around a fixed axis
- *Tracking shot*: a camera on a dolly or truck moves horizontally with the action
- *Crane shot*: a camera on a crane allows for vertical and some horizontal movement
- *Dutch angle*: the camera is tilted so that the image is seen at an angle
- *Handheld shot*: a camera is held on the shoulder for freedom of movement and, sometimes, for the sake of realism, with intentional joggling of the image

Point of View

The term “point of view” can be used in multiple ways. In drama, the unfolding of a plot is often seen from the perspective of a particular character. In *Gone with the Wind*, the Civil War and Reconstruction are seen from the point of view of the female protagonist, Scarlett O’Hara. The film opens and closes with her, and her transformation and her love for the land are the central issues of the film.

In cinematography, **point of view** (abbreviated as POV) refers to the perspective of the camera eye. Usually, a narrative film is shot from what is termed the **omniscient POV**. Often set at a distance from the action, the camera moves at the will of the director. Through this relatively objective point of view, we are allowed to see the action as an observer, and hence often know more about a situation—the identity of the antagonist, what is around the corner—than do the principal characters.

At times, the cinematographer may let us see through the eyes of one of the characters: this is called a **subjective POV**. In *Jaws* (1975), we see dangling legs from the underwater perspective of the shark. In *Birdman*, the audience frequently sees through the eyes of the protagonist, whose imagination includes a street drummer backstage in a Broadway theater. In most instances, subjective POV is used only briefly, allowing the audience to know what a character observes, such as a written note or a critical detail.

Editing

During **postproduction**, the film is given its final shape through the editing process and the addition of sound effects and music. In **editing**, the shots created during production are joined together. A **shot** is the length of film from when the camera begins rolling until it stops, and the precise moment when one shot ends and another begins is called a **cut**. Editing decisions, such as which shots to use, the length of shots, and the ordering of the shots, contribute greatly to the impact of the film.

From our perspective as viewers, many of the cuts will seem natural, allowing us to see a continuous scene from a variety of perspectives. In showing a conversation, for example, a director and editor can cut deftly among the people who are talking; the reactions of the listeners; what one of the characters might be looking at; something that is unknown to



FIGURE I.9 In *Birdman*, Riggan imagines a street drummer backstage.

the people talking, such as impending danger; or a general view of the setting of the conversation. In fact a continuous shot without cuts might strike an audience as monotonous. To experience a film with a minimum of cuts, watch *Birdman*: much of the movie appears to be one long, uninterrupted shot, which adds to the realism of a story that largely takes place in a Broadway theater.

Cuts also separate changes of scene that lead the viewer to other locations and times. In *The Birth of a Nation*, D. W. Griffith presents a powerful Civil War scene in which two best friends, one from the South and one from the North, die in each other's arms. Griffith brilliantly cuts across both time and location to show the two families hearing the news of the deaths. In an instant, Griffith has given us a powerful lesson about the personal costs of war.

With the aid of cutting, a film can show several events occurring simultaneously. The alternation of shots from two or more sequences is called **crosscutting**. One of film's classic clichés is the tension-building crosscutting between someone in danger and someone racing to the rescue. Crosscutting can also allow for the development of multiple plot strands. Much of the plot of *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) involves crosscutting between scenes of Luke Skywalker training with Yoda, Han Solo and Princess Leia avoiding the Imperial forces, and Darth Vader plotting against the heroes. All three strands eventually come together in an extended climax. A creative use of crosscutting occurs at the climax of *Inception* (2010), where developments in three dream levels are intermixed.

Because of the flexibility cutting provides, film can incorporate flashbacks and embrace nonlinear plots much more readily than theatrical drama can.

Mike Nichols effectively uses a jumble of stream-of-consciousness flashbacks in the film *Catch-22* (1970) to show the irrationality of war. Recent filmmakers have excelled in a variety of unusual storytelling techniques. One of the most fascinating is used in Christopher Nolan's *Memento* (2000), a story that is essentially told backward.

Another editing technique is called **montage**. The exact definition of this term varies, but for our purposes montage refers to a section of film comprising a number of brief shots edited together in order to show a series of events in a condensed manner. The juxtaposition of these multiple images emphasizes their relationship, both similarities and differences. Montage is an effective device for showing travel, the passing of time, and the frenetic chaos of battle. Frequently, a montage is unified through the use of music.



FIGURE I.10 When the van falls off a bridge, action is affected in two other dream levels in *Inception*.

TRAILER

Although some composers begin to work on musical ideas while a film is still in production, the bulk of the scoring must wait until after the final editing is completed, when time is usually limited. The craft of film composing is demanding, and the output of some film composers working under pressure is remarkable. A detailed examination of how music functions within a film follows in Chapter 3, but first we must explore a few musical concepts that will help you throughout the remainder of the text.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

antagonist	linear plot	point of view (POV)
causal plot	<i>mise-en-scène</i>	postproduction
cinematography	montage	protagonist
crosscut	mood	setting
cut	narrative film	shot
editing	nonlinear plot	subjective point of view
epic	omniscient point of view	theme
episodic plot	period film	tone
flashback	plot	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Discuss Wagner's concept of the total artwork. Compare his works with more recent artistic collaborations, such as productions of the Ballets Russes in the early twentieth century, Martha Graham's *Appalachian Spring*, and the collaborations of Merce Cunningham, John Cage, and Robert Rauschenberg. Excerpts from some of these and from the Joffrey Ballet's *Rite of Spring* (1987) are available on YouTube. Note the differences between collaborative efforts and the dominance of a single artist.
2. How many non-acting Academy Award categories can you think of? What is the "art" of each one?
3. Since film is a visual art, look for images of various paintings that show how images and backgrounds impact our emotions and intellect. For paintings with a narrative, see Masaccio's *The Tribute Money* and Hogarth's *A Rake's Progress*.
4. Consider and analyze plots that you know well. These could range from the epics of Homer to current television dramas. In television dramas, the structure of an

exposition, complications, climax, and resolution are often easily observed. Why are the individual shows in a television series called “episodes”?

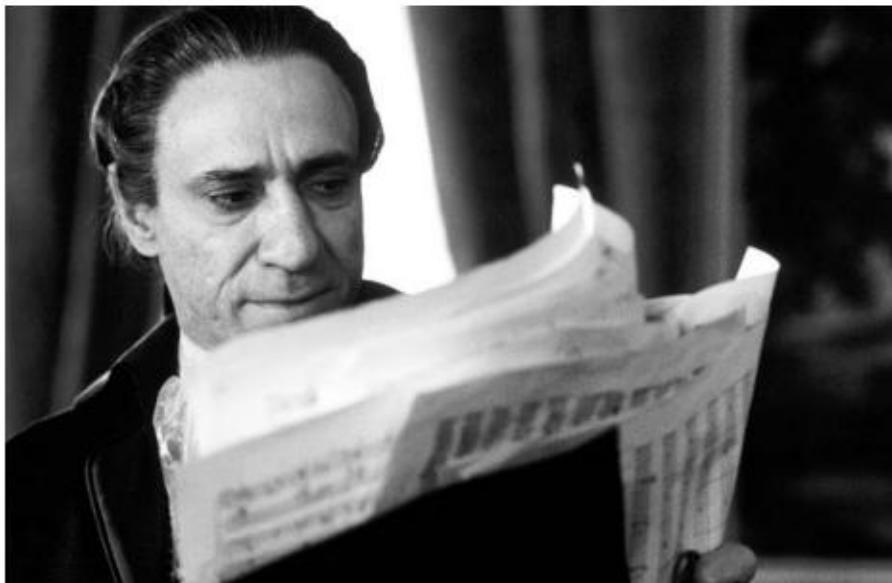
5. Describe narratives that you have seen with nonlinear plots. Why are these more common in film than in theater productions?
6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of live theater and film? How does music fit into each?

FOR FURTHER READING

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- Giannetti, Louis. *Understanding Movies*, 13th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2013.
- Patterson, Jim, and Tim Donahue. *The Enjoyment of Theatre*, 9th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2013.

Elements of Music

2



Salieri looks at Mozart's manuscripts and hears the music in his head in *Amadeus* (1984).

One does not need to know how to read music, play a musical instrument, or analyze a musical score in order to listen to and talk about film music. But since this book contains examples of musical notation and discussions of music that use technical terms, an introduction to music notation and explanations of some important musical concepts and terms are in order.



The expression “to read music” has two principal meanings: the knowledge of note names and rhythmic values, and the ability to play notes on a musical instrument while looking at such notation. The difference between the two is similar to the distinction between reading words on a page and typing. There are people who know how to read without knowing how to type, and it is possible to type without knowing how to read—for example, when we need to type a foreign word or phrase. The same is true with musicians. Some can read note names and rhythms but cannot play them on a musical instrument, while others can play an instrument but cannot read notation. With the aid of computers and keyboards, there are growing numbers of musicians who cannot “read” music but are still successful as performers and composers.

It is not the intention of this chapter to introduce all of the concepts of listening to music in general. Rather, the focus here will be on those aspects that will be most beneficial for listening to film music.

MUSIC NOTATION

For the purposes of this text, you will not be required to read music by either of our definitions. But being able to follow a brief line of notated music is helpful as you listen and is much simpler than it might seem at first. In general, musical sound has three properties: pitch, duration, and color. The traditional music notation developed in Western civilization denotes the first two of these properties. Think of music notation as a graph; pitch is indicated on the vertical axis and duration on the horizontal.

Pitch is the term for how high or low a musical note is. The musical **staff** has five horizontal lines. The higher a note appears on the staff, the higher the pitch. In **EXAMPLE 2.1**, you see that the melodic line at first goes lower and then turns upward. Listening to this melody, you should be able to hear the notes descending and ascending. Also important to pitch is the first symbol on the staff—the **clef sign**. This symbol designates pitches on the staff and tells us whether the basic range is high or low; Example 2.1 contains a treble clef, which indicates a high range, and **EXAMPLE 2.2** is set with a bass clef, which indicates a lower range.

Example 2.1



Example 2.2



In addition to seeing the general direction of a melody, you can also tell if two adjacent notes are the same pitch (Example 2.2, notes 1 and 2), close together (most of Example 2.2), or have a wide interval between them (most of Example 2.1). These two melodies are American patriotic tunes. One is “The Star-Spangled Banner,” and the other is “America the Beautiful.” Can you tell which is which just by looking at the notation?

When following musical notation, you do not have to know the exact duration of individual notes. There are two ways of tracking the music on a staff while listening. The first is simply to follow note by note. For every note that you hear, there is one note indicated on the staff. Be sure to skip the symbols for rests, and be aware that the curved line connecting identical pitches, such as the last two notes of Example 2.2, is called a **tie** and indicates that these two pitches will be heard as one note.

The other helpful technique for following written notation is to count beats. A single vertical line appears at regular intervals on the musical staff; it defines a basic temporal unit called a **measure** (or bar). The second symbol shown on the music staves in Examples 2.1 and 2.2 is a **time signature**, which tell us how many beats there are in a measure (the top number) and what type of note receives a beat (the bottom number). In Example 2.1, the time signature $\frac{3}{4}$ tells us that there are three beats in a measure and that a quarter note $\text{\textbf{C}}$ is equal to one beat. The symbol **C** in Example 2.2 represents “common time,” which has four beats in a measure and a quarter note for a beat. Knowing how many beats there are in a measure and counting along with the music are useful tools in keeping your place, especially when the music moves quickly.

ELEMENTS OF PITCH AND DURATION

Music is commonly described as having five basic elements. Three of these elements deal with the organization of pitch—melody, texture, and harmony. The remaining two elements—rhythm and timbre—deal with the properties of duration and color.

MELODY

A **melody** is a succession of pitches that is heard as a unit. The term sometimes suggests that the unit is easily recognized and somewhat memorable, in which case one can also use the word **tune**. The shape or contour of a melody contributes greatly to its nature and impact on the listener. In the melodies shown in Examples 2.1 (“The Star-Spangled Banner”) and 2.2 (“America the Beautiful”), the divergent directions of the melodic contour are easily seen. The first also has a wider **range** (the distance between the highest and lowest note of a melody), and it moves by wider **intervals** (the distance between one pitch and the next) than does the second melody. When a melody contains a significant number of large intervals, as in Example 2.1, it is called **disjunct**, while a melody that moves primarily in small intervals, as in Example 2.2, is called **conjunction**. Based on the intervals, see if you can identify the two well-known movie themes shown in EXAMPLES 2.3 and 2.4. One of these is the opening theme to *Star Wars*, and the other is the Hobbit theme from *The Lord of the Rings*. Try to hear them in your head as you look at the notation.

Example 2.3



Example 2.4



Because of the limits of the human voice, vocal melodies tend to be limited in range and are frequently conjunct. By necessity, a vocal melody also comes to periodic momentary rests that allow the singer to breathe. These rests define melodic units called **phrases**; the ends of phrases are called **cadences**. In a number of respects, musical phrases are similar to phrases and clauses in writing. Some are independent, some are incomplete, and some are questioning. Musical cadences are the equivalent of punctuation marks. The endings that seem to be incomplete, similar to commas or question marks, are called **open cadences**. Those that are clear and complete, like periods and exclamation points, are **closed cadences**.

Melodies composed for instruments can have a greater range and variety of contours. Instruments are capable of the large ranges and wide leaps necessary for disjointed melodies, as in the *Star Wars* theme (Example 2.4). Some instruments can also play an endless string of notes without breathing, creating melodies that lack clear phrase structures. Instruments are versatile enough to play melodies in a vocal style as well, with limited ranges, conjunct motion, and regularly recurring phrases, as with the Hobbit theme (Example 2.3); such melodies are often described as **tuneful** or **lyrical**.

Two other terms frequently encountered in discussions of melody are **motive** and **theme**. A **motive** is a small melodic idea that can serve as part of a larger melody or stand on its own. In the title theme for *Gone with the Wind* (EXAMPLE 2.5), the first phrase contains four two-measure motives. The motives have a similar shape; each begins with a wide leap upwards (disjunct motion) followed by a descent. The use of motives has two purposes. First, it helps make the tune more memorable, and second, the motive can be isolated and developed on its own. Listen to a recording of this theme. After the initial statement of the melody, there is a contrasting section in which you can hear that the motive continues to play a prominent role, building tension as we wait for the expected return of the main theme.

Example 2.5



Motives can also function as independent melodic ideas. John Williams needs only two low notes to create a memorable and frightening motive in *Jaws*. Similarly, we will hear how Bernard Herrmann constructs a powerful musical score in *Citizen Kane* based largely on two five-note motives representing power and youthful innocence. While motives may lack the broad appeal of full-length melodies, they are useful building blocks for larger musical structures.

A musical **theme** is a melody that recurs within a given work, usually with special significance to the drama. Some themes, such as Elmer Bernstein's energetic theme for *The Magnificent Seven* (1960), have no specific meaning and represent the general spirit of a movie. Other themes are more specific and refer to various aspects of a story. The theme in Example 2.5 represents Tara, the plantation that belongs to Scarlett O'Hara. John Williams's motive from *Jaws* is associated with the shark. These themes are known as *leitmotifs*, a concept that will be explored more fully in the next chapter.

Texture

When listening to melodies in film music, we usually hear a musical accompaniment in the background, subordinate to the principal tune. But there are also moments when we can hear a melody without any other musical sounds, and passages in which two or more equal melodies are played. The relationship of a melodic line to other musical material in a given passage is called **texture**. Film music usually presents a single dominant melody with accompaniment; this texture is considered to be **homophonic**. Examples of such a texture include the music for the opening credits of *Gone with the Wind* and *Star Wars*.

The presentation of a single melodic line without any other musical material is called a **monophonic** texture. This texture is not common in film music. It is heard mostly as a brief contrast, often used for dramatic effect. A single woodwind instrument slowly playing the principal theme from *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* suggests childlike simplicity. In *The Empire Strikes Back*, a sense of fear and power is created when the Darth Vader theme is suddenly intoned in unison by the full symphony orchestra. A monophonic texture can also be used to suggest the distant past—for example, the singing of **Gregorian chant** to suggest the Middle Ages—or non-Western areas of the world, where monophonic textures are more common.

The presence of two or more equal melodies is called a **contrapuntal** texture or simply **counterpoint**. When the melodies are similar to each other, as in a round such as “Row, Row, Row Your Boat,” the texture is called imitative counterpoint, often abbreviated as **imitation**. Most often imitative counterpoint is encountered when two or more musical instruments alternate playing a brief musical motive. Though contrapuntal settings of longer themes are unusual in film music, they can be dramatically effective, as in the scene from *Jaws* when the boat follows the shark: the imitative counterpoint suggests a chase. Such passages recall the structure of a musical form called a **fugue**, which is characterized by extended passages of imitative counterpoint.

Harmony

Harmony is the element of music that is created when two or more pitches sound at the same time. Harmony is an essential aspect of Western music (after 1400 CE), but it is unusual in music from non-Western cultures. An important harmonic term is **chord**, which denotes the sound of three or more pitches at any given moment in a musical work. When a chord has three pitches, it is called a **triad**. Some chords sound beautiful and restful to the ear, while others are harsh

and disturbing. The latter sound, called **dissonance**, is created when the pitches of a chord clash with each other. The resultant sound is especially effective for dramatic moments.

EXAMPLE 2.6 shows the opening chords of Bernard Herrmann's score to *Psycho*. Taken by themselves, the lower three notes of the chords create a traditional harmony. But the top note clashes with the bottom one, and the resultant dissonance establishes the dark mood of the story about a disturbed psychological state.

Example 2.6



Traditional Western harmony, what is often called **functional harmony**, depends on dissonances and their resolution. The movement from dissonance to consonance suggests conflict and resolution. Through this process we identify the central pitch of a passage of music known as the **tonic**. Most of the melodies that you know come to a satisfactory ending on a tonic pitch. We call music with a central pitch **tonal**, and both passages and entire compositions with a tonal area are referred to as being in a **key**, such as Mozart's Symphony in the key of G minor or, more simply, Mozart's Symphony in G Minor. Harmonically, the tonic is defined with a relatively mild dissonant chord called the **dominant-seventh** that resolves to a tonic chord. This is the basis for most older classical music and in jazz and rock as well. To Western ears, it just sounds normal.

Hearing dissonance and resolution is important to understanding harmony, but more-advanced listening skills require some knowledge of Western music theory. The following discussion of basic theoretical terminology can not only sharpen your listening skills, but also assist in your efforts to read and write about harmony. However, like so many listening skills, you cannot learn to hear harmony by reading a book. Listening skills need to be developed by practice.

Fundamental to all music systems is the interval of an **octave**, the distance between a pitch and its repetition in a higher or lower range. In Western music, the octave is divided into twelve equal intervals called **half steps**. From these twelve pitches, two seven-note scales have been created, using a combination of whole and half steps. These scales are commonly referred to as **major** and **minor**. In music written since the early twentieth century, it is not uncommon to abandon these two seven-note scales and employ melodies and harmonies using all twelve pitches found in the octave. Such harmonic treatment is called **chromatic**.

It is not necessary to learn scale patterns in order to listen to film music, but you should be aware that the difference between major and minor harmonies is significant. Most of the music that you hear in your daily life, such as on the radio or in the supermarket, is in major. Minor keys often provide a darker, more menacing sound. Luke Skywalker's theme, heard at the beginning of *Star Wars*, is in a major key. By contrast, the dark qualities of Darth Vader's theme are partially due to its suggestion of a minor scale. Minor harmonies can also be used to underscore the transformation of a character. When Luke Skywalker is sad or in trouble, John Williams transforms his theme by playing it slower, distorting some of the melodic intervals, and adding some minor harmonies, all of which suggest troubled thoughts or danger.

Modern concert music challenged the traditions of functional harmony. With the music of Claude Debussy as a model, many composers of the early twentieth century maintained a tonal center, but eliminated the fundamental role of the dominant-seventh chord. The difference is significant for composers and analysts, but if the composer still relies on triads the listener may not be aware of the difference. A more radical modern style sustains dissonances without resolutions. The resultant sound conveys a disturbing mood, suggesting that something is wrong; we can hear this in musical portrayals of the irrational psychological state in *Psycho*, the pains of being a teenager in *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), the upside-down world of *Planet of the Apes* (1968), and the terror of *Alien* (1979).

Rhythm

Rhythm is the element of music dealing with time. Musical time may have a floating, unmeasured character, or it may be structured on a series of recurring pulses called **beats**. Floating, unstructured rhythm is more common in non-Western musical cultures, but it can be found in Gregorian chant and occasionally in later Western music. The playing and sustaining of a single low pitch when a character enters a room is a cliché suggesting danger. In quite a different circumstance, the long sustained pitches in *Interstellar* (2014) suggest the vastness of space and the length of their travel.

For the most part, music in the Western tradition is organized around beats. The speed of the beats is called **tempo**. A fast tempo generates excitement and can suggest conflict, while a slow tempo indicates calm and might accompany a love scene. For *Inception* (2010), composer Hans Zimmer uses music with different tempos at the same time to suggest the simultaneous levels of action within the various dream states.

Beats often occur in regular patterns of strong and weak pulses. Such patterns are called **meter**. In films, most music features meters with two or four

pulses. The strongest beat is heard as the first of the group. For the most part, melodic material supports the established meter. But it can also contradict the given pulse by creating accents on weak beats or between beats. This rhythmic effect is called **syncopation**. In American popular music, the placement of notes just before or after a pulse creates a rhythmic conflict that generates a fresh, energetic character.

TIMBRE

Timbre is the technical term for the color or tone quality produced by voices, instruments, and various combinations of the two. This element often plays a critical role in the overall impact of a film score. Many composers initially write their music at the piano and then assign the various musical ideas to voices and instruments, a task that is called **orchestration**. Someone who specializes in the latter activity, an **orchestrator**, can provide valuable assistance to a composer by suggesting possible instrumental combinations for a given passage and by completing the time-consuming job of writing out individual orchestral parts.

Voices

A wide variety of colors can be achieved with human voices. Among the factors contributing to vocal color are voice types (male or female; soprano, alto, tenor, or bass), how many singers are heard (a soloist or a **chorus**), what text is being sung, and what performance style is used. In considering performance style, think of the vast difference in vocal color between a performer of Italian opera and a performer of Beijing opera, or the difference between the voices of Celine Dion and Tom Waits. There are many memorable uses of voices in film music, including the strong male chorus in Sergei Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* (1938), the demonic full choir in John Williams's *The Phantom Menace* (1999), and the haunting song "Into the West" from *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003).

Symphonic Instruments

The instruments of the symphony orchestra can be divided into four groups: strings, brass, woodwinds, and percussion (**TABLE 2.1**). The principal string instruments are usually played with a bow, which gives the sound a great deal of flexibility. Strings can play lyrical love themes or agitated combat music.

TABLE 2.1 Instruments of the orchestra

STRINGS	BRASS	WOODWINDS	PERCUSSION
violin	trumpet	flute	timpani
viola	French horn	oboe	snare/bass drums
cello	trombone	clarinet	cymbals
string bass	tuba	bassoon	xylophone
harp			piano

Their versatility can be heard in *Psycho* and *The Red Violin* (1999). Both films employ an orchestra consisting only of strings, but the color effects are dramatically different. String instruments can also be plucked by the finger, a technique called **pizzicato**. This plucking sound is also heard with the harp, a string instrument often used to suggest elegance. Because of its association with heaven, the harp is sometimes heard

when someone—for example, Darth Vader in *Return of the Jedi* (1983)—is dying.

Brass instruments can generate great power and force. They are often heard in marches and fanfares. Movies about ancient Rome usually feature elaborate brass fanfares. At the outset of *Star Wars*, the trumpets play Luke Skywalker's theme, creating the effect of an opening fanfare. The return of this theme after the brief string interlude, however, is given to the French horns, creating a deeper, nobler, and more heroic feeling.

While the strings and brass are often heard as unified families of instruments, the woodwinds are generally heard either with the entire orchestra or isolated as soloists. The colors of this family of instruments are more varied than those of the strings and brass, and composers employ solo woodwind colors for effective contrast. The oboe and clarinet are particularly expressive and can provide a sense of poignancy in film music.

Percussion instruments are often added to generate excitement or add color to the orchestral sound. In *Seven Days in May* (1964), Jerry Goldsmith creates a terse musical score by limiting the music to percussion instruments, suggesting the military setting of the story. Scenes in *Birdman* shift from realism to fantasy with the sound of drum-set riffs linked to a street musician. Also considered a percussion instrument is the piano, whose presence in the traditional symphony orchestra is less common. The piano is capable of producing many colors, as can be heard in jazz numbers (the closing credits to *Big*, 1988), works in concerto style (*Exodus*, 1960), and modern musical sounds (*The Hours*, 2002).

Symphonic instruments have a standard musical color that is produced through the normal process of playing. But there are also a number of special sounds that can be created with unusual performance techniques. **TABLE 2.2** can help you with the terminology for these special sounds.

TABLE 2.2 Special color effects

EFFECT	INSTRUMENT	HOW CREATED	RESULTING SOUND
mute	brass, strings	an object (mute) is placed in the end of the brass instrument or on the bridge of the string instrument	muffled, restrained
trill	piano, winds, strings	the quick alternation of two adjacent pitches	fast, oscillating
pizzicato	strings	pitches are plucked by fingers	guitar-like
harmonics	strings	lightly touching a string with a finger	high, soft, ringing
tremolo	strings	bow is moved back and forth quickly	intense
glissando	strings, harp, piano	series of successive pitches, played quickly	swooping
flutter-tongue	winds	fluttering the tongue while blowing into an instrument	oscillating sound; can be suspenseful or jarring
prepared piano	piano	small objects are placed on the strings of the piano	percussive, some with no pitch

Instruments of Popular Music

Popular music often features the same instruments that can be heard in the symphony orchestra. The violin can be featured as a country fiddle, the pizzicato string bass is a common jazz sound, and the clarinet, trumpet, and trombone are frequently heard in jazz ensembles. When these instruments are heard in popular settings, their color is often altered, sometimes with a more cutting edge, as in the beautiful trumpet theme at the beginning of *Chinatown* (1974). The sound of an acoustic (non-electric) guitar can suggest Spain or countries of Central and South America. A prominent guitar solo is heard at the beginning of *The Deer Hunter* (1978), and it contributes to the western setting in *Brokeback Mountain* (2005).

The saxophone is a versatile instrument that can be heard in both jazz and rock ensembles. Leonard Bernstein employs a saxophone at the beginning of *On the Waterfront* (1954) to link the dissonant, harsh opening music to the popular style of jazz. Bernard Herrmann creates an unsettling mood in *Taxi Driver* (1976) with an extended saxophone solo.

The instruments of a rock ensemble can be used for a variety of effects, creating a hip, slick sound or an intense, aggressive sound to accompany violence. As with jazz, rock music can be combined with other musical sounds. In *Dirty Harry* (1971), Lalo Schifrin combines the dissonance associated with modern concert music with an underlying rock beat. The sound of a drum set generally indicates a musical link to popular music.

Electronic Instruments

A number of musical instruments generate sound through electronics. The earliest **electronic instruments** heard in film music are the theremin and the ondes martenot (see FIGURES 2.1 and 2.2). These instruments can produce wavering pitches that create an eerie, unreal sound. Miklós Rózsa employs a theremin in *The Lost Weekend* and *Spellbound*, both from 1945, to portray psychological problems. The keyboard of the ondes martenot makes it a more practical instrument, and its sounds can be heard in numerous film scores, including Maurice Jarre's *Lawrence of Arabia* (1961).

Elaborate electronic music labs established in the 1950s were capable of generating a seemingly endless variety of new sounds. Film music ventured into these new sounds cautiously, but the landmark film *Forbidden*



FIGURE 2.1 Leon Theremin demonstrates his electronic theremin.



FIGURE 2.2 Sitting at the keyboard is Maurice Martenot, with his invention: the ondes martenot.

Planet (1956) used a completely electronic score created in a studio by Bebe Barron. Another early pioneer in electronic sounds was Wendy Carlos, who abandoned the electronic studio in favor of the **synthesizer**. After establishing the popular appeal of the instrument with the album *Switched-On Bach*, Carlos used the synthesizer in the score to Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971). Since that time, the synthesizer has greatly transformed the sound of film scores. Vangelis won an Oscar for his synthesized score to *Chariots of Fire* (1981), in which he used the synthesizer to reproduce the sounds of traditional instruments. But the synthesizer can also create new sounds such as those heard in Vangelis's *Blade Runner* (1982). In combination with computers, the synthesizer remains a valuable tool for its ability not only to replace acoustic instruments, but also to create new musical sounds.

Historical Instruments

There are a number of Western musical instruments that are effective in suggesting an earlier time period. A story set in the sixteenth or seventeenth century may feature the sounds of recorders (wind instruments similar in sound to flutes), **viola da gambas** (bowed string instruments), or lutes and mandolins (plucked string instruments, similar to the guitar). But the most distinctive instrument from earlier times is the **harpsichord**, a keyboard instrument that looks like a small piano (see FIGURE 2.4). The sound of the plucked strings of the harpsichord immediately suggests the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when it was most popular. The instrument is used in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1966), where it suggests the intellectual facade of a dysfunctional university couple, and in *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014), where it illustrates connotations of formality and tradition.



FIGURE 2.3 Hans Zimmer is shown here with a synthesizer and electronic equipment.



FIGURE 2.4 A harpsichord

Folk and Non-Western Instruments

Musical instruments from other cultures often play a role in establishing the location of a story. Non-Western instruments, such as those shown in TABLE 2.3, can perform in a style indigenous to their region, but they may also be combined with Western instruments. In this way, a film composer can suggest another culture while maintaining a musical style that is familiar to Western audiences. The combinations of a symphony orchestra with an Indian sitar in *Gandhi* (1982) and a cello with a Chinese erhu in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) provide fresh musical solutions to the depiction of non-Western music in a Western art medium.

TABLE 2.3 Non-Western instruments

INSTRUMENT	REGION	CHARACTER	MOVIE FEATURING INSTRUMENT
African drums	Africa	Variety of drums, primarily played by hand	<i>The Naked Prey</i> (1966)
Andean flute	South America	Similar to pan flute; can have a percussive sound	<i>The Mission</i> (1986)
bagpipes	Scotland, Ireland	Nasal wind instrument capable of producing continuous sound	<i>Braveheart</i> (1995)
balalaika	Russia	Plucked string instrument	<i>The Grand Budapest Hotel</i> (2014)
banjo	United States	Plucked string instrument with bright tone	<i>Bonnie and Clyde</i> (1967), <i>Deliverance</i> (1971)
erhu	China	Bowed string instrument with nasal vocal quality	<i>Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon</i> (2000)
gamelan	Indonesia	Percussion ensemble with pitched instruments that create a hypnotic, repetitive character	<i>The Year of Living Dangerously</i> (1982)
koto	Japan	Plucked string instrument	<i>Tora! Tora! Tora!</i> (1970)
oud	Middle East	Plucked string instrument	<i>Lawrence of Arabia</i> (1962)
shakuhachi	Japan	Wind instrument similar to recorder in appearance and a bamboo flute in sound	<i>Legends of the Fall</i> (1984)
sitar	India	Plucked string instrument	<i>Gandhi</i> (1982) <i>Life of Pi</i> (2012)
taiko drums	Japan	Drums beaten with sticks	<i>Pearl Harbor</i> (2001)
zither	Europe	String instrument, strummed and struck	<i>The Third Man</i> (1949)

In creating a non-Western ambience, film composers do not need to maintain musical authenticity, as they often choose sounds that an audience will associate with a particular time or setting. John Debney, in his score to *The Passion of the Christ* (2004), employs a wide variety of instruments, including the plucked oud from the Middle East, the duduk, an Armenian flute, and the Chinese erhu. The combination of these instruments has no basis in historical fact, but their unique timbres create a sound that effectively suggests the time and region for the story.

TRAILER

The musical terminology presented in this chapter may seem daunting at first. Since music is perceived aurally, it is often difficult to understand these concepts by simply reading. But with the aid of your instructor, you should find yourself more comfortable with discussions of music in a relatively short time. As you continue to read, you may want to review this chapter periodically and refer to the glossary for definitions of musical terms. For now, we will turn our attention to how music functions in a narrative film.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

beat	harmonics	pitch
cadence	harmony	pizzicato
chord	harpsichord	range
chorus	homophonic	rhythm
chromatic	imitation	staff
clef sign	interval	syncopation
closed cadence	key	synthesizer
conjunct	lyrical	tempo
contrapuntal	major	texture
counterpoint	measure	theme
disjunct	melody	tie
dissonance	meter	timbre
dominant-seventh chord	minor	time signature
electronic instruments	monophonic	tonal
flutter-tonguing	motive	tonic
fugue	octave	triad
functional harmony	open cadence	tune
glissando	orchestration	tuneful
Gregorian chant	orchestrator	viola da gamba
half step	phrase	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. After reading the text on musical notation and its similarity to graphs, have someone play Examples 2.1 to 2.5 and follow the lines. Continue the exercise with a musician (in or out of class) with other examples of musical notation.
2. Think of various musical works that you know and discuss how differences in melody, harmony, rhythm, and tempo generate divergent emotional responses.
3. Listen to Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*. In this children's classic, you can hear individual instruments and follow the story through the use of leitmotifs. Although not as easily available, a recording of Miklós Rózsa's *Jungle Book* (1942), which identifies various animals with musical themes, can also serve as a useful tool in learning about leitmotifs.
4. Using your school's music library, listen to orchestral music and learn to identify the various instruments. The standard introduction to musical instruments is Benjamin Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*. Other useful works of classical literature include the second movement from Béla Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra* and Aaron Copland's "Variations" on *Simple Gifts* from *Appalachian Spring*. An excellent example for texture, major and minor keys, and timbre is Georges Bizet's *Farandole*.
5. If you know students who can play instruments, encourage them to demonstrate the variety of colors that they can produce. If others have access to a synthesizer, have them explore the range of colors.

FOR FURTHER READING

Forney, Kristine, Andrew Dell'Antonio, and Joseph Machlis. *The Enjoyment of Music*, 12th ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2015.

Listening to Film Music

3



Mickey Mouse congratulates Leopold Stokowski in *Fantasia* (1940).

Music is one part of the total sound fabric that can be heard in film. In the simplest terms, film sound can be divided into three categories: dialogue, sound effects, and music. Dialogue tends to be the principal focus of our listening, while we are less conscious of the other two elements. But music and sound



effects—both of which are added during postproduction—can work together to create a sound ambience for the unfolding of a drama.

One term that is associated with film music is **soundtrack**. Technically, this term should denote all of the sound in a film, including dialogue and sound effects. In its general usage today, however, “soundtrack” refers only to music and sometimes just to songs. Listening to a soundtrack recording is generally an unreliable substitute for watching the movie, as recordings often contain revisions and additions to the actual music used in the film.

Music is a unique sound in film. Both dialogue and sound effects are essential to the realism of a film narrative. Music, however, is often introduced as an outside element, a sound that is not part of the story itself. Such music is sometimes referred to as “background” music, but this designation does not do justice to the powerful and often critical role that music plays in film.

Because the music is often secondary to dialogue and sound effects, it may be difficult at first to listen to film music. With practice and some understanding of the roles of film music, you can sharpen your peripheral hearing, adding to the pleasures of watching films. To this end, we will consider five topics concerning film music: placement, function, style, songs, and unity.

PLACEMENT

One of the subtle arts of filmmaking is the placement of music. The appearance or disappearance of music at a precise moment can make an audience laugh, cry, gasp, or feel tension. In order to support and not distract from the dramatic intention of the director, a film composer must have a keen sense of drama and frequently, a good sense of humor.

Music as the Opening and Closing Frames

In many films, music is heard during the opening and closing credits, thereby providing a musical frame for the film as a whole. In accompanying the main title and the opening credits, music can fill a variety of functions:

- Alerting the audience, often with brass fanfares, to the beginning of the film
- Introducing the dominant musical theme of the film
- Presenting several musical themes that will be heard in the film; when the music quotes a number of songs from the film, as is common in musicals, it is called a **medley**.

- Establishing the mood of the opening scene or of the film
- Foreshadowing significant aspects of the story

Music for the closing credits may similarly reflect the mood at the end of a film or simply create a cheerful ambience for the exiting audience. Frequently, the closing credits reprise a number of important musical ideas from the film, but it is also common in recent filmmaking for the closing credits to include a new song, which could lead to a possible Oscar nomination for Best Song and boost potential sales of a soundtrack recording.

One of the traditions of the epic genre is the inclusion of additional music designated as overture, intermission, and entr'acte. An **overture** is meant to precede the beginning of the film, the intermission separates the two parts of the film (so the audience can take a brief break), and the **entr'acte** immediately precedes the resumption of the film, functioning like an overture to the second part. In these extended formats, the film often takes on the following structure:

Overture
Main title and opening credits
First part of the film
Intermission (with or without music)
Entr'acte
Second part of the film
Closing credits

In a sense, these epic films contain a double overture—the “Overture” proper and the music for the main title and opening credits. Of the two, the music during the opening credits is usually more significant for the film as a whole, but the “Overture” can still help establish a mood and acquaint the audience with themes from the film. Similarly, the music for the entr'acte generally has greater musical weight than that for the intermission.

Music within the Narrative

Music appearing during the narrative portion of the film can be considered as either source music or underscoring. **Source music**, or **diegetic** music, is heard as part of the drama itself—for example, when musicians are performing at a party or concert, or when a radio or phonograph is playing in the film. In a way, source music could also be considered a kind of sound effect. As with sound effects, the audience does not have to see the actual source of the sound. Just as the sounds of cars on a distant street can be understood as real, so too the sound of an unseen dance band or jukebox is considered



FIGURE 3.1 Musicians on Takodana provide source music in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015).

to be diegetic. While the use of source music might seem to be the simplest music in film, it can be subtle and quite sophisticated. In Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954), there is no underscoring. All the music comes from radios and musical instruments in the neighborhood apartments, and the impact is just as strong, if not stronger, than what would have been produced by traditional underscoring.

For the most part, though, the music that you hear in Hollywood films is called **underscoring** or **non-diegetic** music. Underscoring has no logical source in the drama itself. Performed by an unseen orchestra, jazz band, rock group, or vocal ensemble, underscoring creates an overall mood and guides us emotionally and psychologically through the course of a film. The following is a good rule for distinguishing between these two basic types of film music. If there is a reasonable expectation that a character in the film can hear the music, then it is source music. If only the audience can hear the music, then it is underscoring. Hence, if you are watching a film about survivors in a lifeboat in the middle of an ocean and you hear a full symphony orchestra, you are listening to underscoring. If you are watching a movie in which a woman is spinning wildly while singing, "The hills are alive," then you would have to identify this as source music. You may wonder where the orchestra is coming from in this mountainous scene, but that is an issue for a later time. A **score** is the music notation containing all of the individual parts for the instrumentalists and singers. It is often used, along with "scoring," as an alternative to the term "underscoring."

A passage of underscoring from its entrance to its end is called a **cue**. The number and length of cues in a given film vary greatly. In some films there is no underscoring at all. In other films, music plays almost continuously, a technique that is referred to as **wall-to-wall** music. The beginning of a cue may coincide with other sound effects so that the viewer is unaware that music has been added, and cues often fade quietly without notice. But in some instances, the dramatic entrance or the abrupt stopping of music can have a strong emotional impact on the audience. In horror films such as *Halloween* (1978), tensions can be raised both when music starts and when it disappears. Whether obtrusive or subtle, the placement of musical cues is a delicate craft that contributes greatly to the effectiveness of the film score.

FUNCTION

Establishing a Mood

Since music appeals directly to the emotions, all music projects some type of mood. In some movies, the musical mood remains consistent throughout the film, no matter what is occurring in the story. In these instances, the music creates an overall ambience that serves as a backdrop to the unfolding drama. The relentless somber mood of John Williams's music for *Schindler's List* (1993), for example, reminds us of the reality of the Holocaust. A similar effect can be heard in films that rely on popular music, such as *The Graduate* (1967) and *The Social Network* (2010); in the first, the music creates a consistent mood of the youthful uncertainty in the 1960s, and in the second, it reflects the energy and emotions of twenty-first-century college students.

In the typical Hollywood film, the musical mood changes with the developments of the story. Still, there is often an overriding mood, usually suggested in the music for the opening credits. The music for the beginning of such diverse films as *Gone with the Wind* (1939), *Vertigo* (1958), *The Magnificent Seven* (1960), *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961), *The Graduate*, *Star Wars* (1977), and *The Hateful Eight* (2015) establishes the essential mood of the film as a whole.

There are also times when the music depicts a mood that deliberately does not match what is happening on the screen. This is called **running counter to the action**. In one of the most unforgettable scenes in all of film, the climax of *The Godfather* (1972), we hear source music from an organ church service while we observe the systematic slaying of Michael's foes. And in *The Hateful Eight*, several of the main characters die painfully from poisoning while the music sounds playful and humorous.

Supporting the Plot

In addition to creating an overall mood, music can also support a plot by reinforcing its emotional content. In many Hollywood films, music reflects the emotions of a given scene or moment. When a character becomes angry, we hear the music rise in intensity; when someone is sad, we hear a plaintive, longing melody; and when victory is at hand, we are swept away by triumphant music. These emotions are often projected without the actor saying a word; the plot is moved forward by the music.

Because of the abrupt nature of film editing, music can play a critical role by showing the relationship between two or more shots. *Inception* (2010),

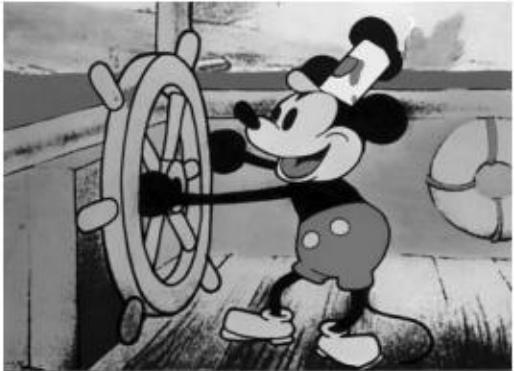


FIGURE 3.2 The mirroring of physical movement in film music is called "Mickey Mousing."

for example, cross cuts between three levels of dream states. By sustaining a musical sound over some of these cuts, composer Hans Zimmer suggests that these events are simultaneous and interconnected. A director may also choose to change the music with the cuts to reinforce the differences between the shots.

The rapid number of cuts in montage often necessitates the use of music to create a sense of unity. Usually a single musical mood is projected, as in the passing of summer to "The Sounds of Silence" in *The Graduate*, the ticking of a clock near the climax of *High Noon*, and the playful bicycle scene in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1979). Some exceptions to this norm are the breakfast montage from *Citizen Kane* (1941), in which each change of shot is accompanied by a musical change, and the first battle sequence in *Braveheart* (1995), where the rhythmic sound effects from the battle replace musical sounds.

In addition to suggesting the emotional qualities of a given story, music can also reflect physical movement and re-create natural sounds. A sudden impact, such as a slap in the face or an object hitting the ground, can be accompanied by an accent in the orchestra, often referred to as a **stinger**. Sometimes when we see a person or object rise, the music ascends, and when the person or thing goes down, the music descends. Music can also suggest natural sounds, such as splashing water, thunder, the ticking of a clock, gunfire, or a speeding train. Such mimicking of movement and sound is quite common in cartoons. Since films are supposed to be more realistic than cartoons, composers tend to be careful not to match the music too closely to physical gestures. When the music is too obvious—for example, accenting every step of someone walking—it is appropriately termed **Mickey Mousing**.

Establishing Character, Setting, Point of View, and Theme

In addition to setting moods and creating emotions, music can reinforce the characterization and setting of a given story. The appearance of a dashing romantic character can be accompanied by a passionate melody, a soldier can be supported by a strong march, and an attractive woman might appear accompanied by a raspy saxophone playing in the background. In a similar fashion, the time and place of a story can be supported by appropriate musical styles. In *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1956), we can close our eyes and still know the locale of each episode, based on the idiomatic sounds of the musical score.

Since various characters may have conflicting emotions in any given scene, the musical mood can suggest a point of view. While the camera may present an omniscient POV, the music can direct us to feel the emotions of a single character. In *The Mission* (1986), for example, the slave trader Mendoza is seen with a village celebration in the background. While the villagers are dancing joyfully, we hear brooding music instead of dance music, thereby reflecting the darkness of Mendoza's mood after he discovers that his brother is sleeping with his mistress.

STYLE

Anyone who has searched for musical recordings in a store or on the Internet is aware that music can be divided into a myriad of styles. All of these styles are defined by distinct characteristics created by elements discussed in Chapter 2: melody, harmony, texture, rhythm, and timbre. Whether listening to classical, heavy metal, country, or world music, you will hear musical qualities common to all music in that style. Knowledge of these basic characteristics can be an aid when listening to film music. To begin with, we will divide film music into three basic styles—Romantic, popular, and modern.

Romanticism

Romanticism, or simply Romantic music, refers to the prevalent musical style created in the nineteenth century. As embodied in the works of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, this music emphasizes melody, colorful orchestrations, and a wide range of emotions. Such qualities are ideally suited for the needs of film: Romanticism is powerful, flexible, and relatively unobtrusive. Composers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries added more-complex harmonies to their concert works, which exerted a strong influence on film composers. Among the most prominent of these figures are Claude Debussy, Richard Strauss, Gustav Mahler, Jean Sibelius, and Sergei Rachmaninov.

Popular Music

Most students will be able to describe and recognize a great variety of subtypes of **popular music**, whether in **jazz** (New Orleans, big band, bop) or **rock** (Motown, disco, heavy metal, rap, post-grunge). Each of these subtypes has its own distinct characteristics, but, in general, popular music tends to be melody-oriented, have a strong dance-like beat, and incorporate syncopated rhythms. Possessing strong appeal for audiences, popular music has played a prominent role in films since the inception of moving pictures.

Since most types of popular music project a single mood, popular music is generally reserved for four situations in film: to accompany the opening and closing credits, to underscore montages, to provide source music, and to serve as a leitmotif, such as can be heard with Axel's theme in *Beverly Hills Cop* (1984). A recent good example is *Guardians of the Galaxy* (2014), where popular songs from the 1960s and '70s serve as both source music (from Peter's Walkman) and as accompaniments to montages such as the preparation for battle (1:19:50).

Modern Music

While most readers readily understand the concept of popular music, the term **modern** is more problematic. In this case, it is not meant to be synonymous with "recent." Although it may seem strange to refer to something written over a century ago as "modern," the term is a common way to refer to music predominantly by concert composers (composers writing for performances in opera and concert halls) that breaks away from the compositional techniques and styles of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As with popular music, there are numerous sub-categories of "modern" music. Five general types are mentioned in the text:

- **Expressionism** is the musical equivalent to the art and literary movements of the same name from the early part of the twentieth century. Since expressionist music explores continuous dissonance and avoids tonal centers, it can be heard as the most radical of the prevalent modern musical styles prior to World War II. Arnold Schoenberg, the leading figure in this movement, developed a theoretical system in the 1920s to sustain this general style called **serialism**.
- **Neo-classicism** emerged around the same time as serialism and became the dominant aesthetic of American music critics prior to 1950. As with serialism, it is not necessary to understand the full implications of neo-classicism in the study of film music, but among the salient features for our purposes are a mildly dissonant harmonic idiom, a reduction in the amount of underscoring and in the size of the orchestra, and a detached, objective character that avoids the emotional excess of Romanticism.
- **American nationalism**, which is most closely associated with the music of Aaron Copland, shares some qualities with neo-classicism. Essential to American nationalism are broad melodies with wide intervals, syncopated rhythms, warm orchestrations, and a modern but relatively conservative harmonic system. American nationalism has influenced a number of prominent film composers, including Hugo Friedhofer, Elmer Bernstein, and John Williams.

- **Avant-garde** is a term applied to a variety of art movements throughout the twentieth century that were innovative and experimental. Avant-garde artists and composers in the 1950s and '60s explored the limits of their disciplines in creative, complex, and colorful manners. Electronic music, in which sounds are generated or manipulated through various electronic devices, is the most enduring development of the musical avant-garde.
- **Minimalism** emerged in the 1960s. Related to a movement of the same name in visual arts, minimalism is a repetitive style based on deliberately simplified melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic qualities. As such, it can incorporate elements of both non-Western musical styles and rock music. Minimalism has had a strong impact on film scoring in the twenty-first century.

Other Musical Styles

Two other styles of music are used more sparingly in film music: historical and ethnic. These styles can help set the time and place of a film. **Historical music** styles are frequently heard as source music. Howard Shore uses Gregorian chant, monophonic sacred melodies from the early years of the Christian church, in his scores for *The Lord of the Rings* in order to show a historical connection of this time period to the Middle Ages, while Renaissance music rings through the period film *Shakespeare in Love* (1998). Historical styles can also create a special ambience that matches a particular story. The film score for *The Four Seasons* (1981), which takes its title from a Baroque composition by Antonio Vivaldi, abounds in works by this Venetian composer. Similarly, the score for *A Little Romance* (1979), in which the goal of the journey is to kiss under a bridge over a Venetian canal, includes numerous Vivaldi quotations.

Ethnic music—music from a non-Western culture—can likewise be heard as source music or incorporated into the underscoring in order to suggest a location in a distant country or the presence of someone from another culture. In some instances, an ethnic style may emerge at the slightest suggestion in the film. For example, characteristics of Asian music are heard during Neo's training in martial arts in *The Matrix* (1999) after he realizes that he knows kung fu. Other incorporations of ethnic styles are more substantial. A mixture of Indian and American popular music sets the place and tone of *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), and the sounds of Central European folk music energize *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014).

SONGS

Songs often occupy an important position in movies. Since the early sound era, many filmmakers have felt compelled to include one or more songs to provide entertainment, create an ambience, or serve as a vital component of the story. Songs may appear in the opening credits, the closing credits, or during the narrative. In the latter, they generally are presented as source music—someone on the screen, either a main character or an entertainer, performs the song. Sometimes, though, a song is part of the underscore, and hence is not sung or heard by anyone on the screen. Most of the Simon and Garfunkel vocal numbers in *The Graduate* are examples of this type. In films such as *Toy Story* (1995) and *Finding Nemo* (2003), Pixar uses songs as underscoring: in neither do you hear a toy or fish break into song. This quality differs from Disney Studio films, where the principal characters do sing, as in *Frozen* (2013).

The term **song**, although general in its application, does have one critical limitation: it has to be sung by a voice or voices. Instruments can play in a songlike, lyrical fashion, but an instrumental passage should not be referred to as a song. In addition, songs need words, and these often necessitate an independent musical form. While most of the music of a film can be tailored to the flow of the drama, a song will often interrupt the story. The song is one instance in which a musical form can take precedence over the dramatic structure. At times you may find yourself impatient for the completion of a song so that the story

can continue, but you will find also that many songs further some aspect of the plot or provide commentary on what is happening. One of the most innovative uses of song in film can be seen in *Cat Ballou* (1965), in which the singing of Nat King Cole and Stubby Kaye provide narration as the story unfolds.

In the simplest song form, called **strophic**, each stanza (or *strophe*) of a poem is sung to the same melody. This is a common structure for folk music and many popular songs. Another frequent form of popular song is the **verse-chorus**. The **chorus** is the musical heart of this structure. It has the most memorable melody, and it usually recurs with the same text (**refrain**). In a live performance, it was common for others, sometimes the full audience, to join



FIGURE 3.3 Dustin Hoffman lies on a pool raft while the song “The Sound of Silence” is heard in the underscore in *The Graduate*.

in singing the refrain—hence the term “chorus.” If the poem has multiple stanzas, then the lyrics change with each verse, while the chorus remains the same.

UNITY

Film scores can be unified by a consistent mood, timbre, and style. The string timbre of *Psycho*, the songs of Simon and Garfunkel in *The Graduate*, and the surf-oriented rock music of *Pulp Fiction* create a unified sound for their respective films. In other movies, such as *Wuthering Heights*, *Laura*, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, *Doctor Zhivago*, and *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, a single memorable theme dominates the score, creating a different kind of unity.

Musical themes can represent the overall mood or underlying idea of a film, without any specific connection to the drama. But some themes, called **leitmotifs**, can be identified with a person, object, or idea in a story. There must be a clear and consistent relationship between a musical idea and its onscreen counterpart in order for a musical theme to be considered a leitmotif.

One of the best-known leitmotifs in film is the two-note half-step motive that accompanies *Jaws*. Throughout the film, the audience is alerted to the shark's presence by these two notes. Also memorable are the numerous leitmotifs in the original *Star Wars* trilogy, including the opening fanfare that represents Luke Skywalker and the dark theme of Darth Vader. Through a leitmotif, the audience can be told what a character is thinking. In *Gone with the Wind*, for example, we see a silent Scarlett O'Hara and hear the Tara theme. Without a word, we know that she is thinking of her plantation.

Thematic transformation helps to create variety and gives support to dramatic situations. In the simplest terms, a leitmotif can be altered when it recurs during a film by a change of instrumentation, tempo, dynamics, or harmony, to depict the changing mood or state of a character. In *Return of the Jedi*, the death of Darth Vader is accompanied by his theme. Vader's leitmotif, generally heard in the low brass with a terrifying edge, is now played gently, suggesting the transformation of his character just before his death. The melody can be heard in string harmonics, woodwinds, and the harp. The high register of the instruments and the timbre of the harp (the instrument of angels) are musical clichés for death.



FIGURE 3.4 After Rhett leaves, Scarlett's thoughts turn toward her plantation, accompanied by the Tara theme, in *Gone with the Wind*.

TRAILER

The material of this chapter forms a critical foundation for the study of film music and should be reviewed periodically. Once you have grasped these fundamentals, you will be ready to explore over one hundred years of film music. Before beginning that journey, we will lay some historical foundations for the new art form by looking at some significant forerunners of film music.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

American nationalism	minimalism	soundtrack
avant-garde	modern music	source music
chorus	neo-classicism	(diegetic music)
cue	overture	stinger
entr'acte	popular music	strophic
ethnic music	refrain	thematic transformation
expressionism	Romanticism	underscoring (non-diegetic music)
historical music	running counter to the action	verse-chorus
jazz	score	wall-to-wall music
leitmotif	serialism	
medley		
Mickey Mousing	song	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

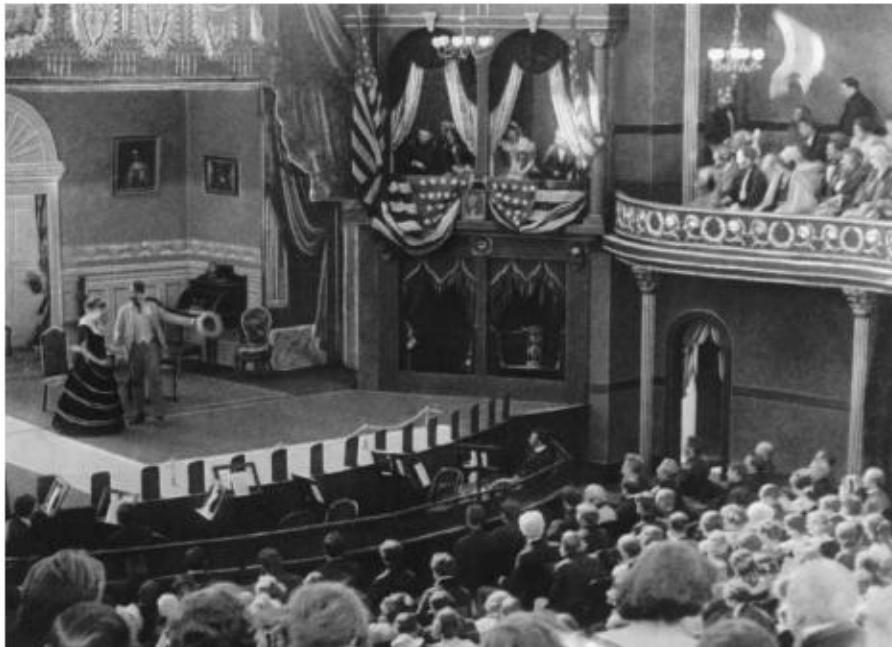
1. Using your home video collection or your access to feature films on television and online, watch the opening credits of several movies. What does the music at the beginning tell you about the movie? How?
2. Obtain a copy of an epic film such as *Gone with the Wind* or *Ben-Hur*. Play the music for the overture, opening credits, intermission, entr'acte, and closing credits and consider what roles these excerpts play in the film as a whole.
3. Watch the portion of *Casablanca* leading into the Paris montage (38:55). Consider the relationship between source music and underscoring, the role of song, the concept of arrangement, the differing effects of popular and Romantic musical styles, and the use of a leitmotif.
4. On YouTube, find examples of movie clips in which the music has been changed to produce a different mood than in the original film. Some fun examples include "The Hangover . . . as a Horror," "The Shining—The Sitcom (Seinfeld Style)," "Willy Wonka—Recut Horror Trailer," and "What if 'Jaws' Was a Disney Movie?" Consider how music plays a role in the perception of these films.

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Forerunners of Film Music

4



A melodrama accompanied by an orchestra is shown in *The Birth of a Nation* (1915).

Music was present at the birth of cinema and has remained a companion through all of its subsequent transformations. Although film itself was a remarkable innovation that combined technology with art, the use of music to accompany the earliest presentations was not a novel conception. Music had

performed similar functions for a variety of nineteenth-century entertainments. Even as silent films grew in length and sophistication, the creators of film music depended on long-established traditions in order to project a wide array of emotions and to suggest aspects of the drama, such as someone's character, the time and setting of a scene, and the action of a given moment.

To achieve these ends, film composers frequently incorporated qualities whose meanings were understood by movie audiences based on their own past musical experiences. The term **descriptive music** is often applied to music that either depicts a general mood suggested in a text, title, and program, or mimics specific physical movements and natural sounds, such as wind, thunder, and animal noises. In our overview of forerunners to film music, we will first look at descriptive music in general and then consider the role of descriptive music in several types of nineteenth-century theatrical entertainments.

DESCRIPTIVE MUSIC

Throughout the history of Western music, associations have developed between human emotions and specific types of musical sounds and gestures. Many of these associations have remained unchanged for centuries. In music from the Renaissance, descending lines were often used to denote sadness; chromaticism, pain and suffering; quick tempos and lively dance rhythms, joy and happiness; and low registers, death and grief. Such connections were codified in the Baroque era in what is generally known as the **doctrine of affections**. Theorists at the time suggested that emotions were derived from a number of basic states or *affects*, and some linked those emotions directly to specific musical gestures. Agitation, by way of illustration, was associated with repeated quick movements of the violin bow on a single pitch, a technique that we call tremolo.

Many of these characteristics from the eighteenth century were assimilated into the music of nineteenth-century composers, who produced the most popular works of "classical" music and the most significant repertory for later film composers. Compositions from the Romantic era (primarily, the nineteenth century) were often adapted into the scores for silent films and were frequently borrowed as source music and even underscoring during the sound era. More importantly, the emotional and pictorial associations of this repertory, many of which were well known to the general public, became models for reproducing similar responses in film music.

Ludwig van Beethoven was the dominant musical figure of the early nineteenth century. Many of his works achieved popular status outside of concert

halls along with their inherent emotional associations: the *Moonlight* Piano Sonata projects a melancholy mood; the first movements of the *Pathétique* Piano Sonata and the Symphony No. 5 generate a sense of conflict and turmoil; and the second movement of the Symphony No. 7 symbolizes both solemnity and death.

The generation after Beethoven included numerous prominent composers. Frédéric Chopin, Franz Liszt, and Robert Schumann created intimate piano pieces that could exude elegance, romance, turbulence, and longing—often ideal in the support of film. Symphonic works of Johannes Brahms, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, and Franz Schubert also provided sources for adaptation or mimicking in film music. Not to be overlooked are the songs (in German nomenclature, *Lieder*) of Schubert. One of his most celebrated works, “Erlkönig,” uses a rapid piano accompaniment that represents the racing of a horse needed to save a boy’s life and the agitated feelings of the father. The song and its musical gestures were easily adapted into film scores (see FIGURE 6.4).



FIGURE 4.1 Beethoven’s *Pathétique* Sonata is played as an accompaniment for a downstairs silent film and an upstairs murder in *The Spiral Staircase* (1946).

Programmatic Music

Instrumental music that tells a story, suggests an image, or evokes a designated mood is referred to as **programmatic**. The violin concertos of Antonio Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons* from the early eighteenth century contain music that portrays oppressive heat, bitter cold, blistering wind, birdcalls, and a barking dog. Programmatic music became particularly fashionable in the nineteenth century. During the Romantic era, two types of symphonic music emerged that reflect this trend—the **program symphony** and the **symphonic poem** (sometimes referred to as a *tone poem*). The difference between the two is simply a matter of length; the symphonic poem is a single-movement work, and the program symphony generally has four or more movements. If you are unfamiliar with classical music, think of a **movement** as an act in a stage drama; a symphonic poem is a one-act play, while a program symphony relates its narrative in multiple acts.

The two best-known program symphonies are Beethoven’s Symphony No. 6 (*Pastoral*) and Hector Berlioz’s *Symphonie fantastique*, both of which have five movements. The “story” in Beethoven’s symphony is quite simple. It evokes the happiness of being in nature, portrays the fury of a storm, and projects the sense of joy after the storm has subsided. Most of this symphony merely reflects



FIGURE 4.2 Bacchus tries to avoid lightning bolts to the thunderous music of Beethoven's *Pastoral* Symphony in Disney's *Fantasia* (1940).

moods suggested in the descriptive subtitles—the exhilaration at being in nature, the calmness of observing a stream, the energy of folk dancing, and the gratitude for surviving the storm. This is typical for program music and even film music. But Beethoven also adds some specific musical imagery: the rippling sound of the brook is suggested by continuous motion in the strings; the birdcalls of a nightingale, quail, and cuckoo can be heard in the woodwinds; and thunder is dramatically sounded in the timpani. Ultimately, the mimicking of natural sounds is the most distinctive type of descriptive music.

A more complicated story is related in Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, composed about a quarter of a century after the *Pastoral* Symphony. As in the Beethoven, the first

three movements of *Symphonie fantastique* create general moods: the passionate love of a poet, the dazzling beauty of the beloved at a ball, and the idyllic pleasures of being in nature, respectively. At the end of the third movement, timpani mimic distant thunder, and the suggestion of the lover's infidelity prompts the poet to kill her (this portion is described in the program notes, not in the music). The last two movements abound with musical images. The poet is led to the guillotine with a vigorous march; his head is severed with a loud chord and bounces into a basket with quieter chords; and the crowd cheers to a brass fanfare. Without words, the music captures these images vividly. In the final movement, the spirit of the poet observes a "witches' Sabbath," complete with the musical sounds of laughter, cackling, dancing, singing, and midnight church bells.

Two melodies are particularly noteworthy in this symphony. In the witches' revelry, Berlioz quotes the *Dies irae*, a well-known melody from the Catholic service for the dead. The association of this tune with death carried into movie music, and it became the single most quoted melody in all of film (see [EXAMPLE 8.9](#)). Berlioz also uses an extended melody in every movement that represents the poet's beloved. Berlioz called this melody an *idée fixe*; as we have seen, such melodies that are associated with people, objects, places, or emotions are often referred to as *leitmotifs*. Typical of the treatment of leitmotifs, Berlioz's melody is varied in every movement, reflecting changes in the story. As noted in Chapter 3, the technique of altering a theme in this fashion is called thematic transformation.

While there have been relatively few program symphonies, there have been many symphonic poems. Among the topics touched upon by these one-movement programmatic works are nature (Felix Mendelssohn's *Fingal's Cave*

and Smetana's *Moldau*), the supernatural (Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain* and Saint-Saëns's *Danse macabre*), nationalism (Sibelius's *Finlandia* and Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture*), and literary works (Richard Strauss's *Don Quixote* and Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*). Pictorial images and dramatic moods are generated in the same manner as in program symphonies. Some notable moments include the bleating of sheep in *Don Quixote*, the musical contrast between love and war in *Romeo and Juliet*, and the use of patriotic melodies and actual military cannons in the *1812 Overture*.

THEATRICAL ENTERTAINMENTS

Opera

At first glance, opera may seem to be far removed from film music. **Opera** is a theatrical medium centered on singing, and film music is predominantly written for instruments, not solo voices. Yet opera is considered in the Western world to be the highest form of musical theater, and a great deal of operatic music is well known to the general public and certainly to film composers. Operas use music to express a full range of emotions, from comedy to tragedy. Opera has also helped to confirm musical clichés that establish character, time period, and setting. *Carmen* is a clear example of this: when he composed the opera in 1875, Georges Bizet incorporated characteristics of "Spanish" music that have been easily understood and imitated ever since as representing this region.

For film music, the most important operatic figure is Richard Wagner, one of the greatest and most influential figures in the history of Western music. In his operas, Wagner sought to bring together the best elements of all the arts—brilliant philosophy and literature in the libretto; stunning visual elements in the scenery, costumes, and lighting; and the best of performing arts in the acting and music. To this end, Wagner created some of the most celebrated works in the history of Western arts, including the masterpieces *Tristan und Isolde* and the cycle of four operas *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, commonly known as the *Ring Cycle*.

In order to implement his ideals fully, Wagner built his own theater—the Festival Theater at Bayreuth, where he exerted total control over his productions. Among his many theatrical innovations are the following, many of which we take for granted today:

- The auditorium was darkened during the performance.
- He created a sunken orchestra pit that extended beneath the stage, so that the audience would not see the musicians.



FIGURE 4.3 As in *The Lord of the Rings*, the story of Wagner's *Ring Cycle* centers on a powerful ring. In both, the ring is accompanied by a distinctive leitmotif.

- The audience was asked not to applaud during the performance.
- Unique and detailed scenery and visual effects were created for each scene in a production.
- He eliminated box seats and created a classless theater in which every seat had equally good sight and sound. The fanlike seating arrangement is now known as "continental" seating.

A number of these innovations were aimed at creating the illusion that the audience was not sitting in a theater. Darkening the hall, removing the musicians from sight, and not letting the drama be interrupted

by applause helped the audience lose its sense of attending a thetic event. These developments were at the forefront of a general theatrical revolution in which the drama was enhanced by greater sensory appeal, action became more important than words, and the director became the central figure, replacing the writer.

These foundations of the "modern" theater were established just prior to the emergence of film, and a number of the innovations observed in Wagner's productions were also assimilated into the showings of motion pictures. Perhaps the most important of these is his role as the dominant director. In film, the term **auteur** is used to describe the central role of the director; the creative force that forges all of the artistic elements into one principal goal. Theater historians Oscar Brockett and Robert Findlay summarize Wagner's position: "It is primarily from this demand for artistic unity and its corollary—the all-powerful director or *regisseur* [auteur]—that Wagner's enormous influence on the modern theater stems."^{*}

As a composer, Wagner established many of the distinctive characteristics of late Romantic music, including a full, colorful orchestration, a rich harmonic vocabulary, and a melody-dominated texture. With these elements, Wagner was able to support his dramas by portraying emotional qualities, establishing moods, and creating specific visual images. Yet his most significant contribution was his ability to achieve musical unity without sacrificing the dramatic flow of the story. By avoiding closed musical structures such as recitatives and arias, Wagner allowed the drama to move in a natural manner. Using leitmotifs

^{*}Oscar G. Brockett and Robert Findlay, *Century of Innovation: A History of European and American Theatre and Drama Since the Late Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1990, 29.

to represent various characters and aspects of the story, Wagner was able to support the drama without stopping the action, and, at the same time, to create a sense of musical unity.

Film composers were quick to apply these techniques to the new art form. To be sure, not all films use leitmotifs or even a Romantic musical style. In a great many films, these would be inappropriate. But Wagner's influence on what will be termed the **classical film score** is substantial. Every facet of the classical score—the use of a symphony orchestra, the musical support of the drama, and unity through leitmotifs and thematic transformation—has precedents in the works of Wagner. He was held in high esteem by many of our greatest film composers. Max Steiner wrote the music for such classic films as *King Kong* (1933), *Gone with the Wind* (1939), and *Casablanca* (1942). Yet when he was told that he had invented movie music, Steiner responded:

Nonsense. The idea originated with Richard Wagner. Listen to the incidental scoring behind the recitations in his operas. If Wagner had lived in this century, he would have been the number one film composer.*

Ballet

Music for **ballet** resembles film scoring in a number of aspects. Like their counterparts in film, nineteenth-century ballet composers had to work with a set scenario, answer to the whims of a director (ballet master), and adjust their music to the particular needs of a drama. Although some musical sections in ballet are simply tuneful dances, others are extended passages for orchestra that support moods, actions, and emotions of given dramatic scenes. Because ballet music is essential in relating a story that has no spoken words, it can be seen as closely allied to the music for silent film in particular.

CLOSE-UP: AUTHORSHIP

Research guides ranging from the popular to the academic attribute the music for *Swan Lake* to Tchaikovsky. In reality, however, there are portions of this ballet and others by Tchaikovsky that were written by other composers. Ballet masters frequently requested alterations to ballet scores, either at the

first production or in later revivals. For *Swan Lake*, the conductor and composer Riccardo Drigo, who remains uncredited outside of specialized studies, crafted many of those changes and created substitutions that we hear today as being the music of Tchaikovsky.

Continued on next page

* Steiner quoted in Tony Thomas, *Music for the Movies*. New York: A. S. Barnes and Co., 1973, 122.

The question of attribution is even more complicated in Hollywood film music, as there are often many hands helping to shape a finalized score. Most studios had a music director who assigned composers to films, oversaw the appropriateness of the music to a particular film, and, at times, even wrote some of the music. The director at larger studios had numerous composers under his control, and he generally assigned one of the principal figures for a major production. But other composers might also be engaged to write cues for the same film because of deadlines and the volume of movies being produced. In certain situations, cues from previous films, such as action sequences in *King Kong*, were reused for similar scenes in later pictures. Another important figure in the studio process was the **orchestrator**, who often took musical sketches from the primary composer and fleshed them out. One more musician also impacted the final product—the conductor, who fits the music to the narrative.

Sometimes, one person fills all or several of these roles, but the “authorship” of a film score can often be more like a committee with a chairman (the credited composer) than the work of a single artist. One

of the foremost examples of this collaborative effort is the score to *Gone with the Wind*. Max Steiner is the official composer, and this is considered by many to be his greatest work. But among others who contributed to the music for this film are veteran composers Adolph Deutsch and Hugo Friedhofer. Indeed, the music for the opening title sequence, which is a classic example of Steiner’s style, is actually written by Friedhofer, who created the arrangement using Steiner’s melody.

For a later example, we turn to James Bond. Monty Norman is credited for composing the famous Bond theme heard throughout the series, including *Spectre* (2015). Yet John Barry contributed enough of the theme to justify a lawsuit over authorship. Norman eventually won the suit, but Barry seems to have won the war, as he replaced Norman for the second film of the series and became the composer most associated with the franchise. For the limited purposes of this text, the authorship of a score will be attributed to the credited composer, but keep in mind that the issue of who wrote the music is often complicated in film, just as it is in ballet.



The three most popular ballets from the nineteenth century all have music by Tchaikovsky—*Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, and *The Nutcracker*. Among the several musical elements of these works that have parallels to later film music, three are of particular importance. To begin with, Tchaikovsky uses leitmotifs in all three ballets. Perhaps most notable are the contrasting themes for Carabosse (the wicked fairy godmother) and the Lilac Fairy in *Sleeping Beauty*. The two themes are heard in the overture, the evil theme first and then the good one. Similar structures can be found in the music for the opening credits in many Hollywood films. *Swan Lake* also pits good against evil, as represented by the characters known as the White Swan and the Black Swan. Both have the same theme, but the melody is transformed from its initial idyllic presentation with a solo oboe to a dark sinister presentation by the low brass to represent the Black Swan.

The second parallel between the music of these ballets and later film music can be heard in Tchaikovsky's **character dances**. In these segments, he often gives ethnic characters distinct musical qualities, many of which became clichés for ethnicity in film. In *The Nutcracker*, for example, the Spanish Dance features a solo trumpet and prominent castanets, while the Chinese Dance is presented primarily by the flute and pizzicato (plucked) strings. In the first act, a dance for a barbarian has syncopated rhythms, low-register instruments, and a quick tempo. These qualities are later assimilated into Hollywood musical depictions of Native Americans, Africans, and African Americans.

Finally and most important, Tchaikovsky excelled at projecting the variety of emotions through his music. Love, tragedy, comedy, and action are all masterfully supported. One of the simplest examples is near the end of Act I in *The Nutcracker*. In the Battle of the Mice and Toy Soldiers, Tchaikovsky creates a sense of action through loud dynamics, syncopated rhythms, military sounds representing the soldiers, and low scurrying thematic material for the mice. At the end, trombones intone a funereal quality with the deaths of the King of Mice and the Nutcracker. A brief lament portrays Clara's sense of loss, but a pizzicato pulse (suggesting a heartbeat) soon indicates that the Prince is alive, and the music turns joyous as he rises and greets Clara. With such flexible emotional qualities, it is little wonder that Tchaikovsky's ballets and orchestral music are seen as one of the models for Hollywood film music.



FIGURE 4.4 The music of Tchaikovsky's ballet is used extensively in *Black Swan* (2010).

Melodrama

Of all the nineteenth-century theatrical genres, melodrama had the single most direct and practical impact on the creation of film music. While the word **melodrama** can be used in a variety of contexts (we might use "melodramatic" to refer to exaggerated emotions), we use the term here to refer to a type of stage drama prominent in the nineteenth century. In a typical plot, a boy and girl are in love, a bad guy places the girl in danger, and, after a series of exciting events, good triumphs over evil, and the boy gets the girl. Just as the word *melodrama* suggests, music was prominent in these productions. In the image at the beginning of this chapter taken from D. W. Griffith's *The Birth*

of a Nation, note the presence of an orchestra in front of the stage for this re-creation of a melodrama.

Music and drama have had a close relationship since the early classics of ancient Greece. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were composers as well as playwrights. Shakespeare, too, incorporated live music in his presentations. An overture announced the beginning of the play, entr'actes played before each succeeding act, and songs and dances were often inserted into the stories. These musical insertions are called **incidental music**, and they closely parallel what we refer to as "source music" in films. A tradition of adding extra songs and even adding music under dialogue in Shakespeare plays reached a peak in the nineteenth century.

Melodrama, which gained prominence in the early nineteenth century, merely expanded the role of music so that it underscored or alternated with spoken dialogue and accompanied movement on stage. In an 1867 edition of the British periodical *The Musical World*, Bashi Bazook describes the music created for melodramas:

The requirements of the English melodrama necessitate very frequently the presence of the musician in the orchestra during the progress of the play. The entrance and exit of the virtuous yet suffering country maiden, of the grim traitor, of the burly English squire, must be marked by what the managers pleasingly style on the bills "characteristic music."

Bazook goes on to describe other types of music such as "Slow music," "Mysterious music," "Dreamy music," "Agitatoes," "Dying music," and "**Hurrys**." The last of these was a common type of melodramatic music performed during a chase scene or a race to the rescue.

Bazook suggests that the best theaters had newly composed music created for such plays, but complains that most theaters relied on borrowed music. Such observations would also be made for film music during the silent era. Borrowings were largely drawn from the repertory of classical and popular works, but, as in the silent film era, theater music directors were aided by the publication of anthologies of musical excerpts. The title page of one such publication from 1878 is shown as FIGURE 4.5. Note that the types of music include



FIGURE 4.5 Title page of an anthology of music for melodramas

Hurrys, Combats, Tremolos, and Mysterious Music, and that the instrumentation is a moderate-size orchestra. The anthology is intended for the theater music director, who could draw upon and reuse any number of these excerpts as the various melodramas might demand. Also note that these excerpts are called “cues,” the same term used for segments of music in film.

The larger theaters in London, such as Drury Lane, turned to spectacular melodramas in the mid-nineteenth century. Such productions were supported by newly composed music for large musical ensembles, including vocal soloists, choir, and a full-sized symphony orchestra. Across the Atlantic, all of the traditions of melodrama were assimilated into American theater, including those of the spectacular productions. In 1899 a stage version of Lew Wallace’s sensational novel *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* was produced on Broadway. One theater historian has estimated that this play was seen both in this country and abroad by over twenty million people, making it the most widely watched American play of all time. The spectacle was enhanced with live camels, a drifting raft, and an onstage chariot race with twenty horses and five chariots.

Edgar Stillman Kelley, a well-traveled and versatile American composer, provided the music for the production. He composed an overture, entr’actes, multiple choral segments, and songs for vocal soloists. In addition, there is music to accompany stage action and to support dramatic dialogues. Within his score, there are several easily identified leitmotifs, including those for Ben-Hur and Christ. The latter ([EXAMPLE 4.1](#)) reflects the traditional references to the Trinity, with its three flats and a melody that centers within a melodic third.

Example 4.1 The Christ theme from Edgar Stillman Kelley’s music for *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*



Since this box-office hit appeared just as cinema was in its formative stages, it would be difficult not to see it as a major influence on the emerging art form. Among those in attendance was America’s first great auteur, D. W. Griffith, who later bid on the rights to make a silent film version of the stage play. And we should keep in mind that many of the major film composers of the golden age



FIGURE 4.6 Dancers and musicians perform in a scene from the stage play *Ben-Hur*.

of sound, including Max Steiner and Alfred Newman, began their careers in the theater and would have been well acquainted with the musical accompaniments to melodrama.

Smaller Dramatic Presentations

We close this chapter with some references to simpler dramatic types. A wide variety of presentations were popular in this country and in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century. Among these were dramatic readings, **pantomimes** (stories acted without dialogue), **tableaux vivants** (live actors posing, often re-creating an image from a famous painting), and magic lantern shows. The **magic lantern** was a type of image projector that primarily worked with individual slides, but it was also the source of some of our earliest illusions of moving pictures. Common to all of these types was a simple musical accompaniment, generally provided by a pianist. Light classical and popular music were a staple for such performances, as it would be for some of the earliest moving pictures, or what we often call movies.

TRAILER

Musical clichés for emotions, character, location, and time were well established at the end of the nineteenth century. These were easily assimilated into the music for silent films, and they continue to be employed in movies up to the present time. For the earliest stages of film history, we shall see how the showing of moving pictures on film adapted a simple type of musical accompaniment, as heard with dramatic presentations such as pantomimes. But as movies became more sophisticated, so did their music. From the beginning, film and music would be linked together.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

auteur	hurrys	program symphony
ballet	incidental music	programmatic music
Beethoven, Ludwig van	Kelley, Edgar Stillman	Schubert, Franz
Berlioz, Hector	magic lantern	symphonic poem
character dance	melodrama	tableau vivant
classical film score	movement	Tchaikovsky, Pyotr Ilyich
descriptive music	orchestrator	Vivaldi, Antonio
<i>Dies irae</i>	opera	Wagner, Richard
doctrine of affections	pantomime	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Listen to programmatic orchestral works such as Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*, Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, Sibelius's *Moldau*, or Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*. How does the music portray the suggested images?
2. After listening to the overture to Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* (*Der fliegende Holländer*), discuss the two principal leitmotifs and the musical depiction of a storm.
3. Watch excerpts from Wagner's *Ring Cycle* (*Siegfried* Act I, Scene 2 provides a good example of the use of leitmotifs in a theatrical narrative). Discuss the similarities of Wagner's work to the film trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*, including the music.
4. Listen to or watch excerpts from Tchaikovsky's ballets and discuss the ways music supports the drama.
5. What are the musical links between nineteenth-century melodrama and film music?

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2

THE SILENT FILM ERA,
1895-1929

SIGNIFICANT
FILMS

1894	<i>Departure from the Lumière Factory</i>	1896	<i>The Kiss</i>
1895	Dickson Experimental Film with Sound	1902	<i>A Trip to the Moon</i>

A New Art Form

5



A poster (c. 1896) advertising Edison's Vitascope shows a pit orchestra in front of the screen.

For many people, the term “silent film” conjures up images of flickering movies, perhaps the figure of Charlie Chaplin’s “Little Tramp,” and the mechanical drone of a projector. While these may have a part in the history

of silent film, the only constant in motion pictures is change. Technology has, at times, impacted all art forms, including architecture, painting, and music. But film, a creation of various technological developments, was born during an age of rapid technological advancements, and it underwent transformations more quickly than we find in other media. Flickering images gave way to sophisticated camera and projection techniques, Charlie Chaplin represents only one approach to the medium, and the showing of films without music was quite rare, as the energy of live music was considered essential to the new art form.

THE BIRTH OF FILM

Eadweard Muybridge

A leading photographer of the American West, Eadweard Muybridge had over fifteen years of experience working with moving images. Leland Stanford, the former governor of California, hired him to use this expertise in order to settle a bet. Racing enthusiasts had long debated whether or not a horse ever has all four legs off the ground while running, and Stanford decided to resolve the issue with the aid of photography. Muybridge placed twelve cameras at specified intervals next to a racetrack. When a running horse broke the trip wires, twelve successive photos were taken. Through this process it was shown with certainty that a horse does leave the ground while running. Stanford won his \$25,000 bet—at a cost of at least \$40,000.

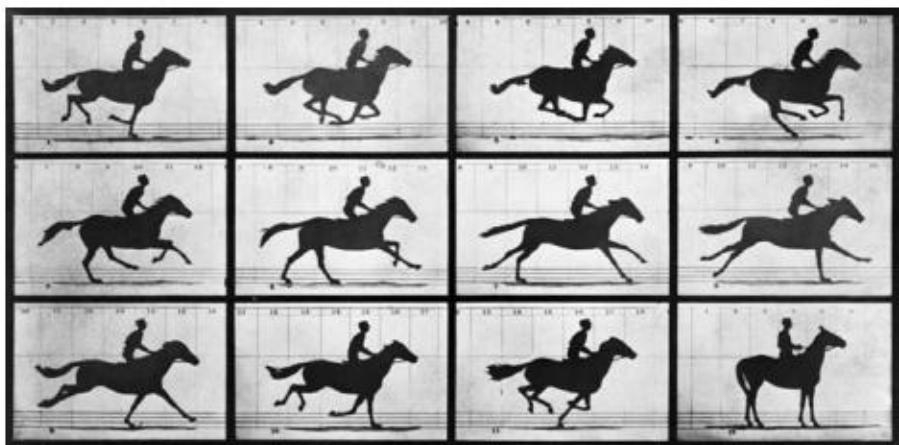


FIGURE 5.1 Muybridge's photos of a horse in motion

The issue soon extended beyond idle curiosity; animal and human motion had become an important scientific subject. Muybridge continued to improve his shutter-release mechanism, increased the number of cameras used for a scene, and explored new subjects, including the movement of unclothed men and women. Having established his technique for capturing motion and freezing it on film, he then took the critical next step of reconstructing the appearance of motion by showing the images in rapid succession. Muybridge toured the United States and Great Britain with a device he called a **Zoopraxiscope**, projecting moving images for distinguished audiences of artists, intellectuals, and dignitaries. (For several of these presentations, the presence of musical accompaniment has been documented.) The influence of Muybridge's discoveries went beyond entertainment, as scientists and artists were fascinated with capturing and re-creating motion. Inspired by Muybridge, Marcel Duchamp, one of the leading figures in modern French painting, attempted to depict motion in his famous 1912 painting *Nude Descending a Staircase* (see FIGURE 5.2).



FIGURE 5.2 Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*

CLOSE-UP: CONTROVERSIAL EARLY FIGURES

Murder and Monopoly

Two of the leading names in the early history of American film are tainted with controversy. **Eadweard Muybridge** (1830–1904) was an eccentric artist. He was born Edward James Muggeridge in England; the peculiar spelling of his name evolved over the years. He spent much of his life in the United States and is recognized as one of the great photographers of the old West. Especially well known are his images of Yosemite (1868 and 1872) and his monumental panorama of San Francisco (1878).

Muybridge was also one of the first photographers to develop a shutter for the camera, a critical step in capturing motion. His collaboration with Leland Stanford led to several technical improvements, and soon his camera was able to capture what the human eye could

not see. Published in important science journals, Muybridge's images generated a great deal of excitement.

But his work was put on hold when he was tried for murder. Muybridge had married a photo retoucher named Flora Stone. She had divorced her husband in order to marry Eadweard, but soon became involved with another man. Outraged, Muybridge shot and killed her lover at close range. During the trial his lawyer argued that an accident on a stagecoach had left him mentally unbalanced, and Muybridge was acquitted.

He went back to work with Stanford, but after some disputes, Stanford withdrew his support. The photographer took a position at the University of Pennsylvania, where he used fellow teachers, models, and other artists as subjects for his studies of motion. Although some of

Continued on next page

the views, such as a nude woman throwing a baseball, seem silly and borderline pornographic, the intent was serious, as evidenced by the lined backdrop used for measuring movement (see FIGURE 5.1). Muybridge created over one hundred thousand images, many of which were issued in two publications, *Animals in Motion* and *The Human Figure in Motion*.

Albert Einstein called **Thomas Edison** (1847–1931) “the greatest inventor of all time.” At the age of twenty-one, Edison received his first patent for the stock ticker. After perfecting numerous devices for the operation of the telegraph, he founded a research laboratory in New Jersey. Here, the Wizard of Menlo Park developed the phonograph, the incandescent lamp, and the carbon microphone used in the telephone.

Yet Edison has a dubious role in film history. The principal moving force behind the development of moving pictures at the Edison lab was not Edison, but a British amateur photographer, W. K. L. Dickson (1860–1935). Dickson’s first crude camera was used to photograph fellow worker Fred Ott in a comical sneeze. Seeing the result of this work, Edison decided to focus on the Kinetoscope. He chose to develop a device for an individual viewer rather than projections that could be shown to an audience. This approach allowed for a simpler coordination of film and phonograph, and Edison believed that it was a better financial investment. Dickson created the first studio, a small building called the Black Maria, directed the

early films, and even appeared as an actor in several of them.

Unhappy that new faces were entering the motion picture arena, Edison attempted to block others from working in the field. In 1902 a Supreme Court decision concluded that since Edison did not invent motion pictures, he could not own a patent on the process. Angered by the decision, Edison turned his attention to controlling the marketplace. In 1909 he consolidated Vitagraph, Biograph, Pathé, Méliès, and other companies into the Motion Picture Patents Company. The key to this trust was George Eastman, who was bullied into a restrictive contract that prevented him from selling his film to anyone who did not cooperate with Edison’s company. The Eastman Company would survive and thrive in future years, but George committed suicide in 1932 following a lengthy illness.

Edison assumed dictatorial powers in the field. He limited films to no more than two reels, and he did not allow the names of actors to appear in the credits, in order to keep them from demanding more money. Some filmmakers were forced to sign contracts to work for Edison. Others, threatened with bodily harm, fled west, eventually making a new home in Hollywood in order to avoid Edison’s gangsters. Finally William Fox decided to fight Edison, and in 1917 an antitrust action dissolved Edison’s company. Edison quit the business in order to pursue other ventures.

Thomas Edison

In 1888 Edison unveiled a commercially viable version of the phonograph, which he had invented in 1876. Immediately he vowed to work on moving pictures: “I wanted to do for the eye what the phonograph does for the ear.” To this end, Edison met with Eadweard Muybridge and proposed a cooperative

venture that would lead to the coordination of moving pictures and recorded sound. The photographer declined Edison's offer, believing that the venture was impractical. The Wizard of Menlo Park was left to work on the project on his own.

Indeed the combination proved to be difficult. After three years of laboratory work, Edison unveiled the **Kinetoscope**, a peephole viewer for a single person to observe moving pictures without sound. In 1894 the first Kinetoscope parlor was established in New York, at a site now occupied by Macy's, and soon similar establishments appeared throughout the United States. In a photo of a San Francisco Kinetoscope parlor from 1895 (see **FIGURE 5.3**), Kinetoscopes for viewing are on the right, and phonographs for listening, with earphones and handkerchiefs dangling in front, are on the left.

Once a public forum for viewing had been established, it became necessary to create a steady stream of new films. W. K. L. Dickson, the Edison lab assistant who had played a critical role in the creation of the Kinetoscope, built the first movie studio and began shooting the first significant repertoire of silent moving pictures. The subjects of these films tended to be sensational and somewhat earthy. *The Kiss* (1896), perhaps the most famous of the early works, is a re-creation of the climactic scene of a Broadway show (see **FIGURE 5.4**), using the actual cast members. Other Dickson films include Sandow, the father of modern bodybuilding, flexing his muscles, an unsavory cockfight, and the famous "Serpentine Dancer," a rare early modern dance routine captured on film.

During this time, Edison continued to work toward his original goal of creating visual images that would accompany recorded sound from a phonograph. The **Kinetophone** debuted in 1895 and, as seen in the center of Figure 5.3 and in **FIGURE 5.5**, came equipped with both a viewer and earphones. Dickson shot the first known films with sound in 1894 or 1895. In



FIGURE 5.3 A Kinetoscope parlor in San Francisco in 1895



FIGURE 5.4 *The Kiss*



FIGURE 5.5 A Kinetophone with a viewer and earphones

one experimental film, several frames of which are shown in **FIGURE 5.6**, Dickson plays a tune from the opera *The Chimes at Normandy* on the violin into a recording horn, while two men dance in the foreground. Recordings for the Kinetophone—our first examples of film music—tend to be of popular dance tunes, such as the “Pomona Waltz,” “Continental March,” and “Irish Reel.” These tunes primarily accompanied images of dancers.

Edison’s vision of film was limited by his original goal of combining moving pictures with music played on his phonograph. The individual peephole approach of the Kinetoscope and Kinetophone was the most practical means to this end. But Edison soon discovered that others had created a great sensation by projecting films to an audience. Not concerned with using recorded music, these innovators employed live musicians to accompany their public showings. Quick to recognize the financial advantages of this alternate approach, Edison turned his energies toward projection as well. In 1896 he unveiled his projector, the **Vitascope**, and, as depicted in a poster from that year (featured at the beginning of this chapter), his presentations included an orchestra. Edison continued to work on combining recorded music with projected films, but he eventually abandoned that project in 1915, just about a decade before this dream became a reality.

The Lumière Brothers

Europeans were the first to explore the projection of films to a paying audience. In 1894 Louis and Auguste Lumière created the **Cinématographe**, a device that was capable of recording moving pictures, printing film, and projecting images onto a screen. Because the camera weighed only twelve pounds, it could be taken outdoors, and it shot the first moving images outside a studio. On December 28, 1895, the Lumière brothers

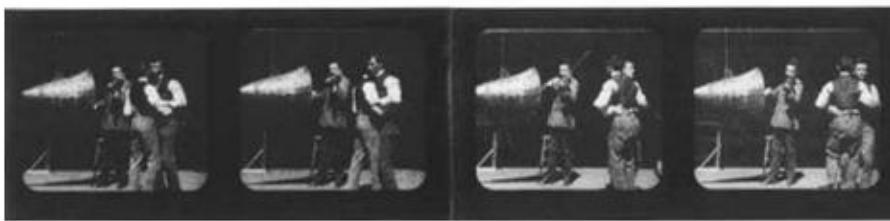


FIGURE 5.6 W. K. L. Dickson plays the violin while two men dance in this early experimental film using recorded sound.

showed a series of films to an audience consisting primarily of photographers and inventors. Included in the show were *Departure from the Lumière Factory*, their first motion picture from 1894; *The Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat Station*, which created an enormous sensation, as the train seemed to roar toward the audience; and *The Sprinkler Sprinkled*, a brief comedy sketch. For the debut, a pianist played what has been described as improvisations on popular melodies. In subsequent presentations of these films in London, musical performances by a harmonium (a reed organ) and an orchestra have been documented.

In later years, the Lumière brothers turned their cameras on historical events, such as the coronation of Czar Nikolai II in Moscow and the inauguration of President William McKinley. They also filmed reenactments, including *The Life and Passion of Jesus Christ*. Hundreds saw Lumière films at the Paris Exposition of 1900, but the brothers abandoned film production that year in order to work on other ventures. Louis is reported to have said, "The cinema is an invention without a future."



FIGURE 5.7 *Departure from the Lumière Factory*

NARRATIVE FILM

The first moving pictures did not tell stories. The art form was originally conceived as an extension of photography. Film and photography focused on similar subjects—people, city life, important events—and both created a heightened sense of reality. The principal difference between the two was simply that the subjects in films moved. It is not surprising that the early history of film is dominated by figures from France and Great Britain, the main centers for photography in the nineteenth century, and that many of the important pioneers in filmmaking are also significant in the history of photography. But when films began to re-create historical events and show brief comic skits, tentative steps toward the telling of stories were taken. The two figures most closely associated with the beginnings of narrative films are Georges Méliès and Edwin Porter.

Georges Méliès

One of the observers at the first Lumière showing was a young magician, Georges Méliès. Inspired by Houdini, Méliès owned the Théâtre Robert-Houdin, where he

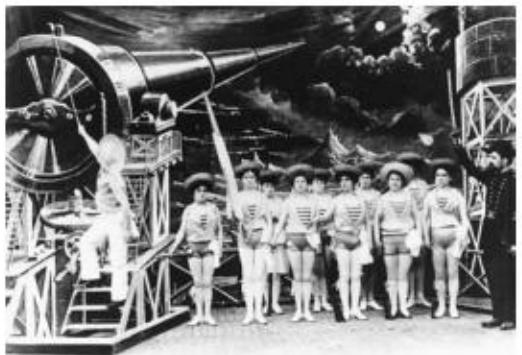


FIGURE 5.8 Preparations before launching in *A Trip to the Moon*

performed magic shows. Méliès obtained a camera-projector and began showing Edison films during his performances. Not content with these brief diversions, he built a studio and began making his own motion pictures. Characterized by elaborate sets and costumes, fantastic stories, and bevvies of beautiful girls, these extended visions were well suited to a magic show. During their presentation, the theater orchestra provided musical accompaniment. In all, Méliès made over five hundred films, in which he explored camera techniques such as slow motion, dissolves, fade-outs, and superimpositions. Eventually, Méliès was forced out of the industry, and his final years were spent quietly selling candy and toys, as depicted in Martin Scorsese's *Hugo* (2011).

Méliès's most famous work is *A Trip to the Moon* (1902). Although this is not the first film narrative, its substantial length (over ten minutes), elaborate sets and costumes, and fantastic story make it a landmark work in the presentation of a story. In each of its fifteen scenes, the camera is stationary, while the actors (Méliès appears as the principal astronomer) and scenery move in front of the lens. The character of a theatrical magic show is evident. The film was originally shown with both narration and musical accompaniment.

Edwin Porter

Edwin Porter's *The Great Train Robbery*, considered to be the first major American narrative film, appeared the following year (1903). Porter had worked as a projectionist and began directing films for Edison at the turn of the century. In

a way, this film falls within the tradition of re-creating historical events. On August 19, 1900, Butch Cassidy and his gang stopped a train in Wyoming, uncoupled several cars, robbed the passengers, and made off with \$5,000. This film is a retelling of that event. While westerns for modern audiences are fantasies set in the past, this plot was current news and audiences went wild, especially at the point at which one of the bandit's points his gun at the camera and shoots straight at the audience.

The greatest dramatic achievement in this work is the telling of a story with discontinuous action. As the film shifts from the escaping bandits to the discovery of the crime and then to a dance hall, we get a sense of



FIGURE 5.9 Dancers and musicians (back right) in *The Great Train Robbery*

simultaneous events. This is an important step in moving away from filmed stage actions to the creation of true cinema. Noteworthy is the length of the dance-hall sequence: the scene is unnecessary for the drama and can be considered an early example of the insertion of a dance or musical diversion into a melodramatic tale. One bit of unintended humor in the film is a stumbling bandit, who appears not to know how to mount a horse. Ironically, this actor, who doubles as the train passenger that gets shot, would later become one of the first famous western stars—Bronco Billy. Clint Eastwood portrays him in the 1980 film named *Bronco Billy*.

MUSIC FOR EARLY SILENT FILM

Following the traditions of live theater, music was created by the individual venues, not by the filmmakers. Hence, the same movie likely had entirely different music from one theater to the next. Needless to say, the quality and appropriateness of these musical accompaniments varied widely. In looking at the diverse music from this fascinating era, we should consider first where the films were shown and then what types of music were employed.

Film Venues

The size of the venue for film presentations was a significant factor in determining the size of the accompanying musical ensemble. Many of the earliest films were presented as part of a theatrical entertainment, such as a magic show or a vaudeville performance—a practice that increased substantially after a strike of vaudeville performers in 1900. In these situations, it was natural for the theater orchestra to accompany the film as an extension of its normal duties.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, however, the principal venue for film presentations shifted from large theaters to **nickelodeons**, small shops that showed films exclusively, usually for the admission price of a nickel. The first nickelodeon was established in 1905 in Pittsburgh. By 1908 nearly five thousand appeared in the United States, and within another three years, that number increased to over ten thousand.

In the confines of the nickelodeon (as seen in **FIGURE 5.10**), an orchestra or even a small ensemble of musicians was often impractical. For the early years of silent film, the piano was the most common type of musical accompaniment to a film in a small venue. If

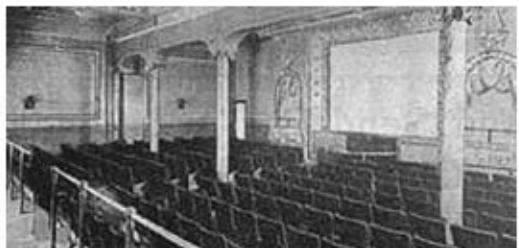


FIGURE 5.10 The interior of the first nickelodeon

there was enough room, it was common to add a drummer, who could make a variety of sound effects with his instruments, or a violinist and cellist. Singers were also employed to entertain between films and to lead audience sing-alongs.

Types of Music

A variety of music would have been heard in the early years of film, ranging from well-known classics and popular melodies to improvisations in traditional or popular style. Popular music seems to have been preferred. Edison chose popular dance melodies for the Kinetophone, and the earliest public showings of films featured popular music, which provided an energetic, cheerful, and decidedly modern ambience. Likewise, vaudeville theaters and nickelodeons tended toward popular musical styles.

Indeed, the early years of film in the United States coincide with the explosion of the publication of popular songs coming primarily from a cluster of music publishers in New York known as Tin Pan Alley. The combination of popular songs and films was natural. At a time when radio was in its infancy and household phonographs were rare, nickelodeons became a valuable tool in the spread of new songs. There is even a significant repertoire of **song films**—films or slide shows created to illustrate a popular song that would be performed live. It was common for song films to alternate with narrative films in a nickelodeon.

Popular music was also employed to accompany narrative films. Well-known melodies were chosen not necessarily for the mood that they projected, but sometimes because their titles reflected an aspect of the story. For example, a scene showing the effects of too much alcohol might be accompanied by “How Dry I Am,” or, in the case of a seaman, “What Shall We Do with a Drunken Sailor?” This tradition continued into the sound era. In *The Wizard of Oz*, for example, Dorothy’s longing to return to Kansas is reflected in the melody of “Home! Sweet Home!”

Despite the wide variety of musical practices in these early years, the combination of live music and film created a special effect. Narrative film depends upon the illusion of reality—making the audience forget that it is in a theater observing a two-dimensional screen—and live music greatly adds to this illusion. Music in these early films would have distracted from the noise of the projector, which otherwise would be a constant reminder that the images were emanating from a machine. More importantly, the presence of live musicians helped compensate for the absence of live actors. When film first appeared, the ghostly appearance of figures on a screen could have been a

mere intellectual curiosity, but the energy and emotion of musicians helped bridge the gap from live theater to canned film.

L'assassinat du Duc de Guise

Amid the swirling stream of approaches to film music, a landmark movie appeared in France. **Film d'Art**, a company dedicated to producing films of high artistic quality, engaged the leading stage actors in France to perform quality dramas based on history or mythology. Their first production, *L'assassinat du Duc de Guise* (1908) recounts the murder of the French duke by King Henry III in 1588. For music, the company turned to one of France's most prestigious composers—Camille Saint-Saëns. Best known for his symphonies, concertos, operas (including *Samson and Delilah*), and numerous popular works, such as *The Carnival of Animals* and *Danse macabre*, Saint-Saëns also composed incidental music for stage plays.

Saint-Saëns published his music for *L'assassinat du Duc de Guise* separately as Opus 128. The concert version of *L'assassinat du Duc de Guise* reveals four important aspects about the first film score. First, the published version is written for twelve instruments: flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, French horn, string quintet, piano, and harmonium. This combination of instruments is unusual for concert music, but is typical of orchestras for moderate-sized theaters. Second, as one might expect from a great master of Romanticism, the musical style emphasizes melody and a strong emotional content. Third, the shifting moods within each movement mirror the dramatic action on the screen. Fourth, recurring themes throughout the five movements suggest a simple system of leitmotifs—themes associated with characters in the film. In other words, the basic elements of the classical film score are already present in Saint-Saëns's initial conception.

TRAILER

L'assassinat du Duc de Guise appeared just over a dozen years after the “birth” of film. By 1908 the medium had undergone substantial changes, but more lay immediately ahead. In many respects, *L'assassinat du Duc de Guise* was ahead of its time, as it foreshadows several subsequent developments in film. Among these are the creation of music intended for a specific film and the association of a quality film with orchestral music.

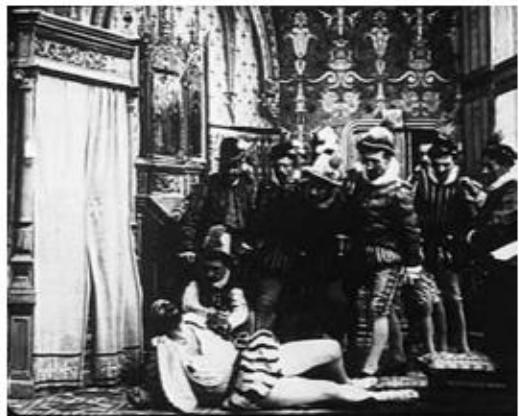


FIGURE 5.II *L'assassinat du Duc de Guise*

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

Cinématographe	Lumière, Louis and	Porter, Edwin
Dickson, W. K. L.	Auguste	Saint-Saëns, Camille
Edison, Thomas	Méliès, Georges	song film
Film d'Art	Muybridge,	Vitascope
Kinetophone	Eadweard	Zoopraxiscope
Kinetoscope	nickelodeon	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Clips of early moving pictures from Muybridge, Edison, and the Lumière brothers are readily available on YouTube. Selections are also available on the DVD *Landmarks of Early Film*, distributed by Image Entertainment. The first volume of this set contains *A Trip to the Moon* and *The Great Train Robbery*. Discuss matters such as the potential for storytelling with film and what type of music might be appropriate for accompaniment.
2. A video of “Dickson Experimental Film” can be found on YouTube and in the DVD collection, *More Treasures from American Film Archives, 1894–1931*, produced by the National Film Preservation Foundation, 2004. Why is the choice of melody appropriate for this short film segment?
3. Multiple versions of *The Great Train Robbery* can be viewed on YouTube, including some without music. Discuss the differences between the “silent” version and the various choices of music.
4. Why was live music so important for silent film?
5. YouTube contains several almost-complete versions of Film d'Art's *L'assassinat du Duc de Guise* with music of Saint-Saëns. You can also listen to a complete recording of this music as Opus 128 on the CD from Harmonia Mundi, HMA 1951472. Consider how the music supports the drama and suggests the emergence of the classical film score.

FOR FURTHER READING

Altman, Rick. “The Living Nickelodeon,” in *The Sounds of Early Cinema*, ed. Richard Abel and Rick Altman. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001, 232–240.

1915	<i>The Birth of a Nation</i>
1925	<i>The Big Parade</i>

The Foundations of Modern Filmmaking

6



A parade inspires Jim to join the army in *The Big Parade*.

By 1909, the commercial viability of the new art form was established. Through the next sixteen years, the fledgling industry would undergo rapid change. Inventors would create new technologies, entrepreneurs would capitalize on financial rewards, and artists would express themselves in a new





FIGURE 6.1 Photoplay cover from November 1915 featuring the image of Mary Pickford

discipline that combined elements of the visual, dramatic, and musical arts.

Filmmaking as we know it took shape in the 1910s. During this time, the length of films expanded from one-reel shorts (a reel generally runs twelve minutes) to **feature films** with four or more reels. Emerging from anonymity, a number of actors became stars. Names such as Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and Charlie Chaplin drew audiences to the new theaters, and movie magazines (see [FIGURE 6.1](#)) and gossip columns focused on the lives of the leading men and women. As the financial potential grew, so did the studio system. After breaking Edison's grip on filmmaking, studios created their own empires. Much of the construction was in the west, most notably in Hollywood, where there was an abundance of cheap land and plenty of sunshine for filming.

Perhaps the most significant development during these years was the emergence of the United States as the dominant center of filmmaking. In the early years of the twentieth century, the histories of European and American film are intertwined, and Europe arguably produced the finest works. The ascent of American films is largely a consequence of World War I, which halted most film production in Europe. European films never regained equal commercial footing with their American counterparts.

CLOSE-UP: FOUNDING FATHERS OF AMERICAN FILM

Shaping American Film

In the early years of the industry, films were often one-man productions, with a single individual dealing with all financial and artistic matters. Soon, these duties were divided between a producer who handled financial matters and a director responsible for the artistic side. Other roles were more clearly defined when studios were established, where specialized production teams worked on individual aspects of the film. Wielding supreme power over this kingdom was the studio head. Producers and directors, like actors, were often attached to one studio, but each could also work

independently. These are among the most prominent figures in the early years of American film:

William Fox (1879–1952) entered the business with a chain of theaters. He achieved a hero's status with his successful efforts to break Edison's control of the business. Soon he created his own monopoly—the Twentieth Century Fox studio. Eventually his monopoly was broken, and, after some jail time, he retired from the business.

Thomas Ince (1882–1924) acted in some of D. W. Griffith's earliest films and soon began directing his own works. Fleeing Edison control, he went to Cuba,

Texas, and finally California. He established Hollywood's first great studio, Triangle Pictures, which would become MGM. Here, Ince created the factory system with distinct production units and defined the role of producer. In one of Hollywood's darker moments, he was killed on board the yacht of William Randolph Hearst. It was suggested that Hearst shot him, thinking that he was Charlie Chaplin, the suspected lover of Hearst's mistress, Marion Davies.

Jesse Lasky (1880–1958) produced the first film on the West Coast (*Squaw Man*, 1914) and is credited as the founder of Hollywood. He joined Adolph Zukor in creating the Paramount studio, but unlike Zukor he was let go by the company after financial woes hit the studio, and he worked independently thereafter.

Louis B. Mayer (1885–1957) began his career in the family enterprise—the junk business. Mayer set his sights on the burgeoning film industry and made a small fortune distributing *The Birth of a Nation* to New England theaters. In 1917 he moved to Hollywood and founded the Metro Pictures Corporation. Seven years later, a merger produced Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), the largest and most prestigious studio in Hollywood. Here Mayer created the studio of the stars, and by 1938 he was the highest-paid officer of any corporation in the United States.

Mack Sennett (1880–1960) began his career with Griffith, and soon his talents led him into directing

comedies. Founding the Keystone Company, he produced a film a day, many featuring the famous Keystone Kops. He also discovered Chaplin and played an important role in the careers of other comic actors, including Harold Lloyd and W. C. Fields.

Irving Thalberg (1899–1936) became the model for the powerful studio producer, controlling all aspects of production and reigning supreme, even over directors. Known as the "Boy Wonder," he was a major figure at Universal Studios before the age of twenty-one. Moving to the newly formed MGM, he became the dominant figure in production in that studio. A heart attack in 1932 slowed his activities, and his sudden death from pneumonia at the age of thirty-seven shocked Hollywood. In 1937 the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences created the Irving G. Thalberg Award for high-quality achievements in production, the only award that is not given as an Oscar but rather in the image of Thalberg.

Adolph Zukor (1873–1976) also began with a chain of theaters but soon turned to distribution and brought some of Europe's finest films, including *Queen Elizabeth* (1912), to the United States. He was one of the founders of Paramount and led the studio to its initial height. After a major financial setback, he turned over the controls but continued to work there until he was one hundred years old. He died at the age of 103.



One might argue that "silent films" were never silent. Although the films lacked spoken words, commentaries and dialogue were often shown through printed texts inserted into the film, called **intertitles**. Still, music, sound effects, and sometimes, spoken words were essential parts of film presentations. Unfortunately, much of the music has been lost for silent films, and the surviving musical manuscripts have rarely been reconstructed and recorded with their films. Despite these complications, we can make some generalizations about music during this era. As the movie

industry grew, film music also underwent significant changes. The following are among the trends that can be observed:

- The size of musical ensembles expanded as larger theaters began to appear.
- The organ replaced the piano as the most common movie-theater instrument.
- Adapted scores incorporating excerpts from nineteenth-century classics became common.
- Cue sheets and music anthologies provided help for theater music directors.
- Original scores were created for specific films.

MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT

In the 1910s and '20s most Americans attended smaller neighborhood movie houses, with music from a single keyboard instrument. Medium-sized theaters could feature an ensemble of five to ten musicians, generally including a pianist. Beginning in 1912, a number of large theaters called **movie palaces** were created, primarily for wealthier patrons in major urban centers such as New

York. The palaces often featured symphony orchestras of over fifty musicians. Perhaps the most spectacular of the silent film palaces was the Roxy Theatre in New York, which could seat 5,920 patrons (see [FIGURE 6.2](#)). Ironically, the Roxy opened in 1927—the same year as the release of *The Jazz Singer*, a film that signaled the end of the silent film era.

Responding to the growing needs of theaters and musicians, **Wurlitzer**, the largest organ maker in the United States, began producing special instruments designed for movie theaters. Organs were already able to produce a greater volume of sound and variety of color than any other instrument; now additional mechanical devices were created for the instrument so that musicians could produce nonmusical sound effects, such as the crow of a rooster, a car horn, or a gunshot. The complexity of these instruments is evident in the descriptions and photos of the organ at the Roxy Theatre (see [FIGURE 6.3](#)), which had five keyboards, a pedal keyboard, and an array of stops (small levers on the side of the instrument) for changes of color and sounds. Used in both small



FIGURE 6.2 The proscenium and orchestra pit of the ornate Roxy Theatre

and large theaters, the organ was the most common type of musical accompaniment for films by the mid-1920s.

FILM MUSIC

Music for silent films can be divided into three types: **adaptations** from the classical repertoire; **arrangements** of well-known patriotic, religious, or popular tunes; and newly composed material. In many cases, all three types can be found in the same film. Musical scores based largely on pre-composed music are considered to be **adapted scores**.

The benefits of adapting classical works included the availability of parts for the instrumentalists; the freedom from having to compose new music for each film; the saving of rehearsal time, since many of the performers would already know the excerpts; the audience's potential familiarity with the music; and the lack of copyright protection. Many theaters developed extended libraries of musical works, often organized by emotional content. Max Winkler, a pioneer in compiling music for films, describes the process:

In desperation, we turned to crime. We began to dismember the great masters. We began to murder the works of Beethoven, Mozart, Grieg, J. S. Bach, Verdi, Bizet, Tchaikovsky, and Wagner—everything that wasn't protected by copyright from outright pilfering. The immortal chorales of J. S. Bach became an "Adagio Lamentoso" for sad scenes. Extracts from great symphonies were hacked down to emerge again as "Sinister Misterioso" by Beethoven, or "Weird Moderato" by Tchaikovsky. Wagner's and Mendelssohn's wedding marches were used for marriages, fights between husbands and wives, and divorce scenes; we just had them played out of tune, a treatment known in the profession as "souring up the aisle." If they were to be used for happy endings, we jazzed them up mercilessly.*

These borrowings were drawn predominantly from the works of nineteenth-century composers. The resultant Romantic style of film music corresponds roughly to the tastes of concertgoers in the United States of the early twentieth century. With the occasional exceptions of ensembles that improvised in a popular style and the rare film that required modern music, the fundamental reliance of American film music on the musical idiom of the late nineteenth century would continue for at least two more decades.



FIGURE 6.3 The organ at the Roxy Theatre

*Max Winkler, "The Origins of Film Music," *Films in Review*, 2/10, December 1951, 40.

CUE SHEETS AND ANTHOLOGIES

Filmmakers, theater owners, and musicians increasingly concerned themselves with the relationship between music and drama. They recognized the ability of music to support the emotions of each scene. Moreover, filmmakers began to recognize music's ability to build a sense of character, to mirror physical gestures on the screen, and to create a sense of time or place—especially useful for exotic settings.

Efforts to facilitate this coordination followed two directions: the creation of guides to help theater musicians select appropriate music, and the composition of new scores for individual films. Two types of guides appeared: cue sheets intended to accompany specific films, and anthologies of stock musical excerpts. The first **cue sheets** appeared in 1909, and leading the way was the Edison Film Company. Wanting to maintain more control over the music played for his films, Edison published specific suggestions for individual scenes. Describing each scene of the film, the cue sheet would indicate what type of music would be appropriate to the various moods.

Also in 1909, the first significant **music anthology** was published with the fanciful title *Motion Picture Piano Music: Descriptive Music to Fit the Action, Character, or Scene of Moving Pictures*. The anthology contained excerpts of music to match general moods, settings, or characters. Rather than picking random works from the classical repertoire, a theater pianist could select passages from the anthology based on the needs of a particular film. Precedence for such publications, of course, can be found in the nineteenth-century anthologies for melodramas (see FIGURE 4.5).

Over the next fifteen years, numerous anthologies were created. In *Motion Picture Moods for Pianists and Organists* (1924), the conductor and composer Erno Rapée keyed 370 musical excerpts to a variety of moods found in films.

Ariettes	2	10
Band	3	
Battle	10	
Birds	21	
Chants	273	
Chase	599	
Chorus	38	
Children	31	
Chimes	269	
Dances	39	
Gavottes	39	
Marches	102	
Maurokaw	48	
Minota	56	
Pelées	61	
Tango	21	
Valsemazette	28	
Vassus	85	
Droll	128	
Festival	146	
Fire-Fighting	161	
Funeral	160	
Grotesque	105	
Gruesome	109	
Happiness	303	

FIGURE 6.4 A page from Rapée's *Motion Picture Moods for Pianists and Organists*

In FIGURE 6.4, we see "Agitato No. 3," with a note that the music would be "suitable for gruesome or infernal scenes, witches, etc." The excerpt borrows heavily from a well-known song by Schubert, "Erlkönig." On the left, an index appears as a quick guide for finding other types of music that would establish a mood ("funeral" and "happiness"), accompany action ("battle" and "fire-fighting"), mimic sounds ("birds" and "chimes"), and provide source music (the various dances).

NEWLY COMPOSED SCORES

In the mid-1910s, film music was primarily created in the individual theaters and contained substantial amounts of borrowed material. Musical scores written for specific films that would travel from theater to theater were unusual. But within a decade, most major new films were issued with their own music. Although these are original scores (written specifically for a new film), they often contained a substantial amount of borrowed music, either adapted works or arranged melodies. Our first two Viewer Guides will illustrate important developments in creating original film scores: the historic and controversial *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) and the blockbuster *The Big Parade* (1925).

The Birth of a Nation

The Birth of a Nation presents a perplexing dilemma. On the one hand, it is film's first great masterpiece, elevating the technique of filmmaking to an art form. On the other hand, it presents a repugnant defense of Southern segregation, glorifying the formation of the Ku Klux Klan. It compels us to consider what makes art great. Can we separate the technique from the content of an artwork? Give some thought to this issue while viewing this landmark film.

Appearing on the scene when the industry was still in its infancy, D. W. Griffith elevated moving pictures from a short diversion to a sophisticated art form. Generally regarded as the single most important figure in American film, he stands as the first great artist in the field. His rise to this position was remarkably quick. In an eight-year time span he rose from novice to master. By the time he began work on *The Birth of a Nation* in 1915, he had made approximately 450 films. Most of these were one-reel works, but he also created a number of two-reel and four-reel films. This output is prodigious by any standard, and the sheer number of productions allowed him to develop his craft.

In these early works, Griffith fine-tuned his skills at using the visual, dramatic, and musical arts. Griffith became the first true auteur of film, controlling all aspects of filmmaking. In the area of visual arts, Griffith explored a wide range of effects, including close-ups, panoramas, and the moving camera. Griffith also



FIGURE 6.5 D. W. Griffith

exploited the unique abilities of film to enhance storytelling. By mastering the technique of crosscutting, he was able to build tension and to show simultaneous action in a way that is not possible on the stage. He also worked with a permanent ensemble of actors. During his unprecedented rehearsals prior to filming, he abandoned the theatrical gestures used in live theater and created a new style of acting suited to film. Having a strong background in music, Griffith also was involved in the creation of scores for his films.

Produced exactly fifty years after the close of the Civil War, *The Birth of a Nation* is a twelve-reel epic film. The plot extends from the antebellum South, through the Civil War, to the time of Reconstruction. The film is divided into two parts. The first half is a powerful story of the Civil War and its tragic impact on two families. Griffith took great pains to re-create several events of the war, most strikingly the assassination of Abraham Lincoln (1:18:40), which is remarkable for its historical accuracy. The most spectacular and successful moments of the film are the panoramic battle scenes. For the climactic scene of the Civil War, Griffith chose to re-create the battle of Petersburg (46:15), the one battle that most closely resembled the modern trench warfare of World War I. The relationship between what was on the screen and current events in Europe would not have been lost on an audience in 1915.

The second half of the film is based on *The Clansman*, a 1905 novel by the white supremacist Reverend Thomas Dixon. In this portion of the film, Griffith slips into historical inaccuracies. Although he suggests that he has re-created a historic vision of the State House of Representatives of South Carolina, his images of people are based on political cartoons of the time, not photos (1:54:05). In addition, historical events are distorted and manipulated to conform to Griffith's point of view. Contemporary viewers were not unaware of the racist undertones in 1915, and the film faced opposition in newspapers, in court, and in the streets.

Music for *The Birth of a Nation*

The dramatic and visual achievements of *The Birth of a Nation* are sufficient justification for this film's artistic reputation. Less known, but also significant, is its use of music composed specifically for this film. With this step, the filmmaker controlled the music, not the theater owner. Hence, the movie could be shown only at a limited number of theaters that were capable of performing a full orchestral score. Griffith worked closely with composer Joseph Carl Breil in the creation of a compelling, three-hour musical score in which all three types of music used for silent film can be heard—adaptations of classical works, arrangements of well-known melodies, and original music. Each type fills a specific function in the film.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Joseph Carl Breil (1870–1926)

America's first significant film composer, Breil began his career as a singer and opera composer. He had completed a short opera and several light operas when he was asked to compose music for the film *Queen Elizabeth* in 1912. In later years, he would be most closely associated with music for films of D. W. Griffith.

Important Film Scores

Queen Elizabeth 1912

The Birth of a Nation 1915

Intolerance 1916

Tess of the Storm Country 1922

The Phantom of the Opera 1925



The extended quotations of classical music usually accompany large action scenes. Breil chose excerpts from the most agitated sections of classical works for scenes of action and violence. Among the most prominent adaptations are passages from Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz*, Franz von Suppé's *Light Cavalry* Overture, Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 (the storm), and Richard Wagner's *Rienzi* Overture and *Ride of the Valkyrie*. The last two of these are used for the horse-riding Ku Klux Klan, racing to the rescue at the climax of the film (2:56:25).

Arrangements of well-known melodies are used primarily to arouse emotions and set moods. Southern tunes, such as "Dixie" and "Maryland, My Maryland" (the same melody as "O Christmas Tree"), express patriotism for the South and remind the viewer of the story's setting. Some of the other borrowed tunes underline the story. When the Southerner Cameron seeks refuge in a cabin with former Union soldiers, their acceptance of each other is suggested by the playing of "Auld Lang Syne," a song associated with reconciliation after the Civil War (2:30:50). Unfortunately, Breil also uses tunes to support the film's racist theme. Slaves are shown happily dancing (14:00) to "Turkey in the Straw," and later scenes of African Americans in power are mockingly accompanied by minstrel tunes, melodies associated with blackface entertainers of the nineteenth century (1:54:00).



FIGURE 6.6 Breil underscores the ride of the Ku Klux Klan with Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyrie* in *The Birth of a Nation*.

VIEWER GUIDE 6.1

The Birth of a Nation: Opening

Composer: Joseph Carl Breil



Timing

DVD: Kino 266 (01:05-13:30)

Setting

In the exposition, Griffith establishes the background for the conflict over slavery and introduces the two central families.

Key Points

- A specific score for orchestra created for the film
- Music that contains arrangements of several well-known melodies
- Leitmotifs that represent groups, individuals, and emotions

Principal Themes

Example 6.1 "The Motif of Barbarism"



Example 6.2 Austin Stoneman



Example 6.3 Elsie



Example 6.4 Cameron Family



Example 6.5 Love theme of Phil and Margaret



Example 6.6 Love theme of Ben and Elsie (also known as "The Perfect Song")



PLOT	MUSIC
Africans are brought to America as slaves.	Barbarism theme
Abolitionist meeting	Hymnlike music
Senator Austin Stoneman is shown with his daughter Elsie.	The stern Stoneman theme is followed by Elsie's light theme.
The Stoneman brothers (Phil and Tod) compose a letter.	Elsie's theme frames some light, popular material.
We meet the Cameron family from South Carolina, including Ben, Margaret, and Duke.	"Old Folks at Home," by Stephen Foster, alternates with the Cameron theme.
The Stoneman brothers visit the Camerons; friendships renew and love begins.	Elsie's theme, contrasting material, and more of Elsie's theme.
Tod and Duke horse around.	"Where Did You Get That Hat?" is followed by playful music.
Phil and Margaret walk through the cotton fields.	Idyllic music and Phil and Margaret's Love theme
Ben, grabbing a photo of Elsie, falls in love with the image.	Lyric music and the Love theme for Ben and Elsie

VIEWER GUIDE 6.1 does not contain any passages of adapted classical music, but there are a couple of arrangements of well-known songs. With the initial cut to South Carolina, Breil brings in Stephen Foster's "Old Folks at Home" (sometimes called "Swanee River"). This quotation serves two purposes: it helps establish a new location, and it provides a nostalgic mood for this idyllic scene in the antebellum South, as shown from D. W. Griffith's point of view. When the families get together, Tod and Duke quickly become playful. Breil now quotes a popular tune, "Where Did You Get That Hat?" (1888), as Duke pokes fun at Tod's hat. This melody poignantly recurs when the two boys die in each other's arms on the battlefield (39:45).



FIGURE 6.7 Sheet music for "The Perfect Song" from *The Birth of a Nation*

The greatest strength of Breil's score lies in the original music in which he crafts numerous leitmotifs. Many of these can be heard during the exposition of the film. While Griffith establishes the political situation in the North and South and introduces the two principal families, Breil presents six leitmotifs that are associated with aspects of the story; two of these belong to specific people, two represent a group of people, and two are simply love themes. The narrative begins with a theme labeled "The Motif of Barbarism," which is meant to represent Africans in general. Later, this melody becomes the theme for the mulatto Silas Lynch, the principal antagonist in the second half of the film. Observe that this theme begins with a syncopated rhythmic gesture, which is associated with the music of African Americans.

Shortly afterwards, two melodies are heard representing the Stoneman family. The stern theme for Senator Austin Stoneman is set in a minor key and suggests his questionable role in the drama. By contrast, his daughter Elsie has a playful tune that suggests her innocence. In the DVD version of the music produced by Kino, she

shares this theme with her two brothers. When the setting changes to South Carolina, we hear the other leitmotifs: a warm melody representing the entire Cameron family and two love themes for budding romances. Typical of love themes, the melodies are lyric and played by string instruments. Notably, the theme for Elsie and Ben is the best-known newly composed music from the film. Taking on an independent life, it was published as "The Perfect Song," becoming the first hit theme from a feature movie.

CLOSE-UP: FILM MUSIC FOUNDERS

Shaping American Film Music

Among the significant film composers of the 1920s, three figures are particularly prominent for their contributions to silent film:

William Axt (1888–1959) was born in New York and became the assistant conductor at the Manhattan Opera House under the music direction of Oscar Hammerstein. In 1919, he was appointed music

director of the Capitol Theatre. Known as "Dr. Billy," he received a doctorate in music from the University of Chicago. He developed a close relationship with Hollywood's MGM studio, and he was contracted to work on many of MGM's greatest silent films, including *Greed* (1924), *The Big Parade* (1925), and *Ben-Hur* (1925). Perhaps his finest accomplishment is the score

to the Warner Bros. production of *Don Juan* (1926, see Chapter 7). In the late 1920s, Axt began working directly for MGM. Among his sound films are *Dinner at Eight* (1933), *The Thin Man* (1934), and *Manhattan Melodrama* (1934).

Erno Rapée (1891–1945) conducted orchestras at the Roxy, Rivoli, and Capitol theaters; he also served as the music director at Radio City Music Hall. These orchestras were large—the Capitol Theatre orchestra numbered seventy-one performers, including forty-seven string players—and their quality was excellent. In addition to accompanying films, theater orchestras played major symphonic works, including tone poems by Richard Strauss. As a conductor, Rapée was heard on the radio by millions in performances on the *Roxy Hour*. He continued to compose

film scores into the 1930s, primarily for the Warner Bros. studio.

Hugo Riesenfeld (1879–1939) was also prominent as a conductor, directing orchestras at the Rialto, Rivoli, and Criterion. He felt that his orchestras were equal in quality to the New York Philharmonic, and considering how well the movie-theater musicians were paid and the number of repeated performances, he may well have been correct. In addition to conducting, Riesenfeld created musical scores for such classics as *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1920), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1923), *Les Misérables* (1925), and the synchronized version of *Sunrise* (1927, see Chapter 7). He later became the music director at United Artists and served as an important musical figure in the early sound era.

The Big Parade

In the years following *The Birth of a Nation*, films and film music became more sophisticated. King Vidor's *The Big Parade* appeared one decade after Griffith's masterpiece. With its mixture of humor, romance, and realistic battle scenes set in World War I, *The Big Parade* became the biggest box-office hit of the 1920s. The story follows Jim Apperson, a spoiled, rich young man who enlists in the army. The title of the film denotes the joyous celebrations when men go to and return from war. Within the story, it also refers to the convoy taking men to the front line and to the procession of vehicles bringing the dead and wounded back home.

Two composers are associated with this film: William Axt (1888–1959) composed the original music for the live performances of the 1920s; Carl Davis (b. 1936) orchestrated, elaborated, and augmented Axt's material for a 1988 DVD. Under normal circumstances, we would prefer to study a film with the music as it was originally heard. An exception is made here because Davis is a gifted composer, wrote period-appropriate music, and, for the most part, remained faithful to Axt's intentions.

Among the examples of period-appropriate music are the arrangements of George M. Cohan's "Over There" (see [VG 6.2](#)) and Isham Jones's "You're in the Army Now," both from 1917. Axt used the latter as a refrain during Jim's early days in France. Davis orchestrated it beginning with a simple statement of this melody in the tuba (14:35). A series of variations then extends, with periodic breaks, well over a half hour. Intertitles show various verses of the song that surely delighted and may have even induced a rousing sing-along from an audience with veterans.

VIEWER GUIDE 6.2

The Big Parade: Departure

Composer: William Axt/Carl Davis



Timing

DVD: WB 1000373130 (1:22:00-1:27:05)

Setting

During World War I, Jim (John Gilbert) has been stationed in France, where he has begun a romantic relationship with a village woman named Melisande (Renée Adorée). Their happy time together ends abruptly, as Jim is called to action.

Key Points

- Music capturing humor, patriotism, and romance
- George M. Cohan's "Over There" transformed into a march
- "Over There" combined with the Love theme
- The Love theme heard in a duple meter (with the march) and then in triple meter (like a waltz)

Principal Themes

Example 6.7 "Over There," George M. Cohan (1917)

Example 6.8 Love



PLOT	MUSIC
The soldiers are going to battle.	The orchestra plays "Over There" as a military march.
Crosscuts show the two lovers looking for each other.	With the first cut back to Melisande, the Love theme is added to the martial tune. The music becomes more dissonant and frantic.
They finally meet and embrace. They are pulled apart, but Melisande clings on.	The Love theme is played more slowly and emphatically.
Melisande holds onto the truck as long as she can. Jim throws her various objects.	The Love theme repeats in its entirety.
Melisande remains after Jim leaves.	A solo violin plays the end of the Love theme.



The scene described in Viewer Guide 6.2 is a highlight of the movie and the score. While waiting to be sent into battle, Jim has fallen in love with a French woman named Melisande. Jim's call to action intrudes upon their happiness, abruptly ending their relationship. In this scene, we are shown two concurrent actions—the procession of the soldiers heading to the front line and Melisande's desperate attempt to say goodbye to Jim. The music reflects both developments. Davis presents "Over There" as a military march. The melody's two most distinctive features are the fanfare-like opening (for four measures) and the lively, syncopated tune, both of which are used to suggest the excitement and stirring patriotism. Brass and percussion dominate in a relentless march tempo.

As in the Axt score, Davis soon adds the passionate Love theme of Jim and Melisande. This melody, expanded by a beat to fit into a march meter, is heard in a distinct timbre (strings), a higher register, and a lyric style. When the lovers unite, the Love theme returns to its original waltz tempo and dominates the score. After Jim leaves, a solo violin plays the theme, suggesting Melisande's profound sadness and loneliness. When the lovers are forced apart and Jim is on the transport, Melisande clings first to his leg, then to a chain on the back of the truck. After she lets go, Jim throws Melisande his wristwatch, dog tags, and shoe. That last gesture is full of irony, as Jim will lose the very leg that she clung to so fiercely. But in typical Hollywood fashion, Jim hobbles back to Melisande

at the end of the film. The Love theme returns fully at this point and provides a tearful conclusion to this classic silent film (2:28:45).

TRAILER

By the middle of the 1920s, the art of making silent films had been perfected. With grand movie palaces, finely crafted films, and lush musical scores, the industry appeared ready for a lengthy period of excellence. But the future of the silent film world was soon threatened by the success of a new technological advancement—synchronized recorded sound. This would strike a blow to film music as it was practiced in the silent era, but Axt, Rapée, Riesenfeld, and others would help music transition to the sound era.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

adaptation	cue sheet	movie palace
adapted score	Davis, Carl	music anthology
arrangement	Dixon, Thomas	Rapée, Erno
Axt, William	feature film	Riesenfeld, Hugo
Breil, Joseph Carl	Griffith, D. W.	Wurlitzer organ
Cohan, George M.	intertitles	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. *Build Your Own Viewer Guide* Throughout this book, you will encounter Viewer Guides intended to help you interpret the music of a film. To fine-tune your listening skills and help you understand the role of film music, try creating some Viewer Guides of your own. I suggest a three-column Guide: Plot, Music, and Function. (In this book, only two columns are used, as the function is described in the text itself, but you'll find that the third column helps you focus your thoughts.) The first step is to select a scene from a movie. In the first column, summarize the plot in a series of short statements. (You may want to adjust your organization after filling out the second column.) Then describe the music for each segment in the second column, noting emotional qualities, thematic material (if any), dynamics, instruments, and any other significant information. For the third column, describe how the music contributed to the plot. Consider issues mood, characterization, dramatic support, emotional qualities, setting, and point of view. With practice, you should find yourself “hearing” music more readily each time you watch a movie.
2. Using online resources, look at images of cue sheets. How would this help the music director at a neighborhood theater?

3. Multiple recordings are available for silent film music played on an organ. Listen to excerpts and consider why the organ became the dominant instrument for silent films. The organ continued to be used in theaters after the sound era began. How does this outdated use of the instrument in movie theaters relate to today's organ at baseball stadiums?
4. *Motion Picture Moods for Pianists and Organists* is available in many libraries. Obtain a copy of the volume and make a list of general moods that can be suggested with music.
5. In light of *The Birth of a Nation*, consider whether or not the content of an artwork should be considered in evaluating an artwork.
6. *The Birth of a Nation* has been issued with a variety of musical accompaniments. Using YouTube and videos from local libraries, consider the differences between these and Breil's original music. As of this writing, the only DVDs with the Breil score are issued by Kino International and Image Entertainment.
7. How do the musical treatments of *The Birth of a Nation* and *The Big Parade* differ? How are they similar?

FOR FURTHER READING

Marks, Martin Miller. *Music and the Silent Film: Contexts and Case Studies, 1895-1924*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

1926	<i>Don Juan</i>
1927	<i>The Jazz Singer</i>
1927	<i>Sunrise</i>
1931	<i>City Lights</i>

Breaking the Sound Barrier

7



One of the earliest Vitaphone shorts features the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

Beginning in 1926, a number of films were issued with recorded music and sound effects. Although they had sound, these films are still considered to be part of the silent era, since they contain no spoken dialogue. At this time, recorded sound was seen merely as an enhancement of silent film, and several films created before 1926 were reissued with **synchronized sound** well into the early 1930s. But this technological achievement signaled the imminent demise of the silent era. Pandora's box was opened in 1927, when Al Jolson

ad-libbed a few spoken lines in *The Jazz Singer*. In the next year, Warner Bros. produced ten all-talking pictures, and within two years, the silent film era had come to an end.

Silent films with synchronized music and sound effects represent a brief phase in the history of filmmaking, but the surviving works give us a tantalizing glimpse of how music may have sounded in the great movie palaces of the silent era. In this chapter, we will examine four films with synchronized sound: *Don Juan*, the first feature film to break the so-called sound barrier; *The Jazz Singer*, the first narrative with spoken words; *Sunrise*, the first film created using the sound-on-film technique; and *City Lights*, one of the last great silent films.

THE VITAPHONE

Attempts to synchronize recorded sounds with moving pictures can be traced back to Thomas Edison (see Chapter 5). After abandoning the Kinetophone, Edison continued to work with sound for projected films. His efforts were successful up to a point, but his cumbersome process ultimately proved to be impractical, and Edison gave up his dream in 1913. Others took up the challenge. D. W. Griffith, using an improved system, produced a partial sound film in 1921, *Dream Street*. It turned out to be a financial disaster due to its weak sound, the lack of theaters with the proper equipment, and the poor quality of the film itself.

A practical system finally appeared in 1926. A product of the perseverance of Sam Warner (one of the four Warner brothers) and the ingenuity of Western Electric, the **Vitaphone** system involved the coordination of visual images shown by a projector with recorded sound played on a phonograph. The length of a reel of film was timed to match that of one side of a record. Since Warner Bros. owned their own theaters, they had sufficient venues to make the efforts financially feasible. Naturally, the quality of recorded sound did not equal that of a live orchestra, but audiences in the largest theaters quickly adapted to the technological novelty, and for those who attended the 98 percent of theaters in America that did not employ an orchestra, the sound of a group like the New York Philharmonic was an exciting advancement.

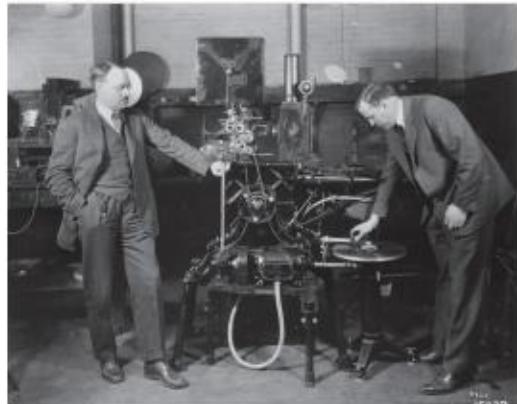


FIGURE 7.1 The Vitaphone coordinated the length of a reel of film with a side of a record.

In 1927 there were about 150 theaters wired for sound. Within two years, the number would exceed 8,000.

Don Juan

The premiere of the Vitaphone system in New York on August 6, 1926, opened with a number of short films, or “shorts,” filmed with live-recorded sound. The first one featured a spoken introduction by Will Hays praising this historical moment. In this brief segment, we can see that the Vitaphone was capable of recording a speaking voice, but we can also observe the constraints placed upon the speaker by having to stand near the microphone. This limitation is acceptable for a speech but is too restrictive for acting.

The other shorts are musical numbers presented in the style of a revue. The New York Philharmonic opens the set with the overture to Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* (see image at the beginning of the chapter). Concert violinists, opera singers, and vaudeville performers follow in these precursors of music videos. The most successful of the musical shorts was Giovanni Martinelli’s emotional performance of “Vesti la giubba” from Ruggero Leoncavallo’s one-act opera *Pagliacci*, which helped secure a permanent place for recorded music in film.

Following the shorts was the feature film *Don Juan*, starring John Barrymore. The drama—with its humorous amorous complications, swashbuckling duels, romantic passions, and a Guinness Book record of 191 kisses—was a perfect choice for the debut of the Vitaphone system. Supporting the film is a musical score composed primarily by William Axt and recorded by the New York Philharmonic.

In the riveting Prologue (see [VG 7.1](#)), leitmotifs reflect the nature of several principal characters. Don Juan as a boy has a childlike melody played gently by the clarinets (see [EXAMPLE 7.5](#)). The theme for Don Jose, Don Juan’s father, is a stately Spanish dance (see [EXAMPLE 7.1](#)). The dwarf servant has an impish melody derived from a clarinet theme in *Till Eulenspiegel* by Richard Strauss (see [EXAMPLE 7.6](#)).



FIGURE 7.2 The Vitaphone and *Don Juan* make headlines.



FIGURE 7.3 Giovanni Martinelli performs “Vesti la giubba” from the opera *Pagliacci* in an early Vitaphone short.

VIEWER GUIDE 7.1

Don Juan: Prologue

Composer: William Axt



Timing

DVD: WB 8331612608 (01:05-11:40)

Setting

In this Hollywood rendition of the Don Juan story, we discover that all the legendary lover and seducer of women really needed was to meet the right woman. Preparing us for this surprising turn of events, the opening prologue shows Don Juan as a young boy, and why his father (John Barrymore plays a dual role in the film) raised him to mistrust women.

Key Points

- Synchronized score for full symphony orchestra
- Music reflects emotions and suggests a point of view
- Leitmotifs represent individual characters
- The Don Jose theme goes through several transformations
- Source music (trumpets)

Principal Themes

Example 7.1 Don Jose

Musical notation for Example 7.1, Don Jose. The music is in 3/4 time, treble clef, and key signature of three flats. It consists of two measures. The first measure is grouped by a bracket labeled 'a'. The second measure is grouped by a bracket labeled 'b' for the first half, and a '3' for the second half, indicating a triplets grouping.

Example 7.2 Don Jose theme as a march

Musical notation for Example 7.2, Don Jose theme as a march. The music is in common time, treble clef, and key signature of three sharps. It consists of four measures. Measures 1 and 2 are grouped by brackets labeled 'a' and 'b' respectively. Measures 3 and 4 are grouped by brackets labeled '3' under each measure, indicating a triplets grouping.

Example 7.3 Don Jose angry

Musical notation for Example 7.3, Don Jose angry. The music is in common time, treble clef, and key signature of one sharp. It consists of two measures. Measures 1 and 2 are grouped by brackets labeled 'a'' and 'b'' respectively.

Example 7.4 Don Jose sad

Musical notation for Example 7.4, Don Jose sad. The music is in 3/4 time, treble clef, and key signature of three flats. It consists of four measures. Measures 1 and 2 are grouped by brackets labeled 'a' and 'b' respectively. Measures 3 and 4 are grouped by brackets labeled '3' under each measure, indicating a triplets grouping.

Example 7.5 Don Juan as a boy



Example 7.6 The Dwarf



Example 7.7 The Lover



PLOT	MUSIC
Workers are removing a chest from a vault in the wall.	Transition from the overture to the Prologue themes
We see Don Juan, his father Don Jose, and his mother Donna Isobel.	Don Juan theme, Don Jose theme, and then back to the Don Juan theme
We see the mischievous dwarf servant.	Dwarf theme
Don Jose orders the workers out and embraces his wife, then his son, and then, with passion, his wife again.	Don Jose theme, Don Juan theme, and then the Don Jose theme, which grows in intensity, matching his passion
Don Jose prepares to leave the castle. He talks with the dwarf servant and waves farewell to his son, who is standing on the balcony.	Source music: trumpet fanfare; the Don Jose theme is transformed into a march, which gives way to the Dwarf theme and the Don Juan theme.
The wife's lover appears, ascends a rope, and joins Donna Isobel. The dwarf signals for Don Jose to return.	Lover theme
Don Jose rides back to the castle. He ascends the stairs. The lover is forced to hide in the space in the wall.	Don Jose theme has a hasty, urgent character. A fragment of the Lover theme gives way to Don Jose's music.
Don Jose thrusts open the door and looks for the lover.	A sustained note coincides with the opening door. Another transformation of Don Jose's theme is heard in the trumpet (Example 7.3).
Don Jose sees his wife signaling to her lover. He seethes and calls for workers to seal up the wall. The workers build the wall back up with the lover still inside.	A loud chord suggests the emotional jolt of Don Jose's realization. Another transformation of his theme suggests his anger, and then the music builds tension, primarily with motives of Don Jose and the Lover.
Don Jose stops the workers as they are about to place the last block into the wall, sealing up the lover. He asks his wife if there is anything of value in the wall, and she shakes her head.	The music continues during the scene, suggesting Don Jose's control over his anger. He is getting revenge. When Donna Isobel disavows her lover, an accent is heard in the orchestra and the tempo increases slightly, suggesting Don Jose's disgust with his wife.

Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
The wall is sealed, to the delight of the dwarf. Donna Isobel breaks down and cries for the life of her lover, but Don Jose merely laughs at her distraught protestations.	A loud chord creates a scream-like sound as the lover is entombed. The Dwarf theme appears briefly, and then the Lover theme is heard passionately, reflecting Donna Isobel's emotions.
Don Jose throws his wife out and orders Don Juan to remain with him. Donna Isobel passes the dwarf as she leaves, and Don Jose tells his son that women cannot be trusted.	Don Jose's theme is played strongly. The Dwarf theme appears, and then Don Jose's theme returns, but played sadly (Example 7.4).

Finally, the Spanish lover has a dashing, passionate theme played primarily in the strings (see [EXAMPLE 7.7](#)). In its presentation of multiple leitmotifs during the exposition, this passage recalls the opening of *The Birth of a Nation* (see [VG 6.1](#)).

But Axt adds something new in this scene—the perspective of one of the characters. For most of the scene, the music reflects the emotions of Don Jose. Note that his wife does not have a theme. When Don Jose kisses her, the music suggests his passion, but reveals nothing of her lack of interest and her impatience for his departure. Donna Isobel's emotions surface in the music only near the end of the scene, after her lover has been sealed in the wall. At that point, we hear the intensity of her lament as we watch Don Jose's laugh, a moment that underscores his cruelty.

To show Don Jose's emotional arc, Axt employs thematic transformation. In this process, Axt alters the original theme so that we hear several versions within a short time span. Example 7.1 shows the original statement. Its most distinctive features are the stepwise rise of four notes at the beginning (marked as "a" in the excerpts), the emphasis on the second beats of the first two measures, and a rising leap in measure 2 (marked as "b"). When Don Jose leaves his estate, Axt transforms this theme into a march (see [EXAMPLE 7.2](#)). The melody still has its distinctive features, but an extra beat has been added to the second note of each measure to create a duple meter instead of the original triple. When he discovers that his wife is unfaithful, Don Jose's theme becomes distorted (see [EXAMPLE 7.3](#)); only three rising notes, an accent on beat 2, and a rising leap recall the initial statement. At the end of the prologue, Don Jose is disenchanted. His theme at this point (see [EXAMPLE 7.4](#)) is much like it was at first, but the noble character is gone; the tempo is slower, and the woodwind orchestration gives the moment a tinge of sadness.

The Jazz Singer

The success of *Don Juan* and the Vitaphone system led to another significant film, *The Jazz Singer* (1927). For *Don Juan*, the studio created a number of musical shorts recorded live and shown prior to the feature film. In *The Jazz Singer*, the story centers on a vaudeville performer, allowing segments of live music to be inserted into the story. During two of these segments, Al Jolson improvised dialogue, including the famous first words in a narrative film: “Wait a minute! Wait a minute! You ain’t heard nothin’ yet.”

Live music appears in four segments interpolated in the film:

- Segment 1 (19:00): Jolson sings “Dirty Hands, Dirty Face” by Jimmy Monaco, Grant Clarke, Al Jolson, and Edgar Leslie (1923) and “Toot, Toot, Tootsie!” by Ernie Erdman, Dan Russo, and Gus Kahn (1921). Between the songs, he speaks his first lines.
- Segment 2 (44:10): Jolson sings two versions of “Blue Skies” by Irving Berlin (1926), a traditional version and a “jazzy” version. Between the verses, Jolson carries on a dialogue with his mother.
- Segment 3 (1:14:40): Jolson sings “Mother of Mine” by Louis Silvers and Al Jolson (1927) during a dress rehearsal.
- Segment 4 (1:31:20): Jolson sings his famous “My Mammy” by Walter Donaldson, Sam Lewis, and Joe Young (1918) in a stage performance that serves as the film’s finale.

The still photo in FIGURE 7.4 shows Jolson at the end of the film singing “My Mammy.” Here we see his signature routine, but with some added details not visible in the film. Especially note the conductor in front, reminding us that the orchestra had to be present during the recording. Also observe the microphone to the left, from which Jolson could not stray. In the final two musical numbers of the film, Jolson appears in blackface, a practice that was popular in the nineteenth century but had just about died away by 1927. To our modern sensibilities this seems to be overt racism, but many of the white entertainers of the nineteenth century felt that this custom paid homage to the energy and creativity of black performers.



FIGURE 7.4 Jolson sings “My Mammy” with a visible conductor and microphone (left front).

Most of *The Jazz Singer* is shot as a silent film, with **synchronized sound**—both music and sound effects—as in *Don Juan*. The underscoring, created by Louis Silvers, is an adapted score; almost all the music is borrowed from other sources. Silvers selected musical excerpts that support this sentimental tale about a talented young boy named Jackie Rabinowitz who is torn between his career (under the name of Jack Robin) and his religion. His father is a synagogue cantor and descended from a long line of cantors, and he expects Jackie to continue the tradition. Scenes in his father's house are scored with the solemn sounds of Russian and traditional Jewish melodies. Even the orchestration, with its frequent separation of a solo instrument (often the cello) from the full orchestra, creates the effect of a cantor and his congregation.

Outside the cantor's world, popular music predominates. The opening "East Side, West Side" reflects the location of the scene in New York City. "Give My Regards to Broadway" resounds as Jack learns that he will be singing in a Broadway revue (37:35). Popular tunes also help set the date of the scene. Scenes in which Jack is a boy are accompanied by tunes from the early part of the century, such as "My Gal Sal" (1905) and "Waiting for the Robert E. Lee" (1912). In the later scenes when Jack is an adult, the popular tunes are drawn primarily from the 1920s.

The score contains several leitmotifs, most notably for Jack's mother and Mary. The application of leitmotifs is for the most part simple and lacks the thematic development heard in *Don Juan*. The biggest weakness of the score is the peculiar use of the love theme from Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* to underscore the intense arguments between Jackie and his father (11:20 and 47:15). Adding to the awkwardness of these moments are obtrusive sound cuts that interrupt the natural flow of the original work.

The pivotal scene for film history, in which Jolson speaks the first words in a major feature film, is set in a café where Jack Robin is about to sing for his supper (17:30). At this early stage of his career, Jack is hoping to break into vaudeville. While he sings, he attracts the attention of Mary, who will serve as a love interest and help promote his career. Supporting the café ambience, Silvers presents a number of popular tunes. The initial view of the café is accompanied by an arrangement of "Hop, Skip," composed by Irving Caesar (1926). At Al Jolson's first appearance, Silvers introduces a fragment from "My Mammy," Jolson's signature song, and then quotes "Dirty Hands, Dirty Face," which Jolson is about to sing live. After Jolson's performance, Silvers quotes two popular tunes, "I'm Lonely without You" by Harry Warren (1926) and "If a Girl Like You Loved a Boy Like Me" by Gus Edwards (1905), the titles of which suggest the imminent love relationship between Jack and Mary.

SOUND ON FILM

General Electric, building on the work of inventors Lee de Forest and Theodore Case, soon developed a competing sound system called **Movietone** for the Fox studio. By making visual images of sound waves, this alternative system could place sound on the film itself (see **FIGURE 7.5**). Hence, the process of filming and of projecting visual images with sound was greatly simplified. Fox took its new camera equipped with the capability of recording sound into the world and made a sensation with its Fox Movietone News, most notably with its initial video and audio of Charles Lindbergh's takeoff for his historic flight across the Atlantic. Movie audiences were watching the event in New York theaters even before Lindbergh landed in Paris. Soon applied to feature films, the simplified coordination and greater durability of the sound-on-film system quickly dominated, and the Vitaphone system faded away.



FIGURE 7.5 In this image of sound on film, the sound portion is the second column from the left.

Sunrise

The highly acclaimed *Sunrise*, created by the renowned German director F. W. Murnau, is the first full-length feature film using the sound-on-film system. In 1928, the first Academy Awards gave two Oscars for Best Picture—Best Production (*Wings*) and Best Artistic Quality of Production (*Sunrise*). In 1929, however, the latter award was dropped, and the Best Production award was renamed Best Picture. As a result, histories of the Oscars list *Wings* as the first Best Picture winner, even though *Sunrise* was considered by most to be superior to the popular aviation film. As late as 1970, one poll listed *Sunrise* as the second-greatest film of all time after *Citizen Kane*, a film that is influenced by *Sunrise*, and many critics today consider *Sunrise* to be the best of all silent films.

CLOSE-UP: THE ACADEMY AWARDS

And the Winner Is . . .

The Academy Award ceremony was the brainchild of Louis B. Mayer. In 1927, he organized the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The stated purpose was "to improve the artistic quality of the film medium, provide a common forum for the various branch-

es and crafts of the industry, foster cooperation in technical research and cultural progress, and pursue a variety of other stated objectives." In other words, this nonprofit organization was founded on the concept of film as a total artwork, dependent on a large

Continued on next page

number of individual artists. Originally, five branches were recognized—actors, directors, writers, technicians, and producers. The current number is thirteen—actors, administrators, art directors, cinematographers, directors, executives, film editors, composers, producers, public-relations workers, short-subject filmmakers, sound engineers, and writers.

One of the first accomplishments of the Academy was the creation of the Oscar awards for outstanding achievement in the industry. The origin of the name “Oscar” is unclear. Many believe that the name came from the executive secretary of the Academy, Margaret Herrick, who looked at the statuette and claimed that it looked just like her uncle Oscar. The Academy’s first ceremony was held in 1928 and awards were given for the following areas:

- Production, two awards—Production and Quality of Production
- Acting, two awards—Actor and Actress
- Director, two awards—Director and Comedy Direction

- Writing, three awards—Adaptation, Original Story, and Title Writing
- Cinematography
- Interior Decoration
- Engineering Effects
- Special Awards—*The Jazz Singer* and Charlie Chaplin

Because of the dual awards for production, two films won what we would now call the Best Picture award—*Wings* and *Sunrise*. In 1929 the Academy eliminated one of the production awards; the single winner in that year was *Broadway Melody*. The Academy also eliminated the awards for Comedy Direction, Title Writing, and Engineering Effects, and merged the remaining two writing awards into one.

The Academy is not the only institution that presents awards to films. Today, among the awards of other organizations that are closely watched are the Golden Globe Awards, given by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, and the Cannes Festival Awards in France.

Like many of the major films from this time period, *Sunrise* had two principal musical scores, one by Erno Rapée for live theatrical performances, and a second by Hugo Riesenfeld for the synchronized version. The Riesenfeld score is remarkable for its emotional range, rich lyric content, and dark moods. Typical of an adapted score, it includes several passages from nineteenth-century classics. Most notable are Liszt’s *Les préludes*, used for the opening credits, Wagner’s *Siegfried Idyll*, a passage associated with marriage, and Gounod’s *Funeral March of a Marionette*, later known as the theme song for the television series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. The latter is played in a humorous scene when the couple thinks they have broken a Venus de Milo statuette (56:15).

Murnau often referred to *Sunrise* with the subtitle *A Song of Two Humans*. In keeping with the idea of a song, the Riesenfeld’s score for *Sunrise* abounds in melody-dominated textures. The middle portion of the film, in which the Man and the Wife (Janet Gaynor won the first Best Actress Oscar for her portrayal)

reconcile in the city, presents a succession of lyric tunes, culminating with the principal love theme (45:15). This melody remains the dominant musical idea for the remainder of the film.

VIEWER GUIDE 7.2

Sunrise: Rendezvous

Composer: Hugo Riesenfeld



Timing

DVD: 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment B0012KHTEC (11:05-15:50)

Setting

The three characters in this scene are simply known as the Man (George O'Brien), the Wife (Janet Gaynor), and the Woman from the City (Margaret Livingston). The latter has seduced the Man, and he goes to meet her while the Wife sadly stays at home with their child.

Key Points

- Moody atmosphere
- Use of leitmotifs
- Layered source music and underscoring

Principal Theme

Example 7.8 Seduction



PLOT	MUSIC
The Man leaves his house and walks through a marsh to meet the Woman from the City	Plodding pulse, in a low register, and harmonically stagnant. This reflects the darkness of the setting and the Man's guilty feelings.
The Woman from the City applies makeup.	A light dance theme reflects the Woman's superficiality.
The Man joins her; they passionately embrace and kiss.	The strings play the Seduction theme.

Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
A crosscut shows the Wife and her child.	A sympathetic melody
The lovers are happily lying down and kissing.	The Seduction theme returns.
The Woman proposes that the Man sell his farm and with the money move to the city to be with her.	The strings play with a pleading sound.
The Man asks about his wife, and the Woman comes up with a plan.	The music initially stops. Quiet string tremolos accompany her vision of murder.
The Man reacts violently, but he is eventually overcome with kisses.	The music reflects his initial anger. The Seduction theme returns as she gains control.
A vision of the city appears, including its nightlife.	The Seduction theme continues. At one point, source music from the city can be heard with the underscoring.

Perhaps the most memorable musical moment in the film is the moody cue that complements the expressionistic *mise-en-scène* near the beginning of the narrative. The scene creates a brooding atmosphere through both visual images and music. When we first see the Man, a low-register **ostinato**—a short melodic idea repeated unchanged—suggests his obsession with the Woman from the City (see [VG 7.2](#)). As he goes to a rendezvous in the marsh, the music reverts to alternating chords played in a low register by bassoons. The Seduction theme (see [EXAMPLE 7.8](#)) suggests a waltz, a dance associated with love and a temptress. A degree of harshness intrudes upon the melody, especially the large opening leap, which is heard several times in succession. The plodding chords return when the Man takes his wife out on the lake with the intent of drowning her (23:50), a mood broken only by the sound of church bells. The tolling of bells is heard at several critical moments in the plot, suggesting an underlying religious theme.

Another notable aspect of the score is the layered effect created by two or more distinct musical sources, such as those heard when the Woman visualizes life in the city. Later, music emanates from a variety of places in the fair scene (59:50), contributing to the cacophonous sound that one might encounter there. Near the climax of the story, the love theme is heard in the lower strings, while source music from a folk dance intrudes (1:13:20). Similarly, the love theme is soon overwhelmed by musical sounds depicting a raging storm (1:14:45). In this climactic scene, the Wife is swept overboard. Murnau's intent was to have her die, a crushing blow to the Man, who had intended to drown her but then fell back in love. Hollywood studio executives did not care for this tragic ending, so the story was altered; the Wife is found alive, and the couple is reunited.

THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT

City Lights

While the rest of Hollywood was embracing talkies in the 1930s, Charlie Chaplin decided to keep his Little Tramp character wordless for two more films, *City Lights* (1931) and *Modern Times* (1936). These are considered the last great silent films, and both are included in the American Film Institute's list of the top 100 Hollywood films (2007)—*City Lights* is no. 11. For both films, the talented Charles Chaplin produced, directed, acted, and composed the music.

City Lights presents a series of comedic episodes loosely connected to a central dramatic thread—the love between the Tramp and the Blind Girl. Chaplin's music helps to unify the story through recurring themes, one of which is a borrowed melody, "La violetera" ("Who'll Buy My Flowers?") composed by José Padilla in 1914. Chaplin also employs comic Mickey Mousing and quotes well-known tunes, such as "How Dry I Am" (14:40). The latter is a double pun, since one of the characters, the millionaire, is drunk, and both he and the Tramp have fallen into the water.

VIEWER GUIDE 7.3

City Lights: Opening

Composer: Charles Chaplin



Timing

DVD: Criterion Collection 680 (0:40-10:05)

Setting

Charlie Chaplin is shown in two comic sketches, and then he meets the Flower Girl.

Key Points

- Popular and comic nature of themes
- Use of source music
- Leitmotif for the Flower Girl from song "La violetera"

Continued on next page

Principal Themes

Example 7.9 Love



Example 7.10 Flower Girl ("La violetera"), opening



PLOT	MUSIC
The opening credits	The clarinet plays a theme associated with the Tramp. Two more themes follow: a vigorous dance and the Love theme. A Gershwin-like passage accompanies the title's reappearance, now in lights.
The film opens with the dedication of a monument to Peace and Prosperity.	Brass fanfare
Dignitaries provide unintelligible speeches for the event.	The strings play a scurrying figure.
The sculpture is unveiled, revealing the Tramp fast asleep.	Brass fanfare and the clarinet Tramp theme from the opening credits
The Tramp tries to get down while dignitaries and police shout at him.	An action theme accompanies the physical humor. We hear three phrases: a-a-b.
The playing of the "Star-Spangled Banner" interrupts the commotion.	The first two phrases of the anthem
The Tramp continues to climb around the sculpture at a rather leisurely pace before exiting in the back.	The action theme returns, now with five phrases: a-a-b-b-a. A quick transition and fade follow.
The Tramp interacts with two newspaper boys.	Another popular music theme, primarily in the strings
The Tramp pauses to view sculptures in a store window.	The music is a waltz played with hesitations that mimic his movements.
We see the blind Flower Girl. The Tramp avoids a policeman by passing through the backseat of a limousine. He buys a flower, discovers that she is blind, and falls in love.	The two portions of "La violetera" are played two times with varied instrumentation.

VIEWER GUIDE 7.3 takes us through the opening credits and the first three scenes. All of the music composed for the credits is heard later during the narrative. The beginning (with its high clarinet theme) and the closing title in lights (with a clarinet smear) are references to George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, which suggests a setting in New York. Between those moments is a passionate

dance theme, heard later during the classic boxing match (1:03:10), and the lyric love theme.

The film opens with a ceremony to unveil a sculpture entitled "Peace and Prosperity," which would certainly have received a chuckle from audiences experiencing the effects of the Great Depression. Chaplin mocks both high society and sound film with a scurrying musical theme and unintelligible speeches from the dignitaries. This portion of the scene is framed by source music—brass fanfares for the dedication. Once the sculpture is unveiled revealing the sleeping Tramp, another fast-paced theme is heard. In its fullest form, it has an a-a-b-b-a form (the b phrase begins with a trombone glissando), but the "Star-Spangled Banner" interrupts its first statement. This music will recur during some of the Tramp's more active scenes throughout the film.

The second scene has three primary points of humor. Once again, it pokes fun at America's wealthy elite. After a brief interaction with paperboys (accompanied by a popular melody associated with the Tramp), Chaplin assumes the guise of an art connoisseur as he "studies" two artworks in a shopping window, his attention actually on the sculpture of a nude woman. Chaplin adds slapstick humor with a street elevator that rises and falls as he paces while pondering the "art" of the nude. In the last bit of comedy, the Tramp begins to scold the workman, only to see that he is a giant; wisely, he moves on. During this scene, Chaplin provides us with a waltz, which gives an aristocratic air to the routine and serves as fitting dance music for the physical humor, highlighted with musical hesitations.

The central plot begins to unfold in the third scene. Essential to the story is the misconception on the part of the blind Flower Girl that the Tramp is rich. This is suggested to her by the sound of a car door. Seeking to avoid a policeman, the Tramp has taken a shortcut through the backseat of a parked limousine. Believing that he is wealthy, she sells him a flower, and during the transaction, the Tramp realizes that she is blind and falls in love. The melody of "La violetera" has two similar phrases, and both are played twice, often with hesitations similar to the second scene. This melody and the Love theme return at the end of the film (1:20:20) for a sentimental conclusion.

TRAILER

The silent film era came to an end in 1928. In the years that followed, problems with sound technology would limit the amount of music in film. By 1933 sound mixing facilitated the coordination of dialogue, sound effects, and music. In that year, we have the first great film score of the sound era in *King Kong*. Hollywood

was entering its second Golden Age, the Golden Age of sound, and music once again achieved a prominent position in Hollywood filmmaking. Meanwhile, European filmmaking also achieved a Golden Age, as France, Great Britain, Germany, and the Soviet Union produced some of the finest artistic productions of the silent era. But these centers would face several major challenges as they tried to keep up with American technology.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

Chaplin, Charlie	Murnau, F. W.	synchronized sound
Jolson, Al	ostinato	Vitaphone
Movietone	Silvers, Louis	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Discuss the pros and cons of using recorded sound with films rather than live music.
2. Videos of many Vitaphone shorts can be found on YouTube. Among these are the introductory speech of Will Hayes (spoofed in *Singin' in the Rain*), Martinelli's rendition of "Vesti la giubba," and performances by the New York Philharmonic. Clips of vaudeville acts are particularly valuable in our understanding of entertainment in the early twentieth century. Discuss the artistic value of these early versions of music videos.
3. Based on the Viewer Guide passage of *Don Juan*, discuss the role of music in creating a point of view and the ways thematic transformation can support a narrative.
4. The first spoken words in *The Jazz Singer* can be heard and viewed on YouTube. Using the numerous excerpts available online, compare scenes with live sound with those with synchronized music.
5. Compare the treatment of music in *Sunrise* to that in *Don Juan*.
6. Discuss how music contributes to the humor of *City Lights*.
7. An increasing number of films with synchronized scores have been released, including *The Better 'Ole* (1926; starring Sydney Chaplin, Charlie's older brother), *Our Dancing Daughters* (1928; the breakthrough film for Joan Crawford), and *Wings* (1927; winner of the first Best Picture Oscar). Obtain a copy of these films and describe the variety in the music created for the films.
8. Although extant copies are rare, some silent films were reissued with synchronized music, including Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*. These provide a revealing glimpse into how music was used in the silent era. Obtain a copy of one of these films and discuss what it reveals about the use of music in the silent era.

SIGNIFICANT
FILMS

1920	<i>The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari</i>	1927	<i>Napoléon</i>
1924	<i>Entr'acte</i>		<i>Metropolis</i>
1925	<i>Battleship Potemkin</i>	1929	<i>Un chien andalou</i>
			<i>The New Babylon</i>
		1930	<i>L'âge d'or</i>

Europe after World War I

8



Death leads the Seven Deadly Sins while playing on a bone as if it were a piccolo in *Metropolis*.

Returning from its World War I hiatus, Europe saw a flurry of creative activity in filmmaking during the 1920s. Strong centers grew in numerous countries, including France, the Soviet Union, and Germany. While no one European country matched the production of the United States, especially in the commercial aspects, a significant number of the films they produced are, from an artistic point of view, among the finest of the era.



CLOSE-UP: THE GOLDEN AGE OF SILENT FILM

In addition to D. W. Griffith, a number of other directors emerged as auteurs during the silent film era. Many of the international figures would emigrate to America to take refuge in Hollywood during World War II. The following are among the most prominent directors of silent film.

Cecil B. DeMille (1881–1959) began directing films in 1913 with partners Jesse Lasky and Sam Goldwyn. His prolific output culminated in the 1920s with two of Hollywood's most lavish films—*The Ten Commandments* (1923) and *The King of Kings* (1927). After a downturn in his activities during the 1940s, he concluded his career with three outstanding films: the religious epic *Samson and Delilah* (1950); *The Greatest Show on Earth* (1952), which won an Oscar for Best Picture; and *The Ten Commandments* (1956), a remake that became a box-office smash.

Abel Gance (1889–1981) was the most prominent French director of the silent film era, during which he directed his three most acclaimed films—*J'accuse* (1919), *La roue* (1923), and *Napoléon* (1927). The renowned French composer Arthur Honegger wrote scores for the latter two films. Gance is particularly known for his innovative techniques, including the use of multiple screens for the conclusion of *Napoléon*.

Fritz Lang (1890–1976) was a German director principally remembered for creating dark and twisted stories. He helped write the script for Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), for which he is credited with formulating the brilliant framed plot. In 1927 Lang filmed the science fiction masterpiece *Metropolis*, and he entered the sound era with the sensational *M* (1931), an extraordinarily dark film about a child murderer that made Peter Lorre an international star. After coming to Hollywood, he directed a number of

serious westerns, but his years in Hollywood are best remembered for his contributions to film noir.

Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau (1888–1931) was one of the most influential directors of the silent film era. While in Germany, he created a horror masterpiece, *Nosferatu* (1922). He immediately followed with several more masterpieces, including *The Last Laugh* (1924) and *Faust* (1926). *Sunrise* (1927), Murnau's first film in Hollywood, is considered by many to be the greatest of all silent films.

Erich von Stroheim (1885–1957), born in Austria, was one of the most enigmatic and brilliant directors of his time. He began working with D. W. Griffith in *The Birth of a Nation*. He soon created a sensation by making silent films that were full of sexual tension, such as *Foolish Wives* (1922). In 1924, he completed one of the most monumental films in Hollywood history, the forty-two-reel film *Greed*, which lasts for over ten hours. MGM cut this film down to ten reels, destroying the other thirty-two reels. The lost material is still the subject of much debate and speculation. Thereafter, Stroheim worked primarily as an actor. In this capacity he can be seen in Jean Renoir's *Grand Illusion* (1937) and Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), which also featured DeMille playing himself.

King Vidor (1894–1982) rose quickly in the Hollywood directorial ranks. His first feature film appeared in 1919, and within five years he was working for MGM, making such acclaimed films as *The Big Parade* (1925) and *The Crowd* (1928). His successes continued into the sound era, when he directed *Hallelujah* (1929) and *The Champ* (1931). He was also one of the uncredited directors of *The Wizard of Oz* (1939). Among his later films are *Northwest Passage* (1940) and *War and Peace* (1956).

FRANCE

French cinema was perhaps the most artistically minded school in the 1920s. In the hands of directors like René Clair and Jean Renoir (the son of the Impressionist painter Auguste Renoir), French films tended to be innovative, experimental, and energetic. Following the lead of Saint-Saëns, a number of prominent French composers wrote film scores. The grand old man of modern French music, Erik Satie (seen in FIGURE 8.1), wrote a musical score for René Clair's *Entr'acte* (1924), so named because it was shown between the acts of a **dadaist** ballet by Francis Picabia; the American composer Virgil Thomson described the film as the "best union of movies and music that has ever been made." This union, however, differs considerably from Hollywood's practices, as Satie's highly repetitive music creates a generalized lighthearted mood that remains detached from the actions and images shown in the film.

Among the other prominent French composers who wrote for films in the 1920s were Jacques Ibert, Darius Milhaud, and Arthur Honegger. Milhaud, a leading figure of a group of composers known as *Les Six*, composed music for Marcel L'Herbier's experimental film *L'inhumaine* (*The Inhuman Woman*, 1924), with a scene depicting a riot at a concert similar to the one at the premiere of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. Milhaud (the most prolific composer of concert music in the twentieth century), wrote scores for films into the 1960s.



FIGURE 8.1 Composer Erik Satie (left) and artist Francis Picabia indulge in playful antics in *Entr'acte*.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Arthur Honegger (1892–1955)

Honegger, a Swiss-French composer, was a member of a group of French composers known as *Les Six*. He became a leading figure in the efforts to make modern music more accessible to general audiences. Among his best-known compositions are the cantata *King David* and the symphonic poem *Pacific 231*. He composed a large number of dramatic works, including forty-three film scores. He often crafted symphonic suites out of the scores for concert performances.

Important Film Scores

La roue 1922

Les misérables 1934

Napoléon 1927

Pygmalion 1938

Arthur Honegger

Arthur Honegger, another member of *Les Six*, created music for several silent films, including Abel Gance's two greatest works, *La roue* (*The Wheel*, 1923) and *Napoléon* (1927). The latter epic was the first and only completed film of a projected series of six works showing the life of this national hero. *Napoléon* explores many remarkable film techniques, the most spectacular of which is the three-screen Polyvision system that foreshadows wide-screen effects in American films in the 1950s (see FIGURE 8.2). Honegger's score features both lyrical sections and dissonant passages. The emotional highlight is the cue entitled "Les mendiants de la gloire" ("Beggars of the glory"), which contains a stirring setting of "La Marseillaise." As with Satie, Honegger's music sets overall moods rather than mirroring dramatic action; there is little contrast within any particular section. This general detachment from the drama would characterize the musical approach of many European filmmakers well into the 1970s.



FIGURE 8.2 The three-screen climax of *Napoléon* was accompanied by stirring patriotic music by Honegger.

Surrealism

Although lagging behind American technology, European filmmakers quickly began to incorporate sound in the late 1920s and early '30s. Two of

the most celebrated French films using synchronized music are *Un chien andalou* (*Andalusian Dog*, 1929) and *L'âge d'or* (*The Golden Age*, 1930), both products of the collaboration between Luis Buñuel, a Spanish film director, and Salvador Dalí, a Spanish artist. These films exemplify **surrealism**, in which the rational and irrational worlds merge, as in a dream state. Striking visual images are juxtaposed without logical connections. Typically, these often absurd visions are filled with humor and biting social criticism. For the initial presentations of *Un chien andalou*, Buñuel used a phonograph to play a variety of musical works, including several tangos and Wagner's "Prelude and Liebestod" from *Tristan und Isolde*. *L'âge d'or* used sound-on-film



FIGURE 8.3 A woman sucks on the toe of a garden statue while music of Wagner is played in *L'âge d'or*.

technology and incorporated the same Wagner excerpt, as well as works from other classical composers, including Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Debussy.

THE SOVIET UNION

Battleship Potemkin

Soviet filmmaking began in earnest in 1919, after the revolution. D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916) greatly impressed Vladimir Lenin, who felt that film could be the most influential of all the arts. He had copies of *Intolerance* sent to Soviet filmmakers for study. Sergei Eisenstein, the leading Soviet director, built upon many of Griffith's techniques. Most impressive are his use of individual close-ups to give a sense of the larger mass and his terse cutting technique, called *montage*. The montage depicting a massacre on the steps leading into the city of Odessa in *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) remains one of the great scenes in film history (see [VG 8.1](#)).

VIEWER GUIDE 8.1

Battleship Potemkin: Odessa Steps

Composer: Edmund Meisel



Timing

DVD: Kino K558 (45:40-52:55)

Setting

Following a revolt against their Imperial officers, the people of Odessa cheer the sailors on the *Potemkin*. The Czar's soldiers then attack the crowd. Firing as they march down the stairs that lead to the city, the Cossacks kill women and children alike. At the bottom of the stairs, soldiers on horses club survivors. The sailors on the *Potemkin* respond with their powerful battleship guns.

Key Points

- Gentle and joyful music for people
- Loud, dissonant music when soldiers open fire

Continued on next page

- March character for soldiers; prominence of military instruments (trumpets and drums)
- Frequent descending lines as people race down the stairs

PLOT	MUSIC
The people cheer the sailors. Many close-ups.	The music reflects the joyfulness of the moment. Numerous folklike tunes
The soldiers begin shooting. A montage shows the flight of the people.	Harsh dissonance announces their arrival. A heavy march beat pounds as the music descends, reflecting the frantic race down the stairs. Trumpets add a piercing chromatic line.
A woman with her injured child and a small group of people appeal to the soldiers.	The music fades to just the marching pulse and a high-pitched sound. Trumpets play a dissonant fanfare.
The woman is shot. The march and killing resumes. Another woman with a baby in a carriage is shot. The carriage rolls down the stairs, and the baby is clubbed.	The death march continues. More instruments are added, including sustained woodwind trills.
The battleship begins firing.	Drum rolls; a lion roar; thundering sounds from the timpani

The Austrian composer Edmund Meisel, who had previously created music for several plays of Bertolt Brecht, wrote the powerful music for *Battleship Potemkin*. Indeed, when the film was imported to Germany, the movie was found acceptable, but the music was banned because it would incite rebellious emotions. Using dissonant harmonies, a pounding percussion section, and almost intolerably loud dynamics, the score stands as one of the great symphonic works for silent films. Herman G. Weinberg, writing in the *New York Herald Tribune* on April 29, 1928, describes a performance of *Battleship Potemkin* in the United States:

For the New York presentation of *Potemkin* at the Biltmore the original accompanying score by Dr. Edmund Meisel, of Berlin, was used. Of the film itself, one need say little here. It has made cinema history already. The music was almost passed over entirely by the critics of the metropolitan press, which was a mistake, for the score is as powerful, as vital, as galvanic and electrifying as the film. It is written in the extreme modern vein, cacophonies run riot, harmonies grate, crackle, jar; there are abrupt changes and shifts in the rhythm; tremendous chords crashing down, dizzy flights of runs, snatches of half-forgotten melodies, fragments, a short interpolation of jazz on a piano and a melody in the

central portion of the film when the people of Odessa stand on the steps waving to the sailors on the cruiser *Potemkin* and others go out on fishing boats with provisions for them—that is one of the loveliest that I have ever heard. It sings! It soars and endears itself to the heart. It is full of gratitude and the love of man for man. It is one of the warmest, tenderest passages that has found its way into the cinema-music repertoire.

The versatility of Meisel's score can be heard in the music for Viewer Guide 8.1. Initially, the score projects the warmth and joyfulness of the people as they celebrate the successful revolt on the *Potemkin*. Several tunes are played in quick succession that may well be folk melodies or revolutionary songs of the time. The tunes are repetitive in nature and have limited ranges, suggesting music to be sung. In particular, note one theme with ragged (dotted) rhythms and a descending line. Representing the people as a whole, this idea recurs frantically during the subsequent panic.

The montage of the massacre is supported with a cacophonous mixture of sounds, including pounding drums and horn calls that signify the marching; descending lines that suggests the flight of the people down the steps; and harsh dissonant chords and chromaticism that reflect the overall terror. The din of sound extends for over six minutes, mirroring the unrelenting procession of soldiers. The musical motion pauses for one brief moment as a mother pleads for the life of her son within the shadows of the soldiers, and others appeal to their reason; they are all shot, and the march resumes. At the end, the military response from the *Potemkin* is supported by a percussion ensemble. Indeed, this is powerful music, especially if heard live.

Dmitri Shostakovich

The last year of the decade produced the first film score by the Soviet Union's leading composer, Dmitri Shostakovich. Now best known for his fifteen symphonies, chamber music, and operas, this former movie-theater pianist created a score for the silent film *The New Babylon* in 1929. Typical of many of his symphonic works, the music of *The New Babylon* contains musical quotations. Since the film is set in Paris, French waltzes, cancans, and patriotic tunes are mixed with Shostakovich's dissonant, satirical sound. Yet the most poignant moment in the film is reserved for a solo piano rendition of Tchaikovsky's *Old French Song* just prior to the final battle (1:07:10). Shostakovich would continue composing for sound films, scoring thirty-four more films in later years, and it can be argued that his experience in cinema was a strong influence on his symphonic compositions.



FIGURE 8.4 *The Scream* by Edvard Munch is a forerunner of expressionism.



FIGURE 8.5 *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* helped open the door for modern music in film.

GERMANY

The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari

Germany entered a creative period of filmmaking in the early 1920s. The first work of the German school to achieve international acclaim is *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, 1920), directed by Robert Wiene. A product of the expressionist movement, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* stands as a true total artwork, with clear ties to drama, visual arts, and music. **Expressionism** was a predominantly German movement that delved into the darker regions of the subconscious mind. Expressionistic dramas explored topics such as perversion, nightmares, and insanity. Expressionistic paintings used distorted images and heavy black lines to give the impression of a disturbed world (see FIGURE 8.4). Expressionistic music, most closely associated with the works of Arnold Schoenberg, avoided tonal centers and created a nightmare-like sound with its totally dissonant treatment.

All three aspects of the expressionist movement converge in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. What appears to be a horror film is really a vision of insanity. The opening frame sets up the deception. The audience is led to believe that the young hero Francis is telling a daring tale of murder and detective work. It is only in the final frame that we understand that it is Francis, not Dr. Caligari, who is insane. The entire film has been a fantasy seen through the eyes of a patient at an asylum. His distorted view of life is reinforced by the expressionistic stage sets, makeup, and costumes. Only in the framing scenes, when we are not seeing through the eyes of Francis, are the expressionistic visual elements minimized.

Giuseppe Becce's original music for the film has been described as expressionistic in style, but only a handful of examples survive as themes in a music anthology. When *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* was brought to America, it premiered at Rothafel's Capitol Cinema in New York. Rothafel, working with Erno Rapée, decided to complement

the dramatic and visual style with modern music, using excerpts from works by Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Debussy, Prokofiev, and Richard Strauss. From this repertoire, several leitmotifs were crafted: a theme from Richard Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel* accompanied Dr. Caligari, and Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* underscored Cesare, the somnambulist controlled by Dr. Caligari. Bernard Rogers, writing for *Musical America* in April 1921, praised the daring use of modern music:

Properly, the American premiere of *Caligari* employed music calculated to heighten its exotic character, to underline its fantastic aspects.... As briefly back as five years Stravinsky or Schoenberg in the movie-house belonged to the inconceivable. Today it calmly happens, and the audience calmly swallows the pill. It would have been far simpler in preparing accompaniment for this film, to dish up the old safe and sickening potpourri. The more admirable, then, is the departure made by Messrs Rothapfel and Rapée. The thing took more than courage; it meant double labor and it meant considerable expense. Four rehearsals were called. But the tune was worth the toll. The acrid air of Stravinsky has been borne into the film theater. It may clear the sweet murk before the last reel is run.

Rothapfel's choice of music was deservedly applauded, but the total effect of the film was diluted by the appearance of a narrator both before and after the show, mirroring the frame within the film itself. Compounding this intrusion was the added happy ending; the narrator assured the audience that the protagonist Francis was now cured of insanity, happily married, and working as a jeweler in Hostenwall.

Metropolis

Expressionistic qualities can also be observed in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927). Inspired by a visit to New York, Lang created a science-fiction vision that focuses on class conflict. In this futuristic city, the workers live and labor beneath the ground, while the idle rich frolic on the surface. Four principal characters shape the story. Joh Fredersen is the mastermind who controls the city and periodically calls upon the brilliant, twisted inventor Rotwang for assistance. Joh's son Freder is a playboy who undergoes a moral transformation after seeing the beautiful and pure Maria, a Christian and a leader in the underworld of workers.

Observing his son's infatuation with Maria, Joh instructs Rotwang to mold his Machine Man (robot) into the image of Maria. The newly created False Maria encourages sin among the rich and leads the working masses into a disastrous revolt. In this classic tale of good versus evil, good eventually triumphs, as Freder forges a compromise between the workers and the planners.

Gottfried Huppertz, a singer, actor, and composer, created a sensational score for the film. A personal friend of Lang, Huppertz worked with the director throughout the production phase. As a result, the score successfully provides



FIGURE 8.6 The creation of False Maria in *Metropolis*

moods ranging from intimate religious moments to wild bacchanalian dances, and yet it is unified by numerous distinct and often related musical themes.

Many of the musical themes are associated with the darker forces. Joh and Rotwang are given curt thematic ideas with jagged melodic intervals presented in the lower registers (see [VG 8.2](#)). The principal Rotwang motive is shared with the image of Moloch, an ancient god that demanded human sacrifices. The motive centers on the interval of a tritone, which had been associated with the devil since the Middle Ages. The motive noted as “Rotwang 2” is similar in its upward motion, and it contains two tritones—between pitches 1 and 3 and pitches 2 and 4. The four False Maria themes first appear in the film with the first image of the Machine Man (42:00). These motives are often intermixed, but each one stands on its own as well. Most notably, False Maria b suggests the seductive qualities of False Maria, and motive c is the primary theme for her erotic dance.

VIEWER GUIDE 8.2

Metropolis: False Maria

Composer: Gottfried Huppertz



Timing

DVD: Kino K6 o (1:23:15–1:34:40)

Setting

The evil inventor Rotwang (Rudolf Klein-Rogge) has kidnapped Maria (Brigitte Helm) and is about to transfer her likeness to the Machine Man. Fredor (Gustav Fröhlich) is attempting to rescue Maria, but he is locked in a room.

Key Points

- Use of the full symphonic orchestra
- Intermixing of multiple leitmotifs
- Transformation of False Maria’s theme into a dance
- Quotation of *Dies Irae*

Principal Themes

Example 8.1 Moloch/Rotwang

A musical staff with four measures. The first measure has a quarter note. The second measure has a half note. The third measure has a whole note. The fourth measure has a double whole note.

Example 8.2 Rotwang 2

Example 8.3 False Maria a

A musical score fragment in G major (two sharps) and common time. The melody begins with a quarter note followed by a eighth note tied to a sixteenth note, and concludes with a eighth note tied to a sixteenth note.

Example 8.4 False Maria b

A musical score for piano, showing two staves. The top staff uses a treble clef and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. The key signature is A major (three sharps). Measure 11 starts with a half note in the bass, followed by a eighth-note triplet, a quarter note, another eighth-note triplet, and a half note. Measure 12 starts with a eighth-note triplet, followed by a quarter note, a half note, a eighth-note triplet, and a half note.

Example 8.5 False Maria c

A musical score page showing two measures of music for orchestra. The key signature is one sharp, and the time signature is common time. Measure 11 starts with a forte dynamic and consists of six eighth-note chords. Measure 12 begins with a half note followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. The score includes multiple staves for different instruments.

Example 8.6 False Maria d

A musical score for piano, page 10, showing measures 11 and 12. The key signature is A major (no sharps or flats). The time signature is common time (indicated by 'C'). The melody consists of eighth-note patterns, primarily in the right hand, while the left hand provides harmonic support with sustained notes and chords.

Example 8.7 Maria/Love

A musical score for piano, showing two staves. The top staff uses a treble clef and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. Both staves are in common time (indicated by a 'C'). The key signature is A major (three sharps). Measures 11 and 12 are shown, each consisting of six eighth-note strokes per staff.

Example 8.8 Joh

A musical score for piano, showing two staves. The top staff uses a treble clef and the bottom staff uses a bass clef. The key signature is one flat, and the time signature is common time. Measure 11 starts with a half note in the bass, followed by a quarter note in the treble, a half note in the bass, and a quarter note in the treble. Measure 12 starts with a half note in the bass, followed by a quarter note in the treble, a half note in the bass, and a quarter note in the treble.

Example 8.9 *Dies irae*

A musical staff in common time (indicated by a 'C') and treble clef (indicated by a 'G'). The notes are: B-flat, A, B-flat, A, G, F-sharp, E, D.

Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
Maria lies under the control of Rotwang.	False Maria a alternates with the opening of False Maria b.
Rotwang goes to the controls.	The Rotwang 2 motive sounds in the low brass.
The transformation process is ready.	False Maria c and b alternate. A full statement of d follows.
Rotwang turns the final switch.	False Maria b is presented lyrically. False Maria c provides contrast, and then b returns with cascading winds that suggest creation. False Maria d alternates with b.
The process is completed.	False Maria d
Freder is released from the room where he has been trapped. He goes upstairs to confront Rotwang. In a crosscut, Maria is shown unconscious.	The strings play False Maria c. A distorted version of the Love theme becomes more passionate as he exits. The Rotwang b motive sounds with the vision of Maria. The music returns to the Love theme.
Rotwang repeats that Maria is now with his father.	The strings play Joh's stern theme.
Joh reads a note.	Motives from False Maria a, b, and c are played.
We see the False Maria.	The strings play False Maria b seductively.
Joh orders her to destroy the work of the true Maria.	Harsh statement of False Maria c
Freder rushes in and is stunned when he sees his father and "Maria." He is hospitalized with the psychological shock.	Racing music gives way to dissonant sounds. False Maria b is played as a waltz. Dizzying music includes more distortions of the love theme. Quick versions of Joh's theme as the doctor talks to Joh. False Maria d and c follow.
Freder has visions of the nightclub entertainment. The False Maria emerges.	A simple waltz plays while we see the men waiting for entertainment. Strings alternate between False Maria c and b.
Maria begins to dance.	False Maria c begins with a dance rhythm. Motive b alternates in a boisterous style.
Freder visualizes a preacher predicting the Apocalypse. Maria's dancing excites the men.	<i>Dies irae</i> is intoned in the brass. False Maria b and c alternate with <i>Dies irae</i> .
The preacher holds up the Bible with the image of the Babylon Woman. Maria rises in the same image.	The music builds in dissonance. <i>Dies irae</i> dominates.
The film cuts to the sculptures of Death and the Seven Sins. They come to life, as Death plays on a bone as if it were a piccolo.	The xylophone suggests the sounds of bones, and a piccolo plays. <i>Dies irae</i> sounds in the brass. The music reaches a climax after an organ mimics the sound of a steam whistle.

The creation scene (VG 8.2) can be divided into three sections. In the first, False Maria is created with the likeness of the kidnapped Maria. False Maria's four motives are intertwined with the Rotwang themes, while cascading winds suggest the energy surging from the laboratory. The second portion begins after the creation. Fredor is released from his room and confronts Rotwang, who says that Maria has taken up with his father. Upon seeing his father with Maria (False Maria), he collapses into delirium and is taken to a hospital bed. Joh's motive and distorted versions of the Love theme are added during this portion.

For the conclusion of this extended scene, Fredor envisions False Maria's orgiastic dance that drives the aristocratic men into frenzy. The music reaches a fever pitch with the addition of the *Dies irae*, a tune from the Catholic Church associated with death and the Last Judgment. The combination of this tune with dance music from False Maria easily recalls the last movement of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* (see Chapter 4).

TRAILER

Having survived World War I and the subsequent technology gap with Hollywood, European cinema centers created some of the finest films of the silent era. The production of high-quality works would continue in France, Great Britain, Germany, and the Soviet Union during the 1930s (see Chapter 12), and films from new centers would also begin to gain international attention at this time. Unfortunately, film production everywhere would soon encounter its most serious challenge yet—World War II.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

Becce, Giuseppe	expressionism	Milhaud, Darius
Buñuel, Luis	Gance, Abel	Renoir, Jean
Clair, René	Honegger, Arthur	Satie, Erik
dadaism	Huppertz, Gottfried	Shostakovich, Dmitri
Dalí, Salvador	Lang, Fritz	surrealism
Eisenstein, Sergei	Meisel, Edmund	Wiene, Robert

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. European films tie into several important artistic movements. View excerpts from *Entr'acte* (dadaism), *L'âge d'or* (surrealism), and *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (expressionism) to consider the interrelationships of these movements with visual arts, literature, and music.

2. Honegger's suites based on his film scores have been recorded on a CD issued by Marco Polo (8.223134). For a sense of how the film might have sounded originally, play portions of the *Napoléon* Suite while watching a video recording of select scenes.
3. *Battleship Potemkin* has been released with the original music of Edmund Meisel (Kino K588). Several other releases of the film (even some saying they use Meisel's music) are accompanied with adapted music from Shostakovich, notably his Symphony No. 5. These are instructive to hear the dramatic qualities of Shostakovich, which he learned from writing and performing film music.
4. Watch the *The New Babylon*, Shostakovich's first film score, and note the similarities to his symphonic style.
5. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* is available in multiple forms. The visual images and the story provide an excellent introduction to expressionism, but the original music has not been revived as of yet. Listen to the various musical accompaniments on YouTube and discuss which are the most appropriate for this expressionist film.
6. Kino has also issued *Metropolis* with its original score by Huppertz (Kino 60). The restoration is remarkable. Also available (perhaps through interlibrary loan) is a published version of Huppertz's full orchestral score. A study of the film and its music, focusing on the instrumentation, moods, and leitmotifs, would be an excellent project.

3

THE GOLDEN AGE OF SOUND, 1929-1943



1933	<i>King Kong</i>
1935	<i>The Bride of Frankenstein</i>
1938	<i>The Adventures of Robin Hood</i>

1939	<i>Wuthering Heights</i>
	<i>Gone with the Wind</i>

The Classical Hollywood Film Score

9



A young man tearfully plays the piccolo after learning that his brother has been killed in *Gone with the Wind*.

At the close of the 1920s, Hollywood faced three serious challenges: the financial turmoil of the Great Depression initiated by the 1929 stock market crash, the technological problems created by the advent of sound films, and the public concern with the morality of movies and their makers. The American

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industry would survive the Depression, resolve the technical issues, and install a standardized censorship called the **Hays Code**. By the mid-1930s, American moviemaking entered a second Golden Age, a period that is considered to be the classic era for Hollywood film. Typical of any art, such a period is characterized by the large quantity and high quality of works produced. During this time, an impressive roster of composers worked for Hollywood, including Max Steiner, Erich Korngold, Franz Waxman, Alfred Newman, and Herbert Stothart. In their hands, the general characteristics of the classical film score were established:

- Extensive use of music (often referred to as “wall-to-wall” music)
- Exploitation of the full range of orchestral colors
- Reliance on the melody-dominated style of the late nineteenth century
- Frequent borrowing of familiar melodies
- Musical support for dramatic moods, settings, characters, and action
- Unity through leitmotifs and thematic transformation

This era also established conventions for film **genres** that would be recognized in future generations. It is helpful to organize our thoughts about film music in terms of genre, since their musical clichés impact audience expectations. But, as the discussion unfolds, we will also see that this approach has limitations in dealing with the variety of individual filmmakers and the frequency of hybrid genres. In this chapter, we will look at film genres that tend to have full orchestral scores: horror films, action and adventure films, romances, and epics.

CLOSE-UP: THE HAYS CODE

In the 1920s, movies were still a relatively new phenomenon. The impact on audiences of scenes of violence, evil deeds, and immoral romances was unknown. In a way, the situation was similar to today's concerns with the Internet. During the 1920s, a number of highly publicized scandals involving silent film stars fueled moral debates. Fearing government censorship, in 1922 Hollywood created the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, for the purpose of improving its moral image. Will Hays was asked to head this organization.

Will Hays (1879–1954) was a lawyer who had served as chairman of the Republican National Committee and as Postmaster General in President Warren G.

Harding's administration. During the 1920s, Hays helped the organization create a list of “Don'ts” and “Be carefuls.” The Hays Code, published in 1930, lists the following general principles:

1. No picture shall be produced which will lower the moral standards of those who see it. The sympathy of the audience shall never be thrown to the side of crime, wrongdoing, evil, or sin.
2. Correct standards of life, subject only to the requirements of drama and entertainment, shall be presented.
3. Law, natural or human, shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation.

A long list of practical rules followed. The code sought to eliminate profanity, the gratuitous use of liquor, sex outside of marriage, and nudity. By 1934 the Catholic Church had begun to exert great influence on the Hays Office, and the Hays Code became a powerful force in the industry. The best-known debate concerned Rhett's final line in *Gone with the Wind*:

"Frankly, my dear, I don't give a damn." After trying a variety of alternate phrases such as "I don't give a hoot" and "my indifference is boundless," producer David O. Selznick opted to pay a \$5,000 fine and retained the classic line. The Hays Office closed in 1945, but the code remained in effect until 1966. In 1968, a rating system took its place.



HORROR FILMS

King Kong

Because of the technical problems filmmakers faced, the quality of films in the early years of sound was relatively weak, and the use of music was often limited to incidental roles. A major turning point came in 1933 with *King Kong*. The film's producers were initially concerned that if the monster did not terrify audiences, the elaborate production would be an expensive disaster. After audiences laughed at the image of King Kong in previews, their fears seemed to be well founded. Desperately needing help, producer Merian C. Cooper turned to composer Max Steiner and paid \$50,000 out of his own pocket for the recording of additional music. The investment paid off. Steiner created a powerful score, complete with raucous brass and pounding percussion.

The amount of music was astonishing for the time; one observer described *King Kong* as "a concert of Steiner music with pictures." The narrative of the film begins without music, as Steiner withholds underscoring for over twenty minutes. Music enters quietly when the ship encounters a mysterious fog (24:50). At that point, the concert begins. Other than during the titanic battle between Kong and the *Tyrannosaurus rex* and Kong's final confrontation with airplanes, the music is unrelenting.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Max Steiner (1888–1971)

Steiner was a child prodigy. Born in Vienna, he conducted his first operetta at age twelve, graduated from the Vienna Imperial Academy of Music at thirteen—completing four years of work in one—and composed a successful operetta at sixteen. In that same year, he became a professional conductor and began working in London. Producer Florenz Ziegfeld helped bring Steiner to the United States in 1914, where he conducted and orchestrated

Continued on next page

Broadway musicals. In 1929 RKO Pictures invited Steiner to Hollywood to work on a film version of the Broadway show *Rio Rita*, and he remained in the service of RKO until 1937. In 1933 alone he worked on thirty-three films, and he would become one of Hollywood's most prolific composers, scoring over three hundred films. Most of these films were for Warner Bros., where he worked from 1937 to 1953. Steiner won three Academy Awards and was nominated for fifteen others.

Important Film Scores

King Kong 1933

The Informer 1935 †

The Charge of the Light Brigade 1936

Dark Victory 1939 ☒

Gone with the Wind 1939 ♀ ☒

Now, Voyager 1942 †

Casablanca 1942 ♀ ☒

Since You Went Away 1944 †

The Treasure of the Sierra Madre 1948

The Caine Mutiny 1954 ☒

The Searchers 1956

A Summer Place 1959

♀ = Best Picture Oscar

† = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination



Max Steiner successfully captures the varied moods of the story. Using a full symphonic orchestration dominated by brass and percussion, Steiner adds harsh harmonies, brass flutter-tonguing, and stuttering repeated chords to create a terrifying sound. But the music goes beyond this one-dimensional view of Kong; during the course of the film, it also gives him a human personality. By the time the climactic conflict is waged on the Empire State Building, Kong is perceived as a tragic figure.



FIGURE 9.1 Music humanizes King Kong when he appears to be curious about Ann.

The extensive musical score is unified by leitmotifs and thematic transformation. The two principal themes, representing Beauty and the Beast, both change during the film. The Beast motive is a three-note chromatic descent (see **EXAMPLE 9.1**). Because of its simplicity, it can easily be combined with other material. When Kong attacks the Third Avenue elevated subway, for example, the orchestra mimics the sounds of the train, and when the train is demolished (1:35:35), Steiner adds the Beast motive in counterpoint. At the end of the film, Steiner transforms Kong's theme by altering the dynamics and orchestration; the result is a sad lament on the death of the magnificent animal.

The Beauty theme appears in two main forms (see EXAMPLES 9.2 and 9.3). At first, it is a lovely waltz tune as John declares his love (see VG 9.1). After Ann is abducted, a terrorized version of her theme appears with a faster tempo and a reduction to four descending notes. Since four descending notes are also embedded in the Native theme (see EXAMPLE 9.4), Steiner is able to merge the two themes during the sacrificial dance. In this shared theme (Example 9.3), the first two measures are the terrorized version of the Beauty theme, the third measure is both the condensed statement of the Beauty theme and the second measure of the Native theme, and the last measure is from the Native theme.

VIEWER GUIDE 9.1

King Kong: Abduction and Sacrifice

Composer: Max Steiner



Timing

DVD: WB T7431 (36:00–48:10)

Setting

Carl Denham (Robert Armstrong), an adventure photographer, has chartered a boat to locate the legendary Skull Island, home of King Kong, a giant apelike creature. He has also hired a beautiful young woman, Ann Darrow (Fay Wray), to be used as a model for his film. Once they begin to explore the island, the natives are attracted to Ann, believing that she would be a good sacrifice to Kong. Also enamored of Ann is the ship's first mate, Jack Driscoll (Bruce Cabot).

Key Points

- Prominent use of brass and percussion
- Music reflects range of emotions from love to terror
- Steiner's use of thematic transformation
- Source music: drums and later full orchestra
- Mickey Mousing effects: music follows the physical movements

Principal Themes

Example 9.1 King Kong



Continued on next page

Example 9.2 Ann/Love



Example 9.3 Ann/Terror



Example 9.4 Natives



PLOT	MUSIC
The boat is anchored off of Skull Island.	The timpani, representing drumming from the island, accompanies a mysterious melody that foreshadows the sacrificial dance theme.
Jack expresses his concern for Ann's safety and then declares his love for her. Interrupting their kiss, the captain calls Jack to the bridge.	Ann's Love theme emerges. With each cut to the captain, the music (and romance) stops.
While Jack is gone, natives kidnap Ann. Discovering what has happened, the sailors prepare to go to the island.	The music builds tension, climaxing with a loud chord as the natives grab Ann. The timpani plays during the search, suggesting drumming on the island.
The natives prepare Ann for sacrifice.	The sacrificial dance theme mixes with Ann's altered theme and a bit of King Kong's motive.
The natives open the gate, lead Ann up the altar stairs, tie her to the posts, and close the gate, leaving Ann alone on the altar.	Dramatic music accompanies the opening of the door. The music ascends as Ann is led up and then the music descends when the natives go down. Ann's theme and the Native theme continue. The latter is played slowly with prominent timpani as the gate is closed.
The natives ascend the wall, and the chief orders the Kong Gong to be sounded.	The music ascends when the natives climb the wall. Rapidly repeated chords, associated with terror, are heard as the natives watch Ann. When the chief speaks, the music stops.
King Kong approaches, terrorizing Ann. She pulls herself free, only to fall into King Kong's hand.	Musical chords suggest Kong's approaching footsteps. Kong's theme is intermixed with Ann's theme, along with the sound of terror.

Typical of Steiner's scores, the music frequently mirrors physical movement. In the sacrificial scene, the music parallels Ann and the natives ascending the altar, the natives descending those steps, and later the natives ascending the wall. Similarly, music mimics each step of King Kong before we see him. Elsewhere in the film, musical chords accompany the steps of the chief when he first observes the intruders (32:30), accents—called **stingers**—coincide with physical impacts, and the music rises and falls with ascending and descending images, as heard during the escape from the cliff (1:15:40). Such obvious mimicking of a physical movement (Mickey Mousing) is now considered to be old-fashioned.

The Bride of Frankenstein

The horror genre produced another outstanding score in *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), sequel to the 1931 classic, *Frankenstein*. Both films were adapted from Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's 1818 novel *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*. The literary connection is reinforced in the opening scene, where Mary Shelley is shown discussing the book with her husband Percy Bysshe Shelley and their friend Lord Byron while a storm rages outside. The story then unfolds, beginning with the revelation that the monster did not really die as we had presumed, a cliché resurrected in the 1980s with such horror-film characters as Michael Myers (*Halloween* movies) and Jason Voorhees (*Friday the 13th* movies). Dr. Frankenstein, who disavowed his earlier creation, is forced by the demented Dr. Pretorius to bring to life a female partner for the monster.

One of the greatest of all horror films, *The Bride of Frankenstein* is noted for its stylized expressionistic images, exuberant self-parody, and the brilliant musical score by Franz Waxman. *Self-parody* is simply treating the conventions of a genre with humor. A recent example is the series of *Pirates of the Caribbean* films, which employs and simultaneously pokes fun at the clichés of pirate/action films.

Example 9.5 Frankenstein



Example 9.6 Bride of Frankenstein



Waxman matches the hyperbole of the film with an energetic score that contains its own sense of parody. The two principal leitmotifs represent exaggerated versions of their characters (see EXAMPLES 9.5 and 9.6). The Monster's



FIGURE 9.2 During the meeting of Frankenstein and his bride, the leitmotifs of both characters are used.

motive, consisting of only five notes, includes a harsh harmonic clash on the fourth note. The dissonance, which could be termed a “wrong-note” harmony (a term suggesting the accidental playing of two adjacent pitches), is purposefully jarring. The loud dynamics, the sustaining of the dissonant sound, and the use of flutter-tonguing in the brass add to the overly horrific effect. By contrast, the theme for the bride is a lush, lyric melody that is far more beautiful than she is, perhaps depicting how she is seen through the eyes of Frankenstein’s Monster. Indeed, the first three notes of her theme are identical to the beginning of the popular song “Bali Ha’i” from *South Pacific* (1949) by Richard Rodgers, where it is used to suggest the beauty of a Pacific island.

The most celebrated music of the film occurs during the climactic creation scene (57:35), which has obvious parallels to a similar scene in *Metropolis* (see [VG 8.2](#)). Throughout the early portions of the scene, the timpani provide a steady rhythmic pulse. The striking of the drum, which does not coincide with the tempo of the other music, represents the bride’s heart, struggling for life. Later, the music mimics the sounds of both the whooshing of the wind and crackle of electricity. All three of the film’s principal leitmotifs can be heard in an aura of magical sounds created by an array of instruments including the organ, celesta, harp, vibraphone, and bells. The music climaxes as lightning strikes the kite. Immediately the timpani beat quickens, providing an aural clue that the bride is alive before we have a visual confirmation and hear the exuberant cry of the excitable Dr. Frankenstein, “She’s alive! She’s alive!”

ACTION AND ADVENTURE FILMS

The difficulties of establishing generic definitions can be seen with action and adventure films. The two genres exhibit many of the same qualities, including fights, escapes, and clearly defined good and bad characters. The action film tends to emphasize conflict, while the adventure film often suggests an exotic location. Action sequences can be found in a variety of other genres, including western, crime, war, and sci-fi movies. For now, we will consider only the pure

action and adventure type of the 1930s, which often involved historical figures (real or fictional), conflicts set in North or Central Africa, and swashbuckling pirates.

The Adventures of Robin Hood

In 1935 Warner Bros. needed someone to adapt music by Felix Mendelssohn for a production of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In a coup, the studio brought to Hollywood Erich Korngold, one of Europe's brightest young composers. He soon began to divide his attention between Vienna and Hollywood, and in a trilogy of action films—*Captain Blood* (1935), *Anthony Adverse* (1936), and *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938)—Korngold established a model for underscoring action films.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Erich Korngold (1897-1957)

Korngold's father was the leading music critic in Vienna, and young Erich had the opportunity to meet some of the greatest musical figures of the time. Gustav Mahler pronounced Erich a genius when he was only ten. Richard Strauss described Korngold's music with "awe and fear." The great Italian opera composer Giacomo Puccini noted: "The boy has so much talent he could easily give us some and still have enough left for himself." Among his other notable admirers was the founder of musical expressionism and serialism, Arnold Schoenberg. In 1928, one European newspaper conducted a poll and named Schoenberg and Korngold the two greatest living composers. Korngold's operatic masterpiece is *Die tote Stadt* (1920).

When the Nazis confiscated Korngold's home in Austria, he used the money he had earned in films to move his family to safety, and he soon became known primarily as a film composer. Unlike Steiner, Korngold was selective about his film assignments and worked on one or two films a year from 1935 to 1947. Once he was labeled a film composer, his reputation declined and interest in his concert works waned. One of his most popular works today is the beautiful Violin Concerto from 1945, which derives its principal themes from melodies originally written for films.

Important Film Scores

Captain Blood 1935

Anthony Adverse 1936 †

The Adventures of Robin Hood 1938 !

The Sea Hawk 1940 ☒

The Sea Wolf 1941

Kings Row 1942

† = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination



The Adventures of Robin Hood is an episodic story based on the lives of two medieval figures—the historical Richard the Lion-Hearted and the fictional Robin Hood. The pairing of these characters, largely based on legend, creates an exciting romantic swashbuckler. The lavish nature of this costume drama is enhanced by the brilliant colors produced by three-strip **Technicolor** (see Close-Up: Color, p. 232), the first film by Warner Bros. to use this process.

Korngold's score is remarkable for its length (he underscored nearly three-quarters of the film), the full and varied exploitation of the large orchestra, dramatic support, and thematic transformation. A number of critics have hailed the work as the first masterpiece of film music. Essential to its conception are the action scenes, for which Korngold employed a style incorporating the following characteristics:

- A full symphonic orchestration, emphasizing brass and percussion
- Loud dynamics
- Passages of quick notes
- Irregular and hard accents
- Occasional motivic references

These elements combine to suggest the chaos of battle. With the addition of sound effects, this simple formula became a cliché for future action films, including *Star Wars*.

Outside of the fighting sequences, the score contains an abundance of tuneful ideas. Much of the melodic material is derived from the Robin Hood theme (see EXAMPLE 9.7), initially presented in a quick trumpet fanfare when Robin is seen for the first time (3:15). The first four notes of his theme form an independent motive that is frequently heard in fighting sequences and can be found embedded within other themes, such as the opening notes of the jovial Little John melody (see EXAMPLE 9.9). Similarly, the Love theme of Robin and Marian (see EXAMPLE 9.10) bears a strong resemblance to the Robin Hood theme. The Love theme also shares a similar contour with the first four notes of the King Richard theme (see EXAMPLE 9.11), which allows Korngold to suggest a close association between the two. Indeed, during the primary romantic scene (1:10:10), the Love theme actually becomes subordinate to Richard's theme, just as Marian decides to stay and help Richard rather than leave with Robin.

The film opens with a rousing march associated with Robin and his Merry Men. Korngold adds a number of unusual melodic twists and harmonic dissonances to the theme, suggesting the arrogant nature of our hero and projecting the jocular spirit that underlies much of the film. The theme reappears in several prominent moments. In the attack on the caravan (33:20), the theme is heard in its entirety, including a contrasting lyric section that coincides with the overconfidence of Sir Guy. Once Robin's men drop into action from the trees,

swooping sounds from the woodwinds and harp punctuate motives of the theme. At the end, Robin swings in with his opening four-note motive. The music for this scene is effortless; it is musically satisfying and supportive of the action at the same time. Shortly thereafter, the March theme is again altered, this time into a boisterous waltz (39:45), musically transforming Sherwood Forest into the Vienna Woods.

VIEWER GUIDE 9.2

The Adventures of Robin Hood: Climax

Composer: Erich Korngold



Timing

DVD: WB 65131 (1:29:55–1:41:20)

Setting

In the absence of King Richard the Lion-Hearted (Ian Hunter), Prince John (Claude Raines) has taxed the poor unmercifully with the help of Sir Guy of Gisbourne (Basil Rathbone). Robin of Locksley, known as Robin Hood (Errol Flynn), organizes a band of outlaws to fight the forces of Prince John. Just prior to the climax, King Richard returns to England and escapes an assassination attempt. He makes plans with Robin to sneak into Nottingham Castle in order to prevent the unlawful coronation of Prince John and to save Lady Marian (Olivia de Havilland) from execution.

Key Points

- Colorful orchestration
- Use of leitmotifs
- Simultaneous source music and underscoring
- Use of action music to accompany fighting

Principal Themes

Example 9.7 Robin Hood



Example 9.8 The March of the Merry Men



Continued on next page

Example 9.9 Little John



Example 9.10 Love



Example 9.11 Richard the Lion-Hearted



PLOT	MUSIC
Disguised as priests, Robin, Richard, and their men proceed toward the castle. Humorous dialogue is exchanged on the way.	The March of the Merry Men (Example 9.8) is played quietly, suggesting that they are in disguise and sneaking into the castle. The sound of bells serves both as source music and as a reminder that the men are dressed as clergy. The prominence of bassoons enhances the humor of the dialogue.
Prince John is preparing for the coronation. Sir Guy suggests that Richard must be dead, and they hear the approaching priests. Marian is seen captive in the dungeon.	A contrasting portion of the March is heard. The bell sound, which is heard by the three men, is now clearly diegetic. Processional chords begin in the harp.
The priests enter the hall, and the men file into strategic positions. Prince John makes his entrance.	The March theme is combined with source music—bells and trumpet fanfares. More fanfares accompany Prince John.
The Bishop challenges John's authority; Richard reveals his identity.	The March theme is developed until Richard appears, when we hear the first four notes of his theme.
Robin calls his men into action and general fighting ensues. Robin goes to look for Marian.	The energetic fighting music is punctuated with motives from Robin Hood's theme.
Sir Guy and Robin engage in a lengthy duel. At the climax, Robin kills the antagonist.	Fighting music with Robin Hood's theme continues. The music subtly follows physical movement during the duel. A woodwind trill precedes the climactic moment.
Robin rescues Marian.	The Love theme is played.
Richard bans Prince John.	Richard's theme follows the Love theme. The music stops briefly for John's sentence.
Robin promises loyalty and requests pardons for his men. Richard then gives permission for the union of Robin and Marian.	Robin Hood's theme projects a climactic, triumphant mood.

A master of orchestration, Korngold makes full use of all of the instrumental families; his score sparkles with a variety of colors matching the bright Technicolor film. Especially noteworthy is the ever-changing instrumentation heard in the lyric section preceding the attack on the caravan. Two other scenes illustrate Korngold's remarkable sense of orchestral color. When Robin is led to the gallows (1:04:45), harp glissandos combine with delicate sounds in the woodwinds, strings, and brass to create a dark, ominous mood. At the beginning of the climactic final scene (see [VG 9.2](#)), the March of the Merry Men is distorted, matching their disguises, and combined with source music—church bells and brilliant trumpet fanfares. The latter are played in a different key than the underscoring, which creates a layered effect and provides us with an aural conflict between Robin Hood's men and the castle. Action music breaks out in an extended scene featuring an intense dual between Robin and Sir Guy. With victory and the rescue of Marian, we hear the Love theme, King Richard's theme, and a triumphant version of Robin's theme.

ROMANCES

The romance is a subcategory in the broad drama genre. Like action, the romance can be viewed as an independent type, but frequently it infiltrates other genres, including horror, adventure, war, and comedy films. The independent romance will likely have a full orchestral score, a predominant string timbre, and a beautiful central theme. Such is the case with one of Hollywood's greatest romances—*Wuthering Heights* (1939), with music by Alfred Newman.

Wuthering Heights

The title of the film and the mid-nineteenth-century novel by Emily Brontë on which it is based is derived from the name of the manor house located high on the English moors. According to Brontë's novel, "wuthering" is the local word for the fierce winds that blow during storms in this region. The setting is ideal for a tempestuous love story.

While the story line, mirrored by the weather, continually focuses on the stormy aspect of the relationship between Heathcliff and Cathy, Newman's music, predominantly set for strings, serves as a constant reminder of the warmth and endurance of their love. The principal leitmotif, known as Cathy's theme, is one of the most beautiful melodies written for the screen. It dominates the film just as their love dominates the story. At one point the theme is even heard as a waltz tune played by a dance orchestra (1:14:45). In Cathy's death scene (1:32:00), Newman's music does not reflect the emotions of the dialogue or the changes in mood. Even



FIGURE 9.3 Heathcliff desperately looks for Cathy as we hear the lush Cathy theme in *Wuthering Heights*.

it, we will find elements of other genres, including action, romance, and horrifying visions of the Civil War.

Cathy's death is barely noted in the music. The love theme overwhelms all other emotions, and suggests, as does the "Liebestod" from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, that there is joy in death of the lovers, as it will lead to the ultimate summation of their love.

EPIC FILMS

Epic films tend to have historical settings and extended stories that tell of the life of a person or of an era. They often contain multiple dramatic threads. As the title of the genre suggests, the epic typically has several famous actors, lavish settings, and a rich musical score. One of Hollywood's greatest films appeared in 1939, the epic *Gone with the Wind*. In

CLOSE-UP: THE GOLDEN AGE OF SOUND

Audiences are generally attracted to a film because of the actors. We see movies because Johnny Depp, Samuel Jackson, Leonardo DiCaprio, or Meryl Streep star in them. But sometimes the producer and director can attract an audience. Names such as Steven Spielberg and Quentin Tarantino have great appeal, and we approach their films with definite expectations as to content and quality. The same is true of the films from the 1930s and '40s. Indeed, some of the producers and directors achieved such prominence that they could work independently, without a contract with any single studio.

Frank Capra (1897–1991) was born in Sicily and moved to California at the age of six. He received a degree in chemical engineering from the California Institute of Technology in 1918, and he tried several careers before he settled into filmmaking. He began directing films for Columbia Pictures, and there he achieved his greatest successes, which in turn helped establish this studio. His best-known films were comedies in

which an idealistic individual wins out against huge odds. He won Academy Awards for *It Happened One Night* (1934), *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936), and *You Can't Take It with You* (1938). Also much beloved are *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), *Meet John Doe* (1941), and *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946).

John Ford (1895–1973), the son of Irish immigrants, was born in Maine. He began working in Hollywood as a stunt double and is said to be one of the Ku Klux Klan members on horseback in D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*. Ford began directing films in 1917 and specialized in westerns. His later films are noted for their complex characters and populist subjects. His four Oscars, the most for any director, are for *The Informer* (1935), *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), *How Green Was My Valley* (1941), and *The Quiet Man* (1952). He also remained a leading director of westerns, including such classics as *Stagecoach* (1939), *The Searchers* (1956), and *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962).

Samuel Goldwyn (1882–1974) married the sister of producer Jesse Lasky and together in 1913 they formed the Jesse L. Lasky Feature Play Company, which became Paramount Pictures. Later he founded his own company, but when the company merged with Metro Pictures, creating Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), Goldwyn was shut out of the studio. He then became an independent producer, and films beginning with the words “Samuel Goldwyn Presents” soon earned a reputation for high quality. Among the major works produced by his company are *Wuthering Heights* (1939), *The Pride of the Yankees* (1942), *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946), and *Guys and Dolls* (1955).

David O. Selznick (1902–1965) began work at MGM as a script reader and rapidly rose through the ranks. Opinionated, he was fired even though he had married the daughter of Louis Mayer. He later worked for Paramount and RKO before returning to MGM as a producer to replace the ailing Irving Thalberg. Later Selznick founded his own independent company and produced some of the great films of the era. Best known for *Gone with the Wind* (1939), he was also responsible for bringing Alfred Hitchcock to Hollywood, and they collaborated on *Rebecca* (1940). Both of these films won Academy Awards for Best Picture, the only time a producer has won that award in two consecutive years.

Gone with the Wind

Based on Margaret Mitchell's popular novel and shot in lavish three-strip Technicolor, *Gone with the Wind* brought together the finest visual, dramatic, and musical art of the time. Hollywood rewarded the work with ten Academy Awards (eight Oscars and two other awards), a record at that time. Considering the strength of the competition (*The Wizard of Oz*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *Stagecoach*, and numerous other “classic” films) in what has been called “Hollywood’s greatest year,” the number of awards for *Gone with the Wind* is remarkable. Moreover, one could argue that the epic actually deserved at least one more Oscar. The masterful music by Max Steiner was bypassed in favor of *The Wizard of Oz* (see Chapter 10). Although Herbert Stothart’s score for the latter is effective, Steiner’s achievement is considerably more substantial: *Gone with the Wind* contains one of the most extensive musical scores ever created in Hollywood.

Source music and quotations of familiar melodies are common in *Gone with the Wind*. Extended passages of diegetic music include

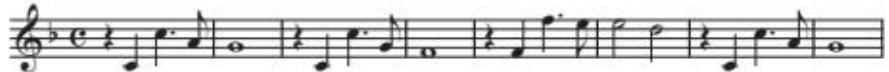


FIGURE 9.4 The Tara theme plays as Scarlett looks at the plantation with her father in *Gone with the Wind*.

the dance orchestras at 12 Oaks (17:50) and Atlanta (38:00), the organ music at religious services (34:50), the tearful rendition of "Dixie" by a Confederate band (49:40), and the solemn voices of the slave chorus (1:05:20). Borrowings or quotations of well-known tunes are also plentiful. Particularly effective are the distorted versions of Southern tunes such as "Dixie" when the South begins to suffer defeat. In one powerful scene in Atlanta, the camera rises slowly, revealing a thousand Confederate bodies and eventually a tattered Confederate flag (1:15:05). The moment is supported by an intense musical outpouring, featuring a sad "Dixie," distorted versions of "Old Folks at Home" and "Maryland, My Maryland," and strong dissonances that build to a somber statement of "Taps."

Steiner's original music for *Gone with the Wind* tends to be tuneful. Avoiding the kinds of short motivic themes he used in *King Kong*, Steiner created a number of lengthy melodies to represent individuals and relationships. The most important of these is the Tara theme (see EXAMPLE 9.12). This resplendent melody is associated not with romantic love or patriotism, but with Scarlett's love for her plantation named "Tara." *Gone with the Wind* begins and ends with Scarlett, and all of the events are seen through her eyes. During the course of the movie, Scarlett undergoes repeated disappointments. The one constant through all these events is Tara, her source of strength. As she rebounds from every setback, thoughts of Tara, accompanied by the theme, give her renewed energy. At the end of the film, despite all her growth, all her triumphs, and her realization that she loves Rhett, she endures yet one more devastating blow. She deals with Rhett's rejection by feeling the weight of the loss, setting her feelings aside with a reference to her adolescent days—"tomorrow is another day"—and turning her thoughts to the source of her strength, Tara. The return of the theme at the end rounds off the film and reassures us that Scarlett's indomitable spirit will triumph.

Example 9.12 *Tara*



Some of the other leitmotifs reflect the nature of the characters they represent. Two of the themes suggest an ethnic background: a jig underscores Gerald O'Hara's Irish heritage (see EXAMPLE 9.13), and a rag theme—a syncopated rhythmic sound associated with African Americans—accompanies the lively character of Mammy (see EXAMPLE 9.14). Character traits are suggested by the serene melody for Melanie (see EXAMPLE 9.15) and the confident theme of Rhett Butler (see EXAMPLE 9.16). The lyric nature of the other themes reflects the romantic quality of the love relationships. As with the Tara theme, all

of the melodies are used with restraint. Perhaps the most beautiful theme of the score, the love theme of Rhett and Scarlett, is not heard for nearly half of the film. It slowly emerges to dominance in the second half, and at the end, it retains a fresh, vibrant quality.

Example 9.13 Gerald O'Hara



Example 9.14 Mammy



Example 9.15 Melanie



Example 9.16 Rhett



VIEWER GUIDE 9.3

Gone with the Wind: Scarlett at Twin Oaks

Composer: Max Steiner



Timing

DVD: MGM 906311 (28:30-35:55)

Setting

Scarlett (Vivien Leigh), having heard rumors that Ashley (Leslie Howard) will marry Melanie (Olivia de Havilland), comes to a party at Live Oaks in order to win him over. Just after the men have had a heated debate about war, she pulls

Ashley into a room in order to confess her love. During this excerpt we also encounter Rhett Butler (Clark Gable) and Charles (Rand Brooks).

Continued on next page

Key Points

- Scoring for full symphony orchestra
- Music reflects a variety of emotional states
- Music runs counter to Scarlett's mood on two occasions
- Use of leitmotifs
- Arrangements of well-known tunes: "Dixie" and "Taps"

Principal Theme

Example 9.17 Scarlett's Love for Ashley



PLOT	MUSIC
Scarlett runs downstairs and invites Ashley into a room.	The descending music mirrors her descent. The music becomes more lyrical as they enter the room, suggesting tenderness.
Ashley asks what she wants, and Scarlett declares her love.	At first, the music is hesitant; her Love for Ashley theme enters as she talks.
Ashley asks her to forget him and confesses his love for Melanie.	The Love for Ashley theme becomes distorted and grows more passionate. With Ashley's sentiments, the mood softens slightly.
Scarlett accuses Ashley of being false and slaps him.	The music grows in intensity, and a single chord is sustained after the slap.
After he leaves, she throws a vase.	Her building anger is reflected in the music. The music follows the flight of the vase.
"Has the war started?"	No music for the dialogue with Rhett
Scarlett leaves the room and hears Melanie defend her.	No music
People cheer; war has been declared.	"Dixie"
Charles talks to Scarlett and declares his love for her.	"Dixie" continues. As Charles speaks, the music becomes tender.
Scarlett agrees to marriage.	The music is emotionally reserved during the proposal and reaches a dark chord.
Scarlett watches Ashley kiss Melanie.	The second half of her Love for Ashley theme plays. A trumpet call sounds faintly at the end as Ashley goes off to war.
At her wedding ceremony, Scarlett cries.	Source music: church organ
We read that Scarlett is a widow.	A trumpet plays "Taps."

The excerpt described in **VIEWER GUIDE 9.3** can be divided into three parts. In the first, Scarlett pulls Ashley into a room and confesses her love to him. He rejects her, saying that he is marrying Melanie. Throughout the scene, the music follows Scarlett's changing moods, as within a matter of minutes she shifts from playful to tentative to passionate, and finally to angry. While she expresses her love for Ashley, we hear a theme that functions as a leitmotif for her love of Ashley, played lyrically by the strings (see **EXAMPLE 9.17**). When Ashley does not respond as Scarlett had expected, this theme becomes distorted, revealing Scarlett's changing emotional state. After Ashley leaves, Scarlett hurls a vase across the room. In the music, we can hear the flight of the vase and its impact. The abrupt silence reinforces our surprise when we discover that Rhett Butler has been present throughout.

In the second and third parts of the excerpt, the music often reflects the emotions of people other than Scarlett, hence the musical mood runs counter to what Scarlett is feeling. After Scarlett leaves the room in tears, the news is announced that war has been declared. The orchestra plays an exuberant "Dixie," a Southern patriotic tune. The music matches the jubilant mood of the house, but it is in stark contrast to the tearful Scarlett that we see on the screen. Later, as Charles proposes to Scarlett, the music returns to Scarlett's point of view. Rather than supporting Charles's love and joy or the general jubilation of the household, the music reveals Scarlett's detached emotional state. As she watches Ashley and Melanie kiss, we hear her Love for Ashley theme and a high-register violin note that suggests Scarlett's isolation. The second part closes when Ashley goes off to join the army, accompanied by a faint trumpet fanfare. For the final portion of this segment, we see Scarlett at her wedding ceremony. The diegetic music from the church organ reflects a solemn mood that once again runs counter to Scarlett's comically tragic demeanor. This mock seriousness continues, as we hear a trumpet play "Taps" and read that Charles has died in a rather non-heroic manner.

In all these emotional contradictions and in Scarlett's quickly changing moods, Steiner has contributed to an important aspect of the story. At this time, Scarlett is young, impetuous, and self-centered, as summed up in her classic response when told that war has been declared: "Don't you men ever think about anything important?" Scarlett will change greatly during the course of this film. She will become independent and strong-willed, a transformation that is reflected in Max Steiner's music.

TRAILER

The music for *Gone with the Wind* can be viewed as the paradigm of the classical Hollywood score. But not all Hollywood films from this decade had such rich and full music. Chapter 10 explores several film genres that tend to have simpler musical support.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

genre	Newman, Alfred	Waxman, Franz
Hays Code	Steiner, Max	
Korngold, Erich	Technicolor	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. What are the qualities of the classical Hollywood film score? Cite examples from movies of this era.
2. Why did Hollywood film composers adapt the style of late-nineteenth-century orchestral music for underscoring?
3. Compile a list of film genres. What types of music do you expect in the various genres? Can you think of exceptions, particularly in film music after 1960?
4. Why do horror, action, adventure, and romance films tend to use a full symphony orchestra? Consider epic films as well. Is there a correlation between “quality” films and orchestral scores?
5. In a discussion of hybrid films (films that contain elements of two or more genres), discuss how a composer might balance the various elements in the score.
6. The Golden Age produced many horror, action, adventure, and romance films. Locate and view others in these genres and compare them to examples in the textbook.
7. Why is the music for *Gone with the Wind* considered to be the paradigm of the classical Hollywood film score?
8. Listen to the concert music of Korngold. How do his compositions for concert halls and film differ and how are they similar?

FOR FURTHER READING

Winters, Ben. *Erich Wolfgang Korngold's The Adventures of Robin Hood: A Film Score Guide*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2007.

1929	<i>The Hollywood Review of 1929</i>	1937	<i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i>
	<i>Broadway Melody</i>		<i>Stagecoach</i>
	<i>Hallelujah</i>	1939	<i>Mr. Smith Goes to Washington</i>
1933	<i>42nd Street</i>		<i>The Wizard of Oz</i>
1937	<i>Shall We Dance</i>		

Lighter Musical Scores

10



Dorothy sings "Over the Rainbow" in *The Wizard of Oz*.

The classical Hollywood score, with its wall-to-wall music, colorful orchestration, melodic material, and full range of emotions, was established as a norm during the Golden Age of sound. But a number of movies from the 1930s have limited amounts of music, and in many types of films, popular music



played a large role. In this chapter, we will observe genres that tend to reflect the latter descriptions—the musical, western, screwball comedy, and animation. At the end, we will return to one of the greatest of all musicals, *The Wizard of Oz*.

CLOSE-UP: THE MAJOR STUDIOS AND THEIR COMPOSERS

Hollywood studios can be divided into two groups, the Big Five and the Little Three. Each studio had its own style and its own approach to music.

The Big Five

RKO: This studio played an important early role in the Golden Age. Radio-Keith-Orpheum, or RKO, emerged as a major studio in 1928 and created such masterpieces as *King Kong*, the Astaire-Rogers musicals (*Top Hat* and *Shall We Dance*), and *Citizen Kane*. During its declining years, Howard Hughes bought the studio, and it eventually was sold to Desilu Television in 1955. Max Steiner worked for RKO from 1930 to 1936. Roy Webb became the principal composer after Steiner's departure.

Warner Bros.: Propelled by its early success with talkies, Warner Bros. specialized in gangster films, biographies, and musicals. By 1936, both Korngold and Steiner were on the impressive roster of composers. Hugo Friedhofer worked as the principal orchestrator. *Gone with the Wind* was their greatest achievement.

MGM: Established in the 1920s by a merger of three companies, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer created the best film factory in Hollywood, with the most sparkling array of stars. Its musicals of the 1940s and '50s were considered the finest in Hollywood. Herbert Stothart was the leading composer in the 1930s, winning an Academy Award for *The Wizard of Oz*.

Twentieth Century Fox: William Fox founded the Fox Company in the nickelodeon days and brought it into prominence with some outstanding productions and early success with the Movietone sound system.

In 1935 Fox merged with Twentieth Century to form a new corporation. Alfred Newman was the dominant musician in this studio. In the 1950s, the studio began hiring composers for individual film projects, including Bernard Herrmann, Franz Waxman, Hugo Friedhofer, and David Raksin. Lionel Newman, Alfred's brother, became director of music in 1961.

Paramount: Paramount was the first studio to establish nationwide distribution. As a result, it became the dominant force in the early studio years, with the largest array of popular stars, including Mary Pickford. Among its early successes were *The Ten Commandments* (1923) and *Wings* (1927). The studio suffered during the Great Depression and was declared bankrupt in 1933. Reorganized in 1935, it specialized in B films, but continued making high-quality films as well. Victor Young was the leading composer at the studio.

The Little Three

Universal: Established in 1912, the studio gained prominence in the early 1930s following its production of *All Quiet on the Western Front*. It specialized in horror films, comedies, and musicals. The studio used a corporate approach to music, often involving several composers on the same project. Franz Waxman became the head of music in 1936, and later Charles Previn took charge of the so-called music factory.

Columbia: A small studio, Columbia specialized in B films. It gradually emerged as a power in the 1940s and '50s, primarily due to its early investment in television.

United Artists: UA was not a studio but rather a distributing company for artists who produced their own pictures. The founders were D. W. Griffith, Char-

lie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, and Douglas Fairbanks. The company has survived competition from the giant studios up to the present day.

MUSICALS

Following the lead of *The Jazz Singer*, films with musical numbers enjoyed great popularity in the early years of the sound era. For models of musical entertainments, Hollywood looked to the theater, where there were two basic types of musical shows:

- Productions featuring a series of unrelated performances, such as the **revue** or vaudeville
- Productions that inserted musical numbers into a dramatic plot, such as **operetta** and musical comedy

Revues were popular in the early sound era. *The Hollywood Revue of 1929* is considered to be the best of these movies, although it is sorely lacking by modern standards. The film was shot at the MGM studios in the middle of the night, after production on all the other films had stopped. Not a lot of attention was given to precision in the dance routines, and many of the jokes are dated. But there are some memorable segments, including Joan Crawford singing and dancing the Charleston (6:45), a comedy routine based on the balcony scene of *Romeo and Juliet* shot in an early form of Technicolor (1:23:50), and the closing song, “Singin’ in the Rain,” which was popularized in a 1952 musical of the same name (1:30:15 and 1:55:40).

A number of operettas were brought to the screen, beginning with Sigmund Romberg’s *Desert Song* in 1929. A series of such works featuring the engaging team of Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy sustained Hollywood adaptations of operettas into the 1940s. But interest in that type of entertainment waned, and the greater simplicity of the musical comedy, or **musical** as it became known, appealed to Hollywood filmmakers. Both newly created works and adaptations of existing Broadway shows began to appear. Over sixty musicals were created in 1928 alone.

Particularly noteworthy is *Broadway Melody* (1929), which won the Academy Award for Best Picture—the only



FIGURE 10.1 Joan Crawford dances the Charleston in *The Hollywood Revue of 1929*.



FIGURE 10.2 Daniel L. Haynes sings “Goin’ Home” in *Hallelujah*.

true musical to win the award until 1951. This film, advertised as “all talking, all singing, all dancing,” served as a model for future musicals; the plot centers on a backstage romance, and the music features popular tunes created by composer Nacio Herb Brown and lyricist Arthur Freed. The musical highlights include “Broadway Melody,” “You Belong to Me,” and “The Wedding of the Painted Doll,” all of which were used again in *Singin’ in the Rain*.

Also appearing in 1929 was a unique musical drama entitled *Hallelujah*, the first movie by a major studio to use an all-black cast. During the silent era, films with African American actors, such as those created by Oscar Micheaux, were shown to predominantly black audiences, while

the studios essentially ignored this segment of the public. The renowned director King Vidor finally convinced MGM to produce *Hallelujah* by donating his services without pay. The result is a fascinating glimpse at the lives of African Americans in the 1920s, including nightclub entertainment (23:10) and religious rituals (53:50). At the end of the film, Zeke (Daniel L. Haynes) sings “Goin’ Home” (1:35:45), based on a melody from the slow movement of Dvorak’s *New World Symphony*.

The more than seventy musical films produced in Hollywood in 1930 saturated the market, and for the next few years such works were box-office poison. The enormous popularity of *42nd Street* (1933) revived the genre. Featuring another backstage romance, effective humor, entertaining songs by Harry Warren and Al Dubin, and elaborate dance routines (1:20:30), the film is a milestone of film musicals. The choreographer for *42nd Street*, Busby Berkeley, continued to create sensational dance sequences in films throughout the decade, both as a choreographer and director. He pushed the musical to its limits with huge production numbers featuring bevyes of beautiful women, fantastic stage sets and costumes, sexually suggestive choreography, and creative camera angles.

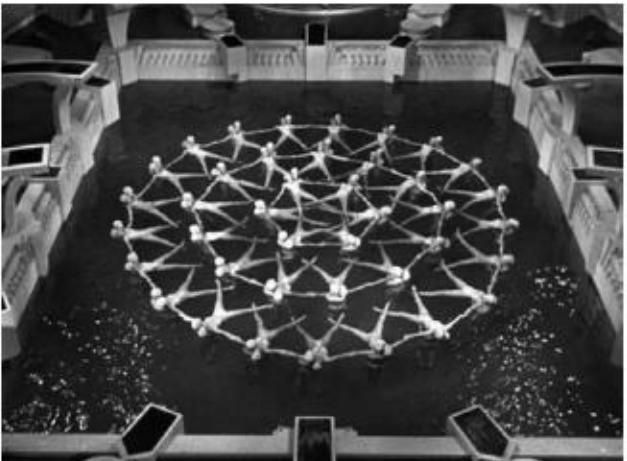


FIGURE 10.3 Spectacular choreography by Busby Berkeley in *Footlight Parade* (1933).

Hollywood also produced less-spectacular, more-intimate musicals. These were often vehicles for star performers such as Gene Autry ("The Yodeling Cowboy"), Mae West, the Marx Brothers, and box office princess Shirley Temple. Among the most popular musicals of the decade were those featuring the dancing duo of Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Fred Astaire was an adequate singer and had a warm, engaging personality, but it was his dancing, with its elegant mixture of ballet and popular styles, that packed the theaters. He is considered one of the greatest dancers of the century, even by the standards of classical ballet, and he is the prototype of the song-and-dance man that remained a staple of musicals into the 1950s. Essential to the success of the Astaire-Rogers films is the music, which includes songs by three of the greatest popular composers of the time: Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, and George Gershwin.

Popular songs from this era tend to follow a standard **verse-chorus** form. The verse serves as a type of introduction. It presents a light patter, in which the words are clever, humorous, and more important than the melody. In any subsequent repetition of the verse, the lyrics change. The chorus is the musical heart of this structure. It has the more memorable melody, and it generally recurs with the same text. The most common shape of a chorus is a-a-b-a, in which the b often has an expanded range. In performances, it was common for other performers or even the audience to join in singing the chorus—hence its name. This type of song became standardized as follows:

Instrumental introduction

Verse

Chorus

Instrumental break

Chorus

Shall We Dance

One of the most popular films pairing Astaire and Rogers is *Shall We Dance* (1937), with songs by the composer-lyricist team of George and Ira Gershwin. The plot follows the conventions of a romantic comedy. The audience is introduced to two major stars and knows that they will eventually come together. But initially, the relationship seems impossible, and every time they get close, something drives them apart. Naturally, all is resolved at the climax of the story, and the lovers are united in love and presumed matrimony. Typical of many musicals, the principals are entertainers: Astaire portrays Peter, a performer of ballet under the stage name of Petrov; Rogers is Linda Keene, a renowned singer and tap dancer.

VIEWER GUIDE 10.I

Shall We Dance: "They All Laughed"

Composer: George Gershwin



Timing

DVD: WB T7255 (53:55-59:30)

Setting

Peter (Fred Astaire) is a tap dancer at heart, but he performs ballet under the assumed Russian name of Petrov. While in Paris, he becomes enamored with Linda Keene (Ginger Rogers), an American singer and tap dancer. Maintaining his false identity, he follows her back to New York on an ocean liner. Every time their relationship begins to warm up, something goes wrong. One night, both attend the same nightclub. At this point, Linda has never actually danced with Peter, and she still believes that he is only a ballet dancer. He has lost hope of getting together with her, but opportunity knocks—or, should we say, taps?

Key Points

- Verse-chorus structure
- Extended dance sequence
- Forwarding the plot through song

PLOT	MUSIC
Scanning the audience, the spotlight lands on Linda. She feels compelled to go onstage and sing.	The band plays the introduction to "They All Laughed."
Linda sings for the audience.	She sings the verse of the song.
She moves slightly forward and continues singing. After the chorus, the band quickly closes the song.	Song chorus (beginning with "They all laughed at Christopher Columbus")
The audience applauds, even the reluctant Peter. To her surprise and dismay, the bandleader announces that she has agreed to dance with Petrov. Peter sees an opportunity and seizes it.	No music
Peter continues to act like Petrov and performs ballet gestures.	The band plays dramatic ballet-style music, ending with a Debussy-like flute solo.
Petrov tells Linda to "tweest" and continues his ballet style.	The band plays the a portion of "They All Laughed" as a waltz.
Linda begins tap dancing. Peter responds with more ballet, but eventually shows off a tap routine.	The b portion of the tune is played in a pop style for Linda and in a more sophisticated style for Peter. The waltz returns, but changes to a pop style for Peter's tap.

PLOT	MUSIC
Linda and Peter begin to tap together. She is reluctant at first, but soon begins enjoying dancing with her new partner.	The band plays the chorus of the song in a moderate tempo. While Linda gets more enthusiastic, the band repeats the chorus twice at faster tempos.

One of the film's highlights is the first dance that pairs Linda and Peter (see [VG 10.1](#)). The music of this scene follows a standard verse-chorus structure. After the opening verse, the chorus can be heard in an a-a-b-a form, with the b portion as the most expansive and lyrical portion. Since each a phrase differs, it is more accurate to diagram the chorus as a-a'-b-a". The first three of these begin with "They all laughed," while "They all said" initiates the last phrase (a"). Also notice how the lyrics for the first two phrases are generalized about historical figures, but the last two address the singer's personal relationship.

Normally, an instrumental break follows the chorus, but in song-and-dance numbers, the break often becomes an extended dance sequence. In this particular example, we hear the band play the four phrases of the chorus three successive times, each in a faster tempo. While this song-and-dance routine is entertaining on its own merits, it also moves the plot forward, mirroring the acceleration of their relationship. During the performance, Linda learns that Peter is not just a ballet dancer, and their energetic dancing brings the two main characters closer together—at least momentarily.

WESTERNS

Westerns have been a staple of American filmmaking since *The Great Train Robbery* (see Chapter 5). The first western in the sound era, *In Old Arizona* (1928), contains little music, but the Cisco Kid does serenade his girl (44:50), and a male ensemble sings "My Antonia" at the close. **Singing cowboys** were a rage on the radio in the late 1920s, and vocal numbers would remain a standard feature of movie westerns through the 1950s.

Stagecoach

Stagecoach (1939) is considered to be the first great western. Richard Hageman provided an energetic score for the film based primarily on American folk and cowboy



FIGURE 10.4 The vision of a distant stagecoach (lower right) is accompanied by "Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie" in the underscore.

tunes. Most prominent is "Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie," one of the most famous of all cowboy songs. His setting of the tune, heard primarily during travel montages, incorporates a fast-paced accompaniment, while the tune itself is presented in a broad, lyric manner. This texture will become a cliché in later westerns, as will the combination of music and beautiful landscapes. In one of the most effective moments (1:09:20), we see the stagecoach in the distance accompanied by its principal theme. As the camera pans to the left, we discover that the stagecoach is being watched by an Indian war party. The shock of this revelation is reinforced musically with loud drumming and a descending Indian theme. When the camera pans back to the stagecoach, the innocent stagecoach theme returns, indicating that the passengers are unaware of the impending danger.

SCREWBALL COMEDIES AND POPULIST FILMS

Among the high-quality films in the 1930s that use little underscoring are Best Picture-winners *It Happened One Night* (1934) and *You Can't Take It with You* (1938), both comedies with screwball tendencies—characters acting outside the norm. During this time, such madness is often combined with a **populist** theme, in which ordinary people are pitted against the rich, politicians, or both. Generally, these movies employ music only for the credits, source music, montages, and perhaps an occasional musical joke. Simple diegetic tunes often provide the main musical presence in these films. *It Happened One Night* contains a rousing rendition of "The Flying Trapeze" by bus passengers, *You Can't Take It with You* achieves a resolution through "Polly Wolly Doodle," and *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946) prominently features "Buffalo Gal."

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington

A similar sparseness of music can be observed in the classic *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939). This film is marginally related to the screwball comedy, and it definitely exemplifies the populist film. As such, music is minimal in the story. In addition, there is another Hollywood cliché at work: it has been generally thought to be inappropriate to underscore scenes set in government buildings,

such as courtrooms or, in the case of this film, the U.S. Senate.

In conformance with these traditions, scoring is heard only once in scenes in the Senate, near the end of Mr. Smith's filibuster. Much of the other music in the film stems from source music, such as the bands at the boys camp and at political rallies. Reflecting the populist tradition, American tunes abound during the montage of Mr. Smith's AWOL bus tour of Washington, DC (21:15), culminating in one of Hollywood's most patriotic moments at the Lincoln Memorial. Dimitri Tiomkin cleverly includes "Red River Valley" as an expansion of "Taps," heard during the view of the Arlington Cemetery. This tune, the unofficial anthem of the populist movement, returns with sounds of nature in the accompaniment as Mr. Smith and Saunders write a bill for a boys camp near controversial Willet Creek (52:10).



FIGURE 10.5 A patriotic moment in *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*

ANIMATIONS

The rich and varied history of cartoon music is certainly worthy of an independent study. Within the limitations of this text, the histories of music for cartoons and music for narrative films meet only in animated features. Still, a few words about early sound cartoons are appropriate at this point, since cartoons and cartoon composers influenced film music.

Walt Disney created a great sensation with *Steamboat Willie* (1928), starring Mickey Mouse. This was not Mickey's first cartoon—it was actually the third—nor was it the first cartoon with sound. But this parody of the Buster Keaton film *Steamboat Bill, Jr.* (1928) fully exploited sound technology and had enormous audience appeal. Music and sound effects are at the heart of this short, while dialogue is minimal. The two most prominent melodies in the cartoon are "Steamboat Bill," and "Turkey in the Straw," featuring a virtuoso performance by Mickey extracting musical sounds from various animals. The coordination of movement and music in this cartoon was painstaking, but the process helped pave the way for advances in the timing of music and film.

Disney worked on more-sophisticated musical settings in a cartoon series entitled *Silly Symphonies*. The first, and one of the most popular, is *The Skeleton Dance*. More a series of sight gags than a story, *The Skeleton Dance* combines

elements of an adapted score with music mirroring specific gestures of the boney cast. Other *Silly Symphonies* relate short stories. Singing is featured in several cartoons, including the operatic *The Goddess of Spring* (1934) and the classic *The Three Little Pigs* (1933) with its hit song, "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?"

Before incorporating sound in his animations, Disney consulted with Carl Stalling. A silent film organist and orchestra director, Stalling joined the Walt Disney Studios and created music for many of the early cartoons. In making *The Skeleton Dance*, Stalling helped develop an early version of the **click track**, a system in which holes placed in the film create a clicking sound that can be made audible to the conductor and musicians of a studio orchestra. Because of the success of this system in coordinating music with action, it was adopted by the movie studios and became part of the standard process in postproduction scoring.

CLOSE-UP: THE ANIMATED FEATURE

Although Walt Disney (1901–1966) is viewed as the foremost figure in animation and children's entertainment, some of his early efforts fell short. In the years before Mickey Mouse, Disney was unsuccessful with three separate series of cartoons—*Laugh-O-Grams*, *Alice in Cartoonland*, and *Oswald the Rabbit*. Mickey Mouse was created in 1928, and a large part of his success was due to Disney's foresight into the potential of technology. He quickly adapted sound in his third Mickey Mouse cartoon, *Steamboat Willie* (1928). The sound of Mickey whistling, clanking, and speaking (the high-pitched voice was Disney himself) brought the house down.

In 1931 Disney took another important technological step: he signed an exclusive seven-year contract with Natalie Kalmus to use Technicolor, and produced a sensational cartoon series called *Silly Symphonies*. In 1937 Disney rushed to complete his first feature-length animation before his contract was to expire, allowing other cartoonists access to Technicolor. The result, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, was an immense success, the most successful musical

of the decade at that time, bringing in record-setting box-office receipts. Within five years, Disney created four additional masterworks: *Pinocchio* (1940), *Fantasia* (1940), *Dumbo* (1941), and *Bambi* (1942).

Fantasia stands out as Disney's only non-narrative feature film, and initially it was a box-office failure. In the Academy Award ceremony of 1941, David Selznick presented Disney with the Thalberg Award and praised his work on *Fantasia*. Walt began weeping and replied to the audience, "Maybe I should have a medal for bravery. We all make mistakes. *Fantasia* was one, but it was an honest one. I shall now rededicate myself to my old ideals." Little did Disney know that *Fantasia* would become one of his all-time biggest moneymakers through subsequent releases. A remake, *Fantasia 2000*, was released in an IMAX version on January 1, 2000.

During World War II Disney quit making feature films in order to make cartoons supporting the war effort. The studio survived on government contracts, which commissioned the work. Donald Duck became his new star. There was a second flurry of Disney

feature animations in the 1950s (*Cinderella*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan*, *Lady and the Tramp*, and *Sleeping Beauty*), and a third creative period began in

1989, with *The Little Mermaid*. In all of these works, music plays an integral role.



Stalling left Disney in 1930 and in 1936 began working for Warner Bros., where he remained for twenty-two years. During this time he composed music for two major cartoon series, *Looney Toons* and *Merrie Melodies*, in which he provided musical support for such popular characters as Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig, Tweety Bird, and the Roadrunner. Behind the visual cartoon antics of these characters are musical scores incorporating children's tunes, popular melodies, jazz, borrowed classics, and modern music. Stalling, like several of the other composers listed in TABLE 10.1, explored a number of modern compositional techniques ranging from serialism to avant-garde, predating and paving the way for their use in Hollywood feature films. Scott Bradley, the composer for *Tom and Jerry*, once remarked: "I hope Dr. Schoenberg will forgive me for using his system to produce funny music."

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

Walt Disney fulfilled his ambition of creating a full-length animated feature in 1937 with *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Dazzling audiences with its realistic animation, stunning colors, and memorable songs, this work became the top moneymaking film in the history of the industry to that point. During the 1930s, only *Gone with the Wind* (1939) would be more financially successful. In the tradition of earlier Disney cartoons, music plays continuously throughout the film and includes a number of simple songs. A clear distinction is made between

TABLE 10.1 Major cartoon series in the early sound era

SERIES TITLE	INITIAL DATE	PRINCIPAL CREATIVE VOICE	PRINCIPAL COMPOSERS
<i>Mickey Mouse</i>	1928	Disney	Carl Stalling; Bert Lewis
<i>Silly Symphonies</i>	1929	Disney	Stalling; Lewis
<i>Looney Tunes</i>	1930	Harman-Ising (note pun)	Stalling
<i>Merrie Melodies</i>	1931	Harman-Ising	Stalling
<i>Woody Woodpecker</i>	1940	Walter Lantz	Darrell Calker
<i>Tom and Jerry</i>	1940	Hanna-Barbera	Scott Bradley

TABLE 10.2 Disney's first animated features

YEAR	ANIMATED FEATURE	COMPOSERS	SCORE	SONG
1937	<i>Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</i>	Churchill, Harline, and Smith	☒	
1940	<i>Pinocchio</i>	Harline and Smith	!	!
1940	<i>Fantasia</i>	Various		
1941	<i>Dumbo</i>	Churchill and Wallace	!	☒
1942	<i>Bambi</i>	Churchill and Plumb	☒	☒

! = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination

**FIGURE 10.6** The Seven Dwarfs sing "Heigh-Ho"

the developed songs sung by humans and the simple tunes for dwarfs: "I'm Wishing" (3:50) and "Someday My Prince Will Come" (57:40) both have verse-chorus structures, while the title "Heigh-Ho" (23:00) contains almost all the words used in the song.

Between 1940 and 1942, Disney produced four more full-length animated films (see **TABLE 10.2**). *Pinocchio*, *Dumbo*, and *Bambi* became the top three moneymaking movies of the 1940s; all three included outstanding music that received Academy recognition. Although *Fantasia* was initially a box-office failure, it eventually became one of Disney's most popular films. As in some of the earlier *Silly Symphonies*, most of the music for *Fantasia* is borrowed from the concert halls, and the eventual success of the film was a major factor in America's burgeoning appreciation of classical music.

THE WIZARD OF OZ

The finest musical film of the 1930s, and many would argue of all time, is *The Wizard of Oz*. The film is a hybrid, with elements of drama, adventure, fantasy, and animation. There are two creative forces behind the music: Harold Arlen wrote the songs and Herbert Stothart orchestrated them, while also composing the underscoring. Both won Academy Awards, Arlen for "Over the Rainbow" and Stothart for Best Original Score.

The songs of Arlen are at the heart of the film. The musical highlight is Dorothy's rendition of "Over the Rainbow," performed early in the film (5:45). The producers almost cut the song because they felt that it slowed down the pace. As a compromise, the song was shortened; the verse and break were eliminated, so that the song consists of the chorus only. The chorus is in the standard a-a-b-a form, with a closing tag called a codetta. This song is different from most typical a-a-b-a songs in that it is the a portions that are expansive (see EXAMPLE 10.1). Each a statement begins with the words "Somewhere over the rainbow," and the first line also includes the words "way up high." Arlen captures these images with a succession of three wide ascending leaps, and the phrase closes with a gentle descent that brings us back to the starting pitch (the tonic). The b segment ("Someday I wish upon a star") is more restrictive, as its range is limited and the rhythms are quicker. Rounding off the song, a portion of the b phrase is used as the codetta ("If happy little bluebirds fly").

Similar in melodic form is the tune "If I Only Had a Brain/a Heart/the Nerve." It too has an a-a-b-a shape, and each phrase a has a recurring line, "if I only had a brain (a heart, the nerve)," although this refrain appears at the end of each a rather than at the beginning. In this tune, the b portion (Scarecrow version: "Oh, I could tell you why") is melodically the most expansive. The significant difference between these two melodies is the overall mood. "Over the Rainbow" has a dreamy quality created by the slow tempo, melodic shape, and orchestration. "If I Only Had a Brain/a Heart/the Nerve" has a sense of simplicity dictated by its quicker tempo, compound meter (a cliché for country folks), and overall strophic form (also associated with simple songs). The structure is somewhat difficult to hear because the three verses of the companions' song are interspersed during Dorothy's trek to the Emerald City (36:30/42:50/52:10).

Most of the other songs in the film are brief tunes within larger musical scenes. The operatic Munchkin Land scene features "Ding-Dong! The Witch Is Dead," "Follow the Yellow Brick Road," and "We're Off to See the Wizard." While the tunes may not be as fully developed, they are catchy enough to be enjoyed by children and adults alike. Indeed, these songs are closer in style to the simple tunes heard in cartoons and in the animated feature *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* than they are to the songs in standard film musicals. It is not coincidental that the most fully developed song takes place in the adult world of Kansas, while the abbreviated songs occur in the colorful, cartoonlike world of Oz.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Herbert Stothart (1885–1949)

After studying music at the University of Wisconsin, Stothart wrote for Broadway, where he composed some of the music for the highly successful operetta *Rose-Marie* (1924). He soon came to Hollywood and remained the leading musical figure at the MGM studio for twenty years. He composed colorful music for many highly acclaimed films during the 1930s, receiving a total of twelve Academy Award nominations and one Oscar.

Important Film Scores

Viva Villa! 1934

The Wizard of Oz 1939 !

Mutiny on the Bounty 1935

Northwest Passage 1940

A Tale of Two Cities 1935

Mrs. Miniver 1942

A Night at the Opera 1935

National Velvet 1944

The Good Earth 1937

= Best Picture Oscar

! = Best Music Oscar

= Music Oscar Nomination

Underscoring in *The Wizard of Oz*

Cinematic musicals such as *Shall We Dance* are often sparsely scored, but the non-diegetic music in *The Wizard of Oz* is substantial. Although Stothart won the Oscar for Best Original Score, most of his music is adapted from other sources, including Henry Bishop's nineteenth-century song "Home Sweet Home," Brahms's *Lullaby*, Schumann's *Happy Farmer*, and Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain*. Stothart also makes good use of Arlen's tunes in his score: "Over the Rainbow" reflects Dorothy's dream of a better place, and "If I Only Had a Brain/Heart/Nerve" represents the three companions. Even the "Miss Gulch/Wicked Witch of the West" theme is derived from a song: its melodic idea was originally intended as a somewhat mocking response to the quartet singing "Off to See the Wizard" as they approached the Emerald City, but it was later removed and given to Miss Gulch (see EXAMPLE 10.2). Try singing the words "off to see the wizard" to the Gulch/Witch theme and you will hear the connection.

VIEWER GUIDE 10.2 describes one of the most original moments in all of film. At the beginning, Dorothy is knocked unconscious as the house is picked up in the tornado. Initially, the music reflects the scary situation, but it soon changes mood and suggests that it might be fun to be caught up in a tornado! Stothart quotes several children's tunes here, including "Reuben and Rachel." This latter quotation would be humorous to anyone who knows the text of the song, whose first line includes the

words “what a fine world this would be if the men were all transported far beyond the Northern Sea.” The mood changes abruptly with the appearance of Miss Gulch on a bicycle, suddenly transformed into the Wicked Witch of the West on a broom. The music plays the Miss Gulch theme at first with a nagging quality, but then gives it a darker and more evil character with the witch. The house soon begins to fall, and the music projects a mild sense of danger.

VIEWER GUIDE 10.2

The Wizard of Oz: The Tornado and Oz

Composer: Herbert Stothart



Timing

DVD: WB 67705 (17:00-25:30)

Setting

On a farm in Kansas, Dorothy (Judy Garland) longs for a different life. After Miss Gulch (Margaret Hamilton) unsuccessfully tries to take Toto, Dorothy runs away from home with her. Worried about her Aunt Em, Dorothy returns home just as a tornado rages, knocks her unconscious, and lifts the house, Dorothy, and Toto into the sky.

Key Points

- Cheerful music for the ride in a twister
- The Miss Gulch theme is transferred to the Wicked Witch of the West
- The land of Oz has colorful music, including voices
- The melody of "Over the Rainbow" represents Oz
- The Munchkin scene suggests operatic recitative
- The Munchkins cheerfully sing "Ding-Dong! The Witch Is Dead"

Principal Themes

Example 10.1 "Over the Rainbow"

A musical score for 'Over the Rainbow' in G clef, common time, and F major. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, primarily in the soprano range.

Example 10.2 Miss Gulch/Wicked Witch of the West

A musical score for the Miss Gulch/Wicked Witch of the West theme in G clef, common time, and F major. The melody features eighth and sixteenth notes, with a distinct, darker tone than the 'Over the Rainbow' example.

Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
The wind blows out the window, which hits Dorothy.	The orchestra enters loudly and with a dissonance. The sound of wind is mimicked.
Dorothy lies unconscious. The tornado lifts the house into the air.	Blasts of sounds suggest danger. A trombone glissando begins to change the mood.
Still in the sky, various objects fly by the open window, including an old woman knitting, a cow, and two men rowing a boat.	Light, cheerful music plays, including the children's tunes "Reuben and Rachel" and "The Happy Farmer."
Dorothy peers downward and becomes frightened. She sees Miss Gulch transform into the Wicked Witch.	The music has a darker tone. The Miss Gulch theme is played by the strings, but when she becomes the Wicked Witch, the tune is louder and in the trombones.
Dorothy leaves the room and goes to the front door.	No music
Dorothy opens the door and walks into a colorful world.	The colorful music includes motives from "Over the Rainbow," beginning with a solo violin, and "Ding-Dong! The Witch Is Dead." A wordless choir suggests the magical quality of this place.
Dorothy tells Toto that they are no longer in Kansas.	The wordless choir presents the melody to "Over the Rainbow." The orchestra continues.
A flying ball lands, revealing Glinda.	A wavering sound accompanies Glinda's flight. A variation of "Over the Rainbow" plays as the ball lands.
Glinda questions Dorothy about being a witch.	The music fades.
Glinda points out the dead Wicked Witch of the East. Glinda introduces herself.	The orchestra plays a variation of the Gulch theme. A portion of "Ding-Dong! The Witch Is Dead" follows.
Glinda asks the Munchkins to appear. She describes what happened to Dorothy.	She sings, "Come Out, Come Out."
Dorothy explains what happened. The Munchkins respond and dance.	The tempo becomes quicker for Dorothy, as the song uses almost every word that rhymes with "witch."



In a few moments, Dorothy leaves the drab world of her Kansas home and enters the colorful land of Oz. The magical moment of the door opening to color is supported with a lush orchestral sound. Note that the music begins mid-phrase, as if it has been present outside of the house all along, without our hearing it. A solo violin immediately plays "Over the Rainbow," signifying that Oz is that special land Dorothy dreamt of. A wordless choir soon joins, creating a magical atmosphere. Glinda arrives and initiates the lengthy musical tableau of the Munchkins. Highlighting the early portion of the songfest is the choral rendition of "Ding-Dong! The Witch Is Dead," a simple melody with yet another a-a-b-a form.

Before concluding, we must return to “Over the Rainbow,” the most significant music of the film. The American Film Institute has listed Arlen’s melody as the greatest song in the history of Hollywood movies. This honor is not only due to the beauty of the melody and its performance, but also to its role in the film. The melody reflects Dorothy’s fundamental change during the story. Initially, the song represents Oz, as we saw in Viewer Guide 10.2. Later, however, the tune begins to represent her home in Kansas. The critical turning point occurs when Dorothy, trapped by the witch, has only a few minutes to live (1:18:00). As she thinks of Auntie Em, “Over the Rainbow” emanates from the orchestra, suggesting that Dorothy has learned that her home in Kansas is the true land “over the rainbow.” Originally this point was made clearer, as Dorothy sang a moving, tearful reprise of her song. Unfortunately, this poignant moment was cut from the film, but we can still hear it on a recording.

TRAILER

Gone with the Wind and *The Wizard of Oz*, both from 1939, are two of the best films of the Golden Age. Building on trends established in the 1930s, these films assimilated many of the qualities of Hollywood’s Golden Age, including outstanding music. Although Steiner and other studio composers would continue to create film scores in the classic tradition for another decade, most of our attention in the subsequent chapters will be on the challenges to the tradition, including the music for Hollywood’s greatest film—*Citizen Kane*.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

Arlen, Harold	Gershwin, Ira	<i>Silly Symphonies</i>
Berkeley, Busby	Hageman, Richard	singing cowboy
Brown, Nacio Herb	Micheaux, Oscar	Stalling, Carl
click track	musical	Stothart, Herbert
Disney, Walt	operetta	Tiomkin, Dimitri
Freed, Arthur	populist film	verse-chorus
Gershwin, George	revue	Vidor, King

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Why were musicals so popular in the early sound era? What are the various types of musical entertainments adapted by Hollywood? Be sure to include musical dramas, such as *Hallelujah*, in the discussion.

2. What are some standard features of the Hollywood musical of the late 1920s and the 1930s? How did Busby Berkeley impact the genre?
3. Listen to the music for the opening credits to *Stagecoach* and discuss what standard features of the western you hear.
4. Why do you think screwball comedies and populist films lack substantial underscoring?
5. Observe moments from various *Silly Symphonies* of Walt Disney. Discuss these as forerunners of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Fantasia*.
6. Compare the songs for adult figures and for cartoonlike characters in both *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *The Wizard of Oz*.
7. YouTube contains numerous clips from *The Wizard of Oz*, including one of the tornado scene without music. This makes for a good comparison of film with sound effects only and with music. One can also find the cut reprise of "Over the Rainbow" that Dorothy sings tearfully while in captivity. This and other delightful musical sounds not in the film can be heard on the Deluxe Edition soundtrack CD to *The Wizard of Oz* (Rhino Records B0000033JH). Discuss the rationale behind the decision to cut the "Rainbow" reprise.

1941	<i>The Devil and Daniel Webster</i>
	<i>Citizen Kane</i>
1942	<i>Casablanca</i>
1943	<i>The Song of Bernadette</i>

Hollywood and World War II



Sam plays "As Time Goes By" for Rick and Ilsa in *Casablanca*.

The United States faced one of its greatest challenges during the 1940s—World War II (1941–45). Historically, the decade can be divided into three distinct periods—before, during, and after the country's entrance into the war. Hollywood filmmaking and its music can similarly be viewed in three corresponding



phases. This chapter looks at films before and during the war; developments in the second half of the decade are examined in Chapter 13.

THE EARLY 1940s

The paradigm of the Hollywood style created in the late 1930s, which includes a lengthy orchestral score in the Romantic style, continued to exert a strong influence on American filmmaking through the end of the 1950s. Yet, as is typical of all artistic cycles, change was inevitable. Although the major challenges to the film industry would take place primarily after World War II, signs of the demise of the Classic age can be seen in films from the early 1940s.

For film music, the manifestation of this imminent transformation was the emergence of a new musical sound influenced by the modern styles of contemporary **concert composers**. The term “concert composer” refers to composers who write primarily symphonies, chamber music, and operas for performances in concert halls. In the United States, classically trained concert composers rarely wrote movie music. The assembly-line production of Hollywood studios required specialists who devoted themselves to film almost exclusively. These composers wrote quickly and effectively but had little time for other music. Composers of concert music did not fit well into this system, and when they tried, they tended to resent their lack of artistic control over the final product. Still, the modern styles and techniques of concert music gradually slipped into the palette of Hollywood composers, partially because of a number of concert composers who were enticed to Hollywood and partially because of the creative efforts of several studio composers.

CLOSE-UP: CONCERT COMPOSERS AND HOLLYWOOD

Image-conscious Hollywood was well aware that European filmmakers worked with more-prestigious concert composers. The studios responded by attempting to lure prominent composers for their films. Erich Korngold was an early success in this endeavor, but they also enticed two of the most famous composers of the century to Hollywood—Arnold Schoenberg in 1934 and Igor Stravinsky in 1941. Both eventually moved to Hollywood permanently, but neither actually completed a studio score. In a frequently told anecdote, Stravinsky is said to have requested \$25,000 for a score,

a year to compose it, and a voice in how the film was created. Needless to say, the studio did not meet his demands. Schoenberg had earlier met a similar roadblock in negotiations with MGM's Irving Thalberg. Although he did not compose for the studios, Schoenberg did join the faculty at UCLA and in that position exerted an influence on a number of film composers.

Hollywood was more successful in coming to terms with the American concert composer Aaron Copland. Best known for his ballets *Appalachian Spring*, *Rodeo*, and *Billy the Kid*, as well as for the *Fanfare for the Com-*

mon Man, Copland established a distinctive and influential style that can be termed American nationalism (Chapter 3, p. 38). He initially applied the warmth of this style to film adaptations of John Steinbeck's novella *Of Mice and Men* (1939) and Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Our Town* (1940), receiving Oscar nominations for both.

In 1949, Copland composed his last scores for two other films about America—*The Red Pony* and *The Heiress*. His scoring for *The Heiress* earned the composer his only Oscar. In this film, Copland makes

effective use of "Plaisir d'amour" (you may recognize this song through a version by Elvis Presley), but the film presented the tune one more time than he had intended: at the last moment, the producers had replaced Copland's music for the opening credits with a rather insipid arrangement of the tune. Infuriated, Copland asked to have his name removed from the credits—the request was not honored—and he refused to accept his Oscar. This would be his last film score, and American concert composers would rarely venture into film composition for nearly fifty years.



One of the leading figures in bringing modern music to Hollywood is Bernard Herrmann. Coming from radio, Herrmann made a remarkable film debut in 1941 with two scores, both of which earned Oscar nominations. Characteristic of the two scores are frequent dissonances, small musical ensembles, and new and colorful musical sonorities. Among the innovative new timbres in his score for *The Devil and Daniel Webster* (1941) are the recorded humming sounds of telegraph wires that help create an eerie effect associated with the devil (15:00). Other musical highlights include a macabre waltz (1:17:20) and the layered violin tracks for a series of variations on "Pop Goes the Weasel" (50:30). Herrmann won the Academy Award for this creative score, but he will always be best remembered for his other 1941 film—*Citizen Kane*.



FIGURE II.1 Mr. Scratch (the devil) appears with the recorded sounds of vibrating telegraph wires in *The Devil and Daniel Webster*.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Bernard Herrmann (1911–1975)

Born in New York, Bernard Herrmann was trained at The Juilliard School of Music. By the age of twenty, he had founded and was conducting a chamber orchestra. He went on to guest conduct for the New York Philharmonic and other prestigious orchestras. Beginning in 1934 he worked as an arranger and conductor for CBS Radio, and it was there that he met Orson Welles. Herrmann provided musical numbers for Welles's infamous *War of the Worlds* broadcast in 1938, and when Welles decided to make *Citizen Kane*, Herrmann was invited to compose the

Continued on next page

musical score. In later years, Herrmann would collaborate with other great directors, including Alfred Hitchcock and Martin Scorsese.

Important Film Scores

Citizen Kane 1941 

The Devil and Daniel Webster 1941 

The Magnificent Ambersons 1942

The Ghost and Mrs. Muir 1947

The Day the Earth Stood Still 1951

The Man Who Knew Too Much 1956

Vertigo 1958

North by Northwest 1959

Psycho 1960

Taxi Driver 1976 

 = Best Music Oscar

 = Music Oscar Nomination

Citizen Kane

Citizen Kane is generally acknowledged as America's greatest film and can be seen as the high point of the Golden Age. Yet many of the qualities that define its greatness run counter to the general trends of the time. The plot is a unique conception, a single story—the rise and fall of Charles Foster Kane—told from six perspectives:

- Newsreel: the public view
- Thatcher: the guardian
- Bernstein: the business partner
- Leland: the best friend
- Susan: the second wife
- Raymond: the butler

After the initial public view of Kane, each of the retellings focuses on more-intimate details of the various stages of his life: Thatcher knew him as a boy, Bernstein began business with him, Leland was his best friend until the marriage scandal, Susan lived with him through his declining years, and Raymond witnessed his last days. An anonymous reporter named Thompson, whose face is never shown fully, links these stories together as he searches for the meaning of "Rosebud," Kane's last word before dying. Although his efforts are eventually futile, the audience is given the last puzzle piece in the final moment, completing our understanding of Charles Foster Kane.

Also breaking with contemporary practices are the cinematographic effects. Most striking is the stark contrast between bright light and darkness. This effect

is used primarily in scenes with the reporter Thompson, such as the discussion after the newsreel and his visit to the Thatcher Library. The camera angles also create many unique shots throughout the film. The low perspective of the camera during Leland's flashback suggests Kane's rise to power and his greatness. The scene with Kane and Leland after the election loss was shot at floor level. These effects—combined with the use of deep focus (which enables images in both the foreground and background to stay in focus), reflected images, and montage—help make this film one of the most creative and influential works in film history.



FIGURE II.2 The use of bright light and darkness in the Thatcher Memorial Library in *Citizen Kane*

Music for *Citizen Kane*

Orson Welles starred in *Citizen Kane*, produced it, and helped write the script. He did allow Bernard Herrmann to compose the music. Like many of the film scores from the Golden Age, the music for *Citizen Kane* supports the drama, captures the moods, and contributes a sense of unity to the film. But Herrmann also introduces disturbing elements in his choice of orchestration, harmony, and melody.

The challenge to traditional filmmaking is readily apparent at the onset of the movie. The title is set with large lettering that seems to demand a trumpet fanfare in the Hollywood fashion. The lack of music here is unnerving, and Welles then daringly segues into a montage showing the death of Charles Kane without presenting the credits for the actors and key production figures. For the montage, Herrmann eschews the typical full symphonic orchestration and writes for a small ensemble featuring flutes, bassoons, muted brass, and vibraphone. **Tone clusters** (highly dissonant chords created by playing a group of adjacent pitches, as if someone pressed down on the piano keyboard with a fist), other dissonances, and the use of the lower registers of the instruments create a dark and somber mood that matches Welles's foreboding images and parallels the starkness of the story and of the black-and-white photography.

In general, Herrmann's melodic material in the film lacks warmth. One of the most lyrical melodies, the



FIGURE II.3 Instruments used in the lower registers and dissonances set the opening tone for *Citizen Kane*.

CLOSE-UP: WELLES VS. HEARST

The Facts and Fiction of *Citizen Kane*

The story of *Citizen Kane* is based on the life of the newspaper mogul William Randolph Hearst. Many of the events depicted in the film mirror incidents in Hearst's life and career, including the following:

- Hearst was kicked out of Harvard.
- Taking over the *San Francisco Examiner*, Hearst mixed hard-hitting investigative reporting with "yellow journalism," a term that designates a sensational and irresponsible approach to newspaper reporting.
- Hearst began expanding his newspaper empire by moving into New York and stealing the top writers from a rival newspaper, Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*.
- Articles in Hearst's papers helped lead the country into the Spanish-American War.
- Hearst had an affair with an entertainer, the actress Marion Davies, and he promoted her career as he became a force in the film industry.
- Hearst was active in politics and had failed political aspirations.

- In 1937 Hearst lost almost all of his fortune and temporarily relinquished control of his empire.
- A lavish spender, Hearst built a \$30 million mansion on a 240,000-acre lot in San Simeon, California, and filled it, along with several warehouses, with antiques and artworks.

With these parallels and the use of Hearst's actual words, the connection between the two was undeniable. Hearst certainly understood that the film was a parody of his life and tried to suppress it and destroy the career of Orson Welles. His principal objection to the film was not his unflattering image, but the distasteful depiction of Marion Davies in the character of Susan. Davies was not without talent as an actress, and she appeared in several first-rate films. Contrary to the film, Hearst and Davies never married, and she remained a close and faithful friend. Moreover, the film dwells on Susan's drinking—Davies did have a drinking problem—which gives her characterization a mean-spirited edge, for which Welles later expressed regret.

waltz tune associated with Kane's first wife, is short-lived. In the breakfast montage (51:50), we hear the waltz dismantled through a set of variations, just as we watch their marriage disintegrate. Each of the six breakfast scenes is accompanied by a variation of the tune. The opening contains the original version, and its romantic quality reflects their feelings just after the wedding. In the succeeding segments, the music turns humorous, agitated, dark, and ominous. For the final portion, the musical motion is suspended, just as the emotions of their marriage have dissipated.

Two five-note themes (see [VG II.1](#)) underlie much of the drama. In addition to providing unity to the musical score, these motives reveal the film's underlying

theme. *Citizen Kane* is the story of a man who rises to a position of great wealth and power. The Power motive appears when we see him on the rise, view his vast possessions, or observe his ruthless treatment of those he loves, such as when he fires his best friend and when he dominates Susan.

But the focus of the film is on something that Kane lost—"Rosebud." Rosebud is the name of Kane's childhood sled. Although we may not be conscious of it until the end, Herrmann reveals this secret early in the film. The Rosebud motive is heard at the opening when Kane says his last word, when he drops the glass ball with the winter scene, and when we first see Charles as a young boy playing with his sled.

Rosebud stands for much more than a child's possession; it represents the innocence and happiness that Kane lost during his rise to power. Kane's relationship with Susan, whom he meets (55:10), symbolically, while on the way to look at items from his youth, including his sled, begins as an effort to recapture what he has lost. Herrmann reinforces this association by initially giving Susan the Rosebud theme. But the Power motive eventually dominates, as the sweet innocence of Susan is crushed by Kane's power.

Like each of the five personal stories of Kane's life, the Thatcher portion of the film is framed with Thompson's investigation (see VG 11.1). Since Thatcher is dead, his view of Kane is related through the memoirs maintained in a locked vault with a guard and a no-nonsense librarian. Flashbacks show three visions of Kane's life: as a boy who has just come into a fortune, as an idealistic young man running a newspaper, and as an older man who has lost much of his fortune. Throughout the excerpt, music is used sparingly; there are a number of extended dialogue scenes without underscoring.

The music centers on the two principal motives. The Power motive is heard frequently. At times the motive remains in the background as a subtle reminder of the critical role of wealth in the story. At other times, it is quite pronounced, for example during the mocking statements following Charles's final verbal jabs at Thatcher in his newspaper office, immediately followed by a sad version as we jump to the year 1929. The Rosebud theme appears in its most joyous form when we first see young Charles playing outside. Later it is heard quietly as we



FIGURE II.4 The music becomes more detached as the marriage deteriorates in the breakfast montage from *Citizen Kane*.

VIEWER GUIDE II.I

Citizen Kane: The Thatcher Memoirs

Composer: Bernard Herrmann



Timing

DVD: WB 6565 (17:15–30:15)

Setting

A newspaper reporter named Jerry Thompson (William Allard) is trying to solve the Rosebud mystery. He goes to the memorial library dedicated to Walter Parks Thatcher (George Coulouris) and reads notes about the life of Charles Foster Kane (Orson Welles). In the course of the episode, we will encounter, among others, Jedediah Leland (Joseph Cotten), Mr. Bernstein (Everett Sloane), and Kane's Mother (Agnes Moorehead).

Key Points

- Two five-note motives are the principal themes
- Quotation of *Dies irae*
- Orchestration for small, colorful ensembles
- Nineteenth-century dance music for “fun” montage
- Extended dialogue segments without music

Principal Themes

Example 11.1 Love



Example 11.2 Rosebud



PLOT	MUSIC
We see a sculpture of Thatcher. A librarian recites rules to Thompson.	Muted brass intone <i>Dies irae</i> in mock seriousness. Chords continue through the dialogue.
Thompson and the librarian enter the vault, where she provides additional instruction. The librarian shuts the door on Thompson.	The Power motive plays as they enter. A loud chord coincides with the closing of the vault door.

PLOT	MUSIC
Thompson begins to read, and a flashback takes us to 1871, where young Charles is playing in the snow. He throws a snowball at the house.	The Power motive is heard slowly; the tempo then accelerates into a lush string setting of the Rosebud theme. The music stops after the stinger with the snowball impact.
We learn how Charles came into his fortune, as Mrs. Kane assigns guardianship of the boy to Thatcher, over the objections of Mr. Kane.	No music
Thatcher asks to meet the boy, and they go outside to talk to Charles.	The Power motive is followed by other background music, which quietly disappears.
Trying to understand what he is being told, Charles finally attacks Thatcher with his sled. The scene closes with a view of the sled.	No music until after the attack, when we hear the Rosebud theme. With the vision of the abandoned sled in the snow, woodwinds quietly play the Rosebud theme.
A young Charles is given a new sled, and, years later, his fortune. In a letter, Charles expresses little interest in his fortune, other than a newspaper.	No music
A montage shows the fun of running a newspaper at Thatcher's expense.	The orchestra plays a nineteenth-century can-can.
Thatcher confronts Charles. We learn of Charles's unscrupulous methods and hear him defend ordinary citizens.	No music until the Power motive mocks Thatcher at the end
We jump to 1929 and see an elderly Charles relinquishing a large portion of his fortune to Thatcher. Along with Bernstein, they reminisce about the past and philosophize.	The scene opens with a statement of the Power motive played slowly and sadly in the muted brass. Music disappears until the end, when the Power motive is played one more time in the muted brass.
Thompson is disappointed that he did not discover the Rosebud secret. He asks if the librarian is Rosebud, and then leaves.	<i>Dies irae</i> is played quickly and with humor in the muted brass as Thompson exits.

see the boy's sled abandoned in the snow. At this point, an alert listener would know the secret of Rosebud.

Other music in this scene is used for humorous effect. When the exasperated Thatcher reads Kane's opinion that it would be fun to run a newspaper, a nineteenth-century can-can dance accompanies a montage showing Kane's newspaper attacking Thatcher. Also humorous is Herrmann's quotation of the Gregorian chant *Dies irae* for the framing scenes, a melody that is similar to the Power motive (see **EXAMPLE 8.9**). The *Dies irae* is a sacred melody sung in



FIGURE II.5 Charles holds Rosebud between himself and Mr. Thatcher in *Citizen Kane*.

the Catholic Church for funeral services, a fitting tune for a memorial library. The low brass instruments solemnly intone the tune, but with mutes, thereby mocking the institution's pretentiousness.

The darker tones of *Citizen Kane* appear as ominous shadows in the Golden Age. Although at its productive peak, Hollywood was facing emerging problems. In the same year as *Citizen Kane*, sociologist Leo Rosten painted a grim picture of Hollywood's future:

Other businesses have experienced onslaughts against their profits and hegemony; but the drive against Hollywood is just beginning. No moving picture leader can be sanguine before the steady challenge of unionism,

collective bargaining, the consent decree (which brought the Justice Department suit to a temporary armistice), the revolt of the independent theater owners, the trend towards increased taxation, the strangulation of the foreign market, and a score of frontal attacks on the citadels of the screen.*

The pending problems were serious, but World War II delayed the consequences. Hollywood suddenly had a more important challenge, and like the country itself, the American film industry enjoyed one of its finest moments.

THE WAR YEARS

The bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, is the defining moment in twentieth-century American history. By the end of World War II, the United States had become a superpower, and every aspect of American life was transformed. During the war, European film production was either curtailed or converted to serve the wartime needs of those countries. In the United States, President Franklin Roosevelt decided to let the film industry remain independent, and Hollywood responded splendidly. Patriotic films were produced to help boost morale, documentaries kept the public informed, and training films helped build stronger armed forces. Moreover, theaters sold war bonds and stars entertained the troops, supported charity and relief efforts, and even enlisted. Hollywood had its finest moment as a social institution; it also made record profits.

*Leo Rosten, *Hollywood: The Movie Colony*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1941, 78.

War movies filled the screen with images of courageous American soldiers pitted against villainous Germans and “Japs.” Other major film genres of the 1930s were retooled to incorporate war themes. Backstage musicals, instead of featuring Broadway hopefuls, now dealt with USO entertainers. Detectives began to pursue spies and become agents of espionage, and even Sherlock Holmes was resurrected from the 1890s in order to fight against the Nazis. Horror films showed zombies created by evil Axis scientists, and comedies and cartoons lampooned the enemy and provided, at the very least, needed diversion from the strains of the war.

Casablanca

Typical of the conversion process was a script entitled *Everybody Comes to Rick's*. The original story told of Rick, an owner of a café in French Morocco that was a hangout for European refugees. His life there would be totally disrupted by the arrival of Lois Meredith, a seductress who had ruined both his marriage and his law practice in prewar Paris. An official report on the possibilities of this story was filed at Warner Bros. on December 8, 1941, the day after the Pearl Harbor bombing. The studio saw potential for a film version, but changed the story to incorporate themes of separation and sacrifice. The woman, now named Ilsa, was made to be an innocent victim of events in the war, and Rick was recast as a former freedom fighter inspired to support a new cause. The drama was also given a new name—*Casablanca*.

The story of *Casablanca* takes place within a forty-eight-hour period in December 1941. American audiences would have known the significance of the date and understood that these events occurred just prior to the US involvement in the war. When Rick describes the United States as sleeping (see [VG II.2](#)), we know that the country, just like Rick, is about to be awakened into action. Many of the films that were hastily revised at this time are dated by their wartime settings. But the changes in *Casablanca* elevate this drama to a timeless tale of love and sacrifice.

Source Music in *Casablanca*

Source music plays a critical role in the film. Once we enter Rick's Café, there is no underscoring, not even during the action of Ugarte's arrest. All of the music for this nearly thirty-minute segment is diegetic, stemming from the pianist Sam and the band. The reliance on American popular music for this portion of the story serves several purposes. Tunes such as “Knock on Wood” (the only newly composed song) are catchy and enjoyable, and the film brilliantly interweaves these entertaining songs into the drama without interrupting the dramatic flow. In addition, contemporaneous American popular tunes help date the story and distinguish Rick's Café from the Blue Parrot, the local bar where Middle Eastern music is heard. More



FIGURE II.6 Sam sings "Knock on Wood" as Rick hides the letters of transit in *Casablanca*.

importantly, source music creates an atmosphere of escapism that shrouds Rick's Café. In this time of trouble, visitors come to Rick's to make deals, gamble, drink, find romance, and be entertained. Rick barricades himself in this superficial world, and the absence of underscoring reflects his lack of emotions. He does not drink, has no emotional attachments, and sticks out his neck "for nobody."

Source music also suggests the political tensions in Casablanca through a musical confrontation between the Germans and the French (1:12:00). This scene contains two patriotic songs, the German "Die Wacht am Rhein" and the French "Marseillaise." Both were featured in the classic 1937 French film *The Grand Illusion* (see Chapter 12). In the

French movie, the songs are juxtaposed, but in *Casablanca*, Steiner's score plays them simultaneously. France's vocal victory ushers in the climactic developments of the plot.

The most important source music in the film is "As Time Goes By," which the American Film Institute lists as the second greatest song in Hollywood history next to "Over the Rainbow." Although Steiner made this tune famous, he did not compose it. Herman Hupfeld wrote the song in 1931. Not liking the song, Steiner asked to write an original tune instead. An attempt was made to accommodate his wishes, but Ilsa had spoken the title, and the scene could not be re-shot because Ingrid Bergman had changed her hair for her role in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. So Steiner worked with Hupfeld's theme, and he later admitted that the

tune grew on him.

As with "Over the Rainbow," only the chorus portion of the song is heard in the film. The structure of the melody differs slightly from the main songs in *The Wizard of Oz*, as each of the a phrases has a different ending. Hence we would diagram the shape as a-a'-b-a'. The words "as time goes by" are heard at the end of each of the a phrases. Sam initially sings the melody for Ilsa in the café (32:35), but he is interrupted by Rick after the second a. Following a break, we hear the song completed during the Paris montage (42:15), where Sam begins singing just where he had left off (after a') with the final two phrases.



FIGURE II.7 In *Casablanca*, Laszlo leads a stirring rendition of the "Marseillaise."

Underscoring in *Casablanca*

The appearance of Ilsa and Laszlo shatters Rick's artificial world. At the moment that Rick sees Ilsa, underscoring occurs (33:30) for the first time inside the café. An orchestral stinger suggests that Rick is stunned by her appearance. The oboe then picks up "As Time Goes By," and the tune becomes their Love theme from this point forward. During the subsequent awkward conversation that refers to the Paris days, Ilsa mentions the Germans, and the music turns dark with a quotation of the German patriotic tune "Deutschland über alles," against which a phrase of the love theme can be heard in counterpoint. This is our first musical depiction of the events in Paris, where the German invasion disrupted their love affair.

After the guests leave, Rick has an alcohol-induced flashback to Paris (see VG 11.2). As he slips into his memories, the orchestra picks up the Love theme, which Sam has been playing on the piano. Following the "Marseillaise," Steiner provides a lush fantasy based on individual phrases of "As Time Goes By." Two moments of source music intrude into the montage—a tango at a dance club and Sam's singing. Other music heard in this section includes the two German melodies in dark, sinister settings and a somber "Marseillaise" at the train station. The variations on "As Time Goes By" during the montage and the emotional climaxes that accompany the kiss and the reading of the rain-drenched letter are among Steiner's finest moments. After the flashback (47:50), Sam's piano playing reemerges, helping us understand that the flashback was in Rick's mind.



FIGURE II.8 "As Time Goes By" is played by the orchestra as Rick says goodbye to Ilsa in *Casablanca*.

VIEWER GUIDE II.2

Casablanca: Paris Montage

Composer: Max Steiner



Timing

DVD: WB 65681 (36:20-47:55)

Setting

Devastated from a broken relationship with Ilsa, Rick (Humphrey Bogart) has come to Casablanca and opened an establishment for eating, drinking, gambling, and musical entertainment. He avoids drinking or personal at-

Continued on next page

tachments until Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman) walks into his café with her husband Lazslo (Paul Henreid). That night, Rick drinks heavily. Sam (Dooley Wilson) tries to divert his attention, but in a flashback he recalls his relationship with Ilsa in Paris.

Key Points

- “As Time Goes By” is first heard as source music
- The melody of “As Time Goes By” is treated freely during the flashback
- “La Marseillaise” represents France
- The Germans are represented by dissonant harmonies and two patriotic tunes
- Other source music includes “Can’t Help Lovin’ That Man” and “Perfidia”

Principal Themes

Example 11.3 Love theme: “As Time Goes By”



Example 11.4 “La Marseillaise”



Example 11.5 “Deutschland über alles”



PLOT	MUSIC
After the café has closed, Rick begins to drink heavily. He asks Sam to play “As Time Goes By.”	At first Sam plays Kern’s “Can’t Help Lovin’ Dat Man,” but finally he plays the Love song.
In a flashback montage, we see the earlier relationship between Rick and Ilsa in Paris.	As Rick sinks into his memories, the orchestra joins Sam in playing “As Time Goes By.” The “Marseillaise” announces the shift to Paris. A free fantasy based on the Love theme suggests the joy of their love. At a dance club, we hear “Perfidia.”
The Germans are approaching Paris. Rick, Ilsa, and Sam drink champagne. As they hear an announcement that the Germans are about to arrive, Rick and Ilsa make plans to meet. They kiss “as if it were the last time.”	“Die Wacht am Rhein” is played with a dark and heavy character. Sam sings the love tune at the nightclub La Belle Aurore, and the melody is picked up in the underscoring. “Deutschland über alles” intrudes with the German announcement.

PLOT	MUSIC
Rick waits in the rain at the train station.	"La Marseillaise" plays sadly as Parisian citizens gather to flee.
Sam brings a note from Ilsa saying that she will not join him. He leaves without her.	"As Time Goes By" passionately underscores the reading of the note.
Rick recovers from his memories.	No music

"As Time Goes By" remains the dominant musical theme until the end of the film. The Love theme appears at every step in the plot—Laszlo's first arrest, when Rick is waiting for Captain Renault, at the arrival of Laszlo and Ilsa, and as Rick pulls a gun on Renault. Love is guiding every step of this climax. In the final farewell, Steiner gives yet another potent setting to "As Time Goes By," as the lovers sacrifice their relationship for the greater cause (1:36:10).

Although the Love theme dominates the closing musical material, the patriotic melodies—a theme associated with Laszlo and the "Marseillaise"—are given prominence. At the end, we are left with only the latter, as Rick and Renault go off to fight for Free France. The music here parallels the statement of the tune in the opening credits, but it is now given a firm and confident cadence. In this way, patriotic emotions supersede those of a personal nature.

The Song of Bernadette

Casablanca is the finest example of a film relating directly to World War II. Other movies from this time provided a morally uplifting mood with plots unrelated to current events. *The Song of Bernadette* (1943) is a drama based on the life of Bernadette Soubirous. Born in Lourdes, France, in the mid-nineteenth century, Bernadette had a vision of a "Beautiful Lady" in a grotto at the age of fourteen. Facing initial skepticism, Bernadette continued to see apparitions of what she eventually identified as the Virgin Mary. In later years, following several miracles at the site, the Roman Catholic Church recognized Bernadette as a saint, and the grotto became a major pilgrimage destination. This story, with its setting in France (at the time, occupied by Germany) and with its strong religious message of hope, resonated strongly with American audiences.

Among the movie's four Academy Awards is an Oscar for Best Score given to Alfred Newman, one of the foremost figures in the history of Hollywood film

music. His legacy includes composing, conducting, and serving as the music director at Twentieth Century Fox. Typical of the score as a whole is the radiant music for the initial vision (see **VG II.3**). The scene can be heard in four distinct sections: the buildup to the vision, the vision itself, the break for dialogue among the girls, and Bernadette's subsequent description of the vision.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Alfred Newman (1901–1970)

Alfred Newman began working in vaudeville at the age of thirteen. By the time he was seventeen he was conducting Broadway shows. In 1930 he came to Hollywood in order to conduct Irving Berlin's music for a film at the request of the composer. In the following year he conducted Chaplin's music for *City Lights* and composed the notable music for *Street Scene* (1931). Newman soon developed a reputation as Hollywood's finest conductor and became general music director at Twentieth Century Fox. He scored about 225 films, received forty-five Academy nominations, and earned nine Oscars, more than any other composer. A number of his family members have also been active in Hollywood, including brothers Lionel and Emil, sons David and Thomas, and nephew Randy.

Important Film Scores

The Prisoner of Zenda 1937 ☒

Gunga Din 1939

Wuthering Heights 1939 ☒

The Grapes of Wrath 1940

How Green Was My Valley 1941 🏹 ☒

The Song of Bernadette 1943 !

Gentleman's Agreement 1947 🏹

All About Eve 1950 ☒

Call Me Madam 1953 !

Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing 1955 !

How the West Was Won 1963 ☒

Airport 1970 ☒

■ = Best Picture Oscar

! = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination

The music begins with the Bernadette theme as she sits to remove her shoes and stockings (see **EXAMPLE II.6**). When this theme was first heard in the narrative (2:00), it had a somber tone, as we are shown the family's miserable living conditions and Bernadette (sleeping), who suffers from asthma. Now, the Bernadette theme appears without harmonic support in an unusually high register of the violins. These qualities suggest simplicity and innocence, and they generate a sense of anticipation. The entrance of a wordless women's choir, a sound associated with highly spiritual moments, adds to the audience's expectations.

The timbre of the choir mixes with fragments of Bernadette's theme and music mimicking the sounds of nature—gusts of wind (woodwinds), the flowing river (strings), and birdcalls (oboe, bassoon, and English horn). In a passage marked in the score as "Emotional Prelude," the music begins a dramatic crescendo. The upper register steadily rises, and the lower register features a powerful descending melodic line. Following the addition of a trumpet fanfare, the music achieves a glorious climax with the vision of the Beautiful Lady.

VIEWER GUIDE II.3

The Song of Bernadette: The Vision

Composer: Alfred Newman



Timing

DVD: 20th Century Fox 8 (16:25–22:55)

Setting

Sickly Bernadette is on an errand with her sister and friend to find firewood. Due to her asthma, Bernadette falls behind and does not cross a cold river with her companions. They continue on, and she waits for them by the river.

Key Points

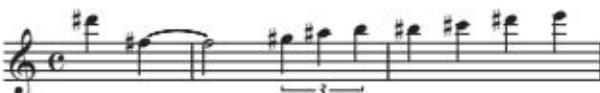
- Full symphony orchestra and voices
- Use of leitmotifs
- Music mimics sounds of nature
- A harmonic climax with the appearance of the Beautiful Lady

Principal Themes

Example 11.6 Bernadette



Example 11.7 Vision



Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
Sitting, Bernadette removes one of her shoes and stockings.	The Bernadette theme is played by violins in a high register.
A strong gust of wind blows. She removes the other shoe and stocking. She looks at the various natural disturbances around her.	A wordless women's choir enters. Woodwinds mimic the sound of the wind while fragments of Bernadette's theme are played.
Rising, Bernadette looks around and then upward. A bright light shines on her face.	More sounds of nature, including birdcalls. The music rises in volume and emotional intensity.
Bernadette sees the Beautiful Lady. They greet each other. Bernadette prays with her rosary beads.	The music achieves a climax. Bernadette's theme is heard with a full orchestration, and then the Vision theme enters for the first time.
The movie cuts to the other two girls coming back. They try to get Bernadette's attention; she finally responds, and the vision disappears.	The Vision music continues, more quietly under the dialogue. Once Bernadette hears the girls, the music fades.
Bernadette is feeling stronger. She crosses the river and finds it to be warm. The girls ask her to tell them about the vision.	No music
Bernadette describes the Beautiful Lady.	In a more subdued mood, the Vision theme enters with voices.
The three girls head back. Bernadette carries the largest bundle of sticks.	The Vision theme is played joyfully. The music transitions to the darker mood of the next scene.

Newman sustains a colorful sound for the duration of the vision, avoiding cadences or pauses in the musical flow. Bernadette's theme is heard initially, but this is soon followed by the Vision theme, which begins in the high register of the violins and subsequently moves to the lower range of the cellos (see EXAMPLE II.7). The music continues at a quieter dynamic level as the film cuts to Bernadette's sister and her friend. They call to Bernadette and throw rocks, but the sustained music indicates that she is still engrossed with the image. Finally, when Bernadette becomes aware of her companions, the music fades and disappears, suggesting that the vision is gone.

In the aftermath of these events, we see that Bernadette seems to be cured of her frailty, and when she crosses the river, she chastises the other girls for thinking that the water is freezing cold. The audience will understand these developments to be the first miracles from the Blessed Virgin Mary. Music is withheld as the girls talk, but once Bernadette begins to describe the Beautiful Lady, the Vision theme returns in a more subdued and reverent tone.

It is easy to hear links to the traditional romantic style of film music in this passage—the lush timbre of the full orchestra and choir, emotional intensity, sweeping melodic lines, and reliance on triads. There are also more subtle modern features, including harmonic progressions that do not follow the classic rules of previous centuries. Indeed, some of the magic of the moment of the vision is that the climactic B-major chord is unexpected, and hence feels uplifting.

TRAILER

The music for *The Song of Bernadette* stands between the stark modernism employed in *Citizen Kane* and the traditional scoring of *Casablanca*. Newman's compromise between old and new becomes an important trend after the war, along with more-radical modern styles and the expanded role of popular music in scoring.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

concert composers	Hupfeld, Herman	tone cluster
Hearst, William Randolph	Soubirous, Bernadette	Welles, Orson
Herrmann, Bernard		

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. How does composing music for the concert hall differ from writing for movies?
2. Why is *Citizen Kane* considered to be America's greatest film?
3. How does Bernard Herrmann's score for *Citizen Kane* differ from the standard classical Hollywood score as exemplified in *Gone with the Wind*? Numerous scenes from *Citizen Kane* can be viewed on YouTube, most notably the Breakfast montage and the portion of the Viewer Guide showing Charles as a boy.
4. Discuss the effect of World War II on Hollywood filmmaking. Have more-recent military conflicts had a similar impact?
5. What is the role of source music in *Casablanca*?
6. The Paris montage from *Casablanca* (see VG 11.2) and the scene preceding it are available for viewing on YouTube. Discuss Steiner's free treatment of "As Time Goes By" and the insertions of source music.
7. In *The Song of Bernadette*, how does the music enhance the vision scene?

SIGNIFICANT
FILMS

1929	<i>Blackmail</i>	1937	<i>La grande illusion</i>
1931	<i>The Threepenny Opera</i>		<i>Pépé le moko</i>
	<i>The Blue Angel</i>	1938	<i>Alexander Nevsky</i>
	<i>M</i>	1939	<i>La noche de los mayas</i>
1934	<i>Les Misérables</i>	1944	<i>Henry V</i>
1936	<i>Things to Come</i>		

International Filmmaking: A Golden Age Interrupted

12



The artist plays the piano and sings in *Blackmail*.

During Hollywood's greatest year, 1939, World War II erupted in Europe, forcing yet another break in international filmmaking. Prior to that time, European films had made great strides in their efforts to catch up with Hollywood. A number of film centers thrived during the 1930s, and an abbreviated



Golden Age was at hand. For music, filmmakers from centers such as France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union often turned to the talents of composers who enjoyed worldwide reputations for their concert music.

FRANCE

Mirroring American tastes for musicals, France produced numerous entertaining musical works, including two directed by René Clair in 1931: *Le million* and *À nous la liberté* (*Freedom for Us*). The composer for the latter was Georges Auric, who, like Honegger, was a member of *Les Six* (see Chapter 8). He was to have an extended career as composer for British and Hollywood films. Other musicals garnered international recognition as well, especially those with the charming acting and singing talents of Maurice Chevalier.

During the 1930s France produced four of its most highly regarded films, *Les Misérables* (1934), *L'Atalante* (1934), *La grande illusion* (1937), and *La règle du jeu* (1939). In the scores for these films, a number of musical traits can be detected that would characterize European film music well into the 1970s:

- Underscoring is used sparingly
- Music tends to sustain a single mood
- Leitmotifs are used less frequently than in American films
- Source music plays a prominent role

Based on the classic Victor Hugo novel, *Les Misérables* received a powerful cinematic interpretation under the direction of Raymond Bernard. He

called upon the internationally acclaimed French composer Arthur Honegger (see Composer Profile, p. 109) to compose music for the film. Retaining the principles of *Les Six* and of the neo-classical movement, Honegger's music is sparse and moody, very different from Hollywood scores. Breaking somewhat from the score's general emotional detachment, Honegger provides a powerful march at the end of Part II for the procession of prisoners observed by Jean and his adopted daughter Cosette.



FIGURE 12.1 Jean Valjean and Cosette observe a procession of prisoners to Honegger's somber march in *Les Misérables*.

La grande illusion

Joseph Kosma created the music for two of the most critically acclaimed films directed by Jean Renoir: *La grande*

illusion (*The Grand Illusion*) and *La règle du jeu* (*The Rules of the Game*). The latter is devoid of music other than occasional source music and several brief excerpts from composers of the Classical era, Mozart and Pierre-Alexandre Monsigny. *La grande illusion* is more fully scored, but it still relies heavily on source music.

Typical of the treatment of music in *La grande illusion* is the Music Hall scene (33:35). This portion of the film contains no underscoring, just four musical numbers. The middle portion of the scene shows a music-hall performance staged by French soldiers in a German prison-of-war camp during World War I. Both of the principal songs here belong to the period. The first, "Si tu veux . . . Marguerite" (1913), illustrates the verse-chorus structure typical of popular songs at the time (see Chapter 10). As the term "chorus" suggests, the audience joins in the singing at the repetition of the second chorus. The next number, "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" (1912), is a rousing British patriotic tune. The humor of the French singing a British tune in a German camp is enhanced by the appearance of the performers in drag.

The music-hall songs are framed by two patriotic tunes. In the first, the German soldiers lustily sing "Die Wacht am Rhein" just after reading that their countrymen have taken Fort Douaumont, which was protecting the city of Verdun in France. Later, during the music-hall entertainment, news arrives that the French have recaptured the fort. The French fervently sing the French anthem "La Marseillaise." These same two patriotic songs are heard in *Casablanca*, where Steiner combines them in counterpoint (see Chapter 11). For a French audience on the eve of another war with Germany, these songs would have had as much impact as any type of Hollywood underscoring.

Foreshadowing Darkness

A number of French films from the late 1930s project darkness both visually and dramatically. These forerunners to the American cinematic movement in the 1940s called *film noir* (see Chapter 13) employ music to enhance the moodiness of the stories. Among the best examples are *Pépé le moko* (*Pépé, the Toulon Man*, 1937), *Le quai des brumes* (*Port of Shadows*, 1938), and *Le jour se lève* (*Daybreak*, 1939).



FIGURE 12.2 A performance of "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" in drag from *La grande illusion*.



FIGURE 12.3 A man is shot to the cheerful sounds of a player piano in *Pépé le moko*.

All three feature the famed actor Jean Gabin (also seen in *La grande illusion*) in a tragic role. The most prominent music occurs in *Pépé le moko*, which includes songs, North African music, American jazz, and a waltz theme representing Pépé's love for a European woman. Foreshadowing the use of music in film noir, a player piano belts out cheerful music as one of the characters is murdered (52:00). In the end, Pépé is trapped by his environment, stabs himself rather than going to jail, and watches his lover sail away believing that Pépé had not really cared for her.

GERMANY

German cinema excelled during the silent era (see Chapter 8), and the early sound years produced some notable films as well. The best-known films of the early 1930s share an emphasis on realism, darkness in plot and image, and a primary reliance on source music. One of the most daring films of this time is *Die Dreigroschenoper* (*The Threepenny Opera*, 1931), a musical based on Bertolt Brecht's stage play with music by Kurt Weill. This story of decadence and corruption is set in London, but most observers understood that it represented life in Berlin. The Nazi party opposed the film, banned it in 1933, and tried to destroy all copies. The reconstructed version of the film gives us a fascinating glimpse of the era, an opportunity to see the celebrated Lotte Lenya (Weill's wife), and hear the original source of "The Ballad of Mack the Knife" (4:15), which has enjoyed considerable popularity in the United States. Brecht and Weill both moved to the United States and worked for Hollywood studios.



FIGURE I2.4 Marlene Dietrich sings "Falling in Love Again" in *Der blaue Engel*.

In 1930, Josef von Sternberg directed a musical drama entitled *Der blaue Engel* (*The Blue Angel*). The film stars Emil Jannings, who received the first Oscar for Best Actor in the previous year, and a young Marlene Dietrich. Friedrich Hollaender composed four songs and a limited score, and Franz Waxman was the orchestrator; both would later rise to prominence in Hollywood. The musical highlight of the film's English version (it was also released in German) is Dietrich's sultry singing of "Falling in Love Again" (50:00), which seduces a strict yet respected professor (Jannings) and leads to his downfall. Dietrich would soon become a sensation in Hollywood, where she was touted as a rival to MGM's Greta Garbo.

Fritz Lang, the director of *Metropolis* (see [VG 8.2](#)), created another international sensation with *M* (1931), a dark movie about a serial killer of young girls. The film made a star of Peter Lorre, and both Lang and Lorre would soon leave the political turmoil of Germany and venture to Hollywood. For the most part, music is absent from this film, but Lorre invariably whistles Edvard Grieg's "In the Hall of the Mountain King" from *Peer Gynt* just prior to each murder, creating a chilling and unforgettable musical effect. The combination of stark urban realism with expressionistic images would become an important element of the American film noir movement.

GREAT BRITAIN

Blackmail

Great Britain could also boast of a master of darkness and suspense—Alfred Hitchcock. One of British cinema's greatest figures, Hitchcock learned his filmmaking techniques during the silent film years. His ability to tell a story without words remained with him throughout his career. Hitchcock's *Blackmail* (1929) is fascinating for its glimpses into the young director's creative mind and for its inclusion of both silent and sound scenes. When filming began, *Blackmail* was shot as a silent film, but equipment for sound was acquired in mid-production, and many subsequent scenes incorporated dialogue.

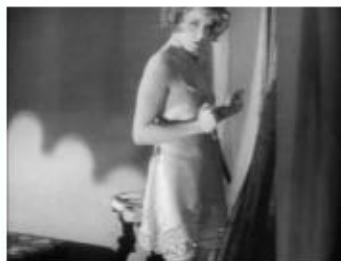
It is easy to see the differences between the silent and sound scenes. Silent scenes are presented with synchronized music created by Hubert Bath and Harry Stafford. The most extended musical cues accompany movement, as in the racing van music in the opening sequence (1:10) and the final chase scene that leads the actors to the top of the British Museum (1:13:00). The beginning of the film establishes one of the principal melodic ideas—the Law theme (see [EXAMPLE 12.2](#)). First heard in a fast tempo while the van is driving, it slows to a march tempo when the detectives disembark in order to arrest a criminal.

Scenes with dialogue have no music, unless it is performed live. Also evident in the dialogue scenes is the camera's lack of mobility, as it needed to remain in a soundproof booth during filming. Another issue was that the leading actress, Anny Ondra, was Czech. Since the film was originally silent, her thick accent was not a concern, but with added sound, her voice was unacceptable. Hence, another actress had to read her dialogue into a microphone out of camera range while Ondra lip-synched the words.

VIEWER GUIDE I2.I

Blackmail: Assault and Aftermath

Composers: Harry Stafford and Hubert Bath



Timing

DVD: LaserLight 82036 (28:00–40:30)

Setting

Alice (Anny Ondra) is the girlfriend of a police detective. After a fight, she unwisely goes to the apartment of a young artist (Cyril Ritchard) and consents to trying on a dress for a possible portrait. Alice soon learns that the artist has other intentions.

Key Points

- Sound portions of film have live music only
- Silent portions of film use continuous synchronized music
- The song becomes a leitmotif for murder
- Distorted musical sounds for Alice's daze, including both main leitmotifs

Principal Themes

Example 12.1 Artist ("Miss Up-to-Date")



Example 12.2 Law



PLOT	MUSIC
Alice changes into a fancy dress the artist has given her to put on, while he waits at the piano.	The artist plays the introduction to a song and stops.
At Alice's urging, the artist plays the piano and then sings. Alice emerges in the dress, and he admires her.	The artist sings "Miss Up-to-Date" with both a verse and a chorus (separated by a sip of liquor). He plays a portion of the tune once again on the piano.
The artist tries to help her with the dress and ultimately kisses her. She rejects his advances and removes the dress to change back into her street clothes, but the artist has taken her dress.	No music

PLOT	MUSIC
Alice realizes what he has done and asks for her own dress.	The artist plays the tune once again at the piano, more aggressively.
The artist forces Alice to the bed. She finds a knife and kills him. Dazed, she walks away from the bed.	No music
Alice looks around at the apartment. She dresses, paints out her name on the canvas on the easel, and goes downstairs.	The orchestra plays portions of the Artist theme; the tune is also played by a loud distorted piano during the scene.
Outside, she begins to walk aimlessly. At one point she passes a theater featuring "A New Comedy." She continues walking through London.	The marchlike Law theme is played in the strings pizzicato. Gentle statements of the Artist theme are intermixed with brass statements of Law. Source music from the theater is the Artist's song. The underscoring resumes immediately afterwards, and the two themes continue.

The extended scene described in [VIEWER GUIDE I2.I](#) contains sections using both sound and silent film techniques. The first four minutes feature dialogue and live music. After a fight with her detective boyfriend, Alice unwisely goes to the apartment of an artist. Playing the role of the artist is Cyril Ritchard, a veteran music-hall entertainer who could sing and play piano. While waiting for Alice to appear in a special dress, the artist plays and sings Billy Mayer's "Miss Up-to-Date" (1929), which was literally up to date, since it was composed in the same year as the film. Typical of the time, the song has an introductory verse and a melodic chorus (separated by a sip of liquor). The chorus portion is adapted into the underscoring during the second half of this excerpt. The lyrics of the song suggest that a "modern" girl is sexually active, but Alice is oblivious to the meaning, and her innocence soon clashes with the artist's intent. After being rejected, he plays the song one more time with much more aggression and a final dissonant chord, foretelling his next action.

Once the artist has forcibly grabbed her and begins pulling her to the bed, silent film techniques take over. Initially, music is absent. This is not uncommon for Hitchcock, who often shows his most dramatic moments without music (*Psycho* is an exception). Once she has killed the artist with a knife, Alice is dazed. The synchronized score enters with fragments of "Miss Up-to-Date," the artist's song, as she walks around the apartment. A distorted piano sound can be heard three times in the cue as she recovers enough to get dressed, remove evidence of her presence, and leave the apartment building.

Alice wanders through the streets of London in a daze. The film's two principal themes now alternate or are combined: the march representing Law and her boyfriend, and the distorted piano tune played earlier by the artist. The settings of both melodies contain disorienting harmonies and unusual orchestral colors. At one point she walks by a music hall that just happens to be playing "Miss Up-to-Date." All ends shortly thereafter with a scream, and the blackmail is just about to begin.

Other Hitchcock Films

Hitchcock's English films began to create a sensation in the United States in 1935 with *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and *The 39 Steps*. The latter features a 39-note ascending scale and a melody that is the critical clue to unlocking the title's mystery.

At the onset of World War II, Hitchcock would move effortlessly from his British studio to Hollywood, where he remained. In his first American effort, he joined forces with David O. Selznick (the producer of *Gone with the Wind*) to create *Rebecca* (1940), winner of the Best Picture Oscar. For this film, he had strong musical support from Franz Waxman.

CLOSE-UP: ALFRED HITCHCOCK

The Master of Suspense

Alfred Hitchcock (1899–1980) established himself as the foremost British director during the silent film era, most notably with *The Lodger* (1927). During filming, one scene did not have enough extras, so he joined other actors in order to create a sense of a crowd. This began a long tradition of his making an appearance in most of his movies.

In 1929, Hitchcock ventured into sound with *Blackmail* (see VG 12.1). Other successful suspense movies followed, including *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934), *The 39 Steps* (1935), *Sabotage* (1936), and *The Lady Vanishes* (1938). Hitchcock then began directing films in the United States. For his film *Rebecca* (1940), he received his only Academy Award for Best Picture. Other major films from the 1940s

include *Suspicion* (1941), *Saboteur* (1942), *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), *Spellbound* (1945), and *Notorious* (1946). He continued to produce popular thrillers after 1950, climaxing with *Rear Window* (1954), *Vertigo* (1958), *North by Northwest* (1959), *Psycho* (1960), and *The Birds* (1963). He became a household figure in America by producing a weekly television mystery series from 1955 to 1965.

Hitchcock's choices in music varied considerably. The amount of underscoring ranged from essentially none (*Lifeboat*, 1944, and *Rear Window*) to wall-to-wall (*Rebecca* and *Spellbound*). Hitchcock had an ear for disturbing musical sounds, such as the swirling of Lehar's *Merry Widow Waltz* in *Shadow of a Doubt* and the electronic wavering of the

theremin in *Spellbound*. Source music often plays a central role in his dramas, notably the haunting melody in *The 39 Steps*, the sounds of a carousel as a backdrop to murder in *Strangers on a Train* (1951), and the Oscar-winning “Whatever Will Be, Will Be (Que Sera, Sera),” sung during the climax of his Hollywood remake of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956).

Hitchcock worked with some of Hollywood’s greatest composers, including Franz Waxman, Dimitri Tiomkin, and Bernard Herrmann. Although relations were often tense between the latter and the famed British director, they teamed for many memorable musical moments in films such as *Vertigo*, *North by Northwest*, and *Psycho*. Herrmann’s music for the shower scene in *Psycho* is one of film’s most memorable cues.

Other Composers for English Films

Hitchcock was not the only English filmmaker to venture to America. In 1940 London Film Productions, Britain’s most prestigious film studio, moved to Hollywood in order to complete the filming of *The Thief of Bagdad*. The founder of the company, Alexander Korda, brought his staff with him, including the composer Miklós Rózsa. While in America, Korda produced a number of films, including *Jungle Book* (1941). This film (the non-animated version) created a sensation, and Rózsa’s music for it became the first film score to be recorded on an LP (RCA Victor). After the war, Korda returned to Great Britain and produced films such as *The Third Man* (see Chapter 16); Rózsa remained in Hollywood and became one of the industry’s most highly regarded composers, eventually working for the MGM studio.

British filmmakers, like their counterparts in France, enlisted some of their country’s most prominent composers to provide music. Perhaps the best British score of the 1930s is *Things to Come* (1936) by Sir Arthur Bliss, a well-known composer and conductor. The film’s fascinating futuristic vision—the plot extends from 1940 to 2036—is supported by a number of excellent marches. Particularly noteworthy is the music for the opening montage, which juxtaposes the joys of Christmas with the coming of war. Another prominent British composer, Richard Addinsell, wrote several successful scores during this time, and his piano music to *Suicide Squadron* (1941), popularly known as the “Warsaw” Concerto, received widespread attention in the United States.

The most celebrated film to be produced in Britain during the war was Laurence Olivier’s *Henry V* (1944). Olivier adapted the Shakespeare drama to the



FIGURE I2.5 Musicians with Renaissance instruments at the Rose Theatre in *Henry V*.

medium of film. The movie begins as if we were observing a performance in Shakespeare's Rose Theatre, but it soon moves seamlessly to the realm of cinema with outdoor scenes. William Walton, one of Britain's most renowned composers, wrote the music. For their efforts, and despite the film's having been made under adverse wartime conditions, it was nominated for four Oscars, including Best Picture, Best Actor, and Best Music. Olivier was given an honorary Oscar for his outstanding achievement. This would be the first of three Shakespeare films that featured this artistic collaboration, followed by Best Picture-winner *Hamlet* (1948) and *Richard III* (1955).

THE SOVIET UNION

The totalitarian governments of Europe saw films as propaganda tools. Germany's industry declined as it came under the control of Hitler in 1933, and the documentary films of Leni Riefenstahl proved to be the only enduring products of the Nazi period. Italian films likewise subordinated artistic value to pro-Mussolini political views. Only the Soviet Union created narrative films that served propaganda purposes effectively and still maintained a high level of artistic quality. Two outstanding concert composers wrote music for films in the Soviet Union, Dmitri Shostakovich and Sergei Prokofiev. Shostakovich, whose work for silent films was discussed in Chapter 8, wrote music for fifteen additional films during the 1930s, including *The Great Citizen* (1938). Created under the watchful eye of Stalin, it was the Soviet Union's first movie made for television.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975)

Shostakovich spent the entirety of his career working in the Soviet Union. During his early years, he enjoyed relative freedom, as did many artists under the Lenin regime. At this time he established an international reputation with the bold style of his First Symphony, but he earned a living playing piano for silent films. His first major film score is for the silent movie *The New Babylon*. In 1933 Stalin gained control of the government, and Shostakovich composed under greater restrictions and in fear of banishment or even death if his works met with disapproval. In the West, he is best known for his fifteen symphonies and fifteen string quartets. But he maintained a steady

output of film music as well, producing a major score in every decade from the 1920s to the 1970s. Among his films are a musical (*Cheryomushki*), an arrangement of a Mussorgsky opera that received an Oscar nomination (*Khovanshchina*), and a brilliant scoring of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Without a doubt, the film work influenced his symphonic writing, which is often filled with vividly pictorial music.

Important Film Scores

The New Babylon 1929

Khovanshchina 1960 (scoring of Mussorgsky opera)

Great Citizen 1938

Hamlet 1964

Cheryomushki 1957 (musical)

King Lear 1971



Prokofiev left his homeland after the Revolution and returned in 1936, after establishing himself as a major international composer and performer. During his transition back to the Soviet Union, Prokofiev composed music for the 1934 satirical film *Lieutenant Kije*. While the film was never released, the suite he created from the score has become one of the standards of twentieth-century concert music. Prokofiev also collaborated with Sergei Eisenstein on two major films—*Alexander Nevsky* (1938) and the monumental *Ivan the Terrible* (Part I, 1945, and Part II, 1946). The music for the earlier film has achieved widespread international dissemination through Prokofiev's arrangement of the film score as a choral cantata.

Alexander Nevsky

Alexander Nevsky is a powerful historical drama about the legendary thirteenth-century Russian leader who defeated the invading armies of both Sweden and Germany through brilliant tactical maneuvers. The film focuses on the German conflict. The invaders are portrayed as brutal beasts, cruelly throwing Russian babies into a fire (29:00). The film climaxes with the famous battle on the frozen Lake Chudskoye, where the outflanked Germans drown when the ice breaks under the weight of their heavy armor. This inspiring story served as a warning for the twentieth-century Soviet audience, which was preparing for yet another German invasion.

The greatest strength of the score lies in the stirring choruses, representing the voices of the people. For the instrumental portions, Prokofiev uses music to set moods rather than mirror the action of the scene. When German crusaders

slaughter the Russians in Pskov (22:10), the music does not react to individual deaths and to cruelty, but merely projects an overlying sadness for the Russians and a sense of evil for the Germans.

VIEWER GUIDE 12.2

Alexander Nevsky: Battle and Field of Dead

Composer: Sergei Prokofiev



Timing

DVD: Image 4575 (1:21:05–1:29:45)

Setting

The Germans have horses and armor, but the Russians outnumber them and have cleverly outflanked their opponents. The Germans panic and begin to flee, only to discover that their heavy armor is cracking the ice of the frozen lake.

Key Points

- The music reflects overall mood rather than the action on screen
- Russian forces are represented by joyful music
- German forces are represented by a horn call
- Discordant combination of themes
- A solo soprano sings a beautiful lament in the aftermath

Principal Themes

Example 12.3 Russian Triumph



Example 12.4 German Retreat (one variant)



PLOT

The Germans are being routed. A horn signal rallies the Germans.

MUSIC

Three layers of music: the sound of the retreat signal, the Russian Triumph theme, and a fast-paced accompaniment suggesting galloping horses and running men.

PLOT	MUSIC
The ice breaks under the weight of the German armor. The German soldiers desperately try to stay afloat, but most sink into the cold lake.	Percussion instruments alone, suggesting the sound of cracking ice. At the end, the German theme is played, with trombone downward glissandos mocking the Germans drowning in the lake.
Cut to Alexander looking at the field of the dead. The women begin to search for loved ones.	Sorrowful music, primarily in the strings. A solo soprano sings a folklike lament.

The climax of the film is the Battle of Lake Chudskoye, which takes up nearly one-quarter (over 26 minutes) of the narrative. Once Alexander joins the conflict (1:04:50), joyful music is heard, even though the outcome is still in doubt.

VIEWER GUIDE 12.2 begins near the end of the battle, and we immediately hear the German horn signal in conflict with the triumphant Russian tune. Compared to American films, the technical problems with sound are obtrusive, but the discordant combination of the two musical ideas is more daring than in similar scenes from Hollywood. Similarly, the use of percussion for the ice cracking and the Germans drowning has no parallel in American film scores at this time. After the battle, we are shown the field of dead and dying bodies. Women enter with torches, looking for their loved ones. Prokofiev provides a somber orchestral mood and then brings in a solo soprano singing a lament, one of the musical highlights of any film from the decade.

DEVELOPING NATIONAL INDUSTRIES

While the United States and the leading countries of Europe dominated filmmaking, other national schools began to emerge during the 1930s in Europe, Asia, Australia, and South America. In the shadow of Hollywood, Mexican filmmakers struggled for independence, eventually creating a distinctive original style in the 1940s. In the mid-1930s, Silvestre Revueltas (1899–1940), one of Mexico's most prominent composers, began to score films. He completed seven film scores before his untimely death in 1940. The music for *La noche de los mayas* (1939) has become one of the composer's most enduring works. An energetic composition requiring at least eleven percussionists, the colorful score abounds in folk melodies, dance rhythms, and modern dissonances; it clearly establishes him as one of the principal nationalist composers of the mid-twentieth century.

TRAILER

Despite the struggles before and during World War II, European filmmakers challenged Hollywood with the quality of their films and the inclusion of contemporary musical styles. Following the war, most traditional European centers rebounded, and significant new schools emerged in centers such as Sweden, India, and Japan (see Chapter 16).

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

Addinsell, Richard	Hollaender, Friedrich	Shostakovich, Dmitri
Auric, Georges	Korda, Alexander	Stafford, Harry
Bath, Hubert	Kosma, Joseph	Sternberg, Josef von
Bernard, Raymond	Olivier, Sir Laurence	Walton, William
Bliss, Sir Arthur	Prokofiev, Sergei	Weill, Kurt
Brecht, Bertolt	Revueltas, Silvestre	
Hitchcock, Alfred	Rózsa, Miklós	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Watch scenes from the French films described in the text. Many of the other French movies of the period can be viewed online for a small fee. Discuss the balance between realism and psychological moods.
2. What are the differences between making silent and sound films? View various scenes from Hitchcock's *Blackmail* for examples.
3. Using *Things to Come*, compare British scoring with that of Hollywood.
4. For students interested in choral music, investigate how a cantata was crafted out of Prokofiev's film score for *Alexander Nevsky*. For those inclined toward orchestral music, do the same for *Lieutenant Kije*.
5. Listen to Revueltas's score to *La noche de los mayas* and discuss the mixture of modern, traditional, and Mexican folk musical styles.

4

NEW CHALLENGES FOR HOLLYWOOD, 1944-1959

1944	<i>Laura</i>
1945	<i>The Lost Weekend</i> <i>Spellbound</i>

1946	<i>The Killers</i>
1947	<i>The Best Years of Our Lives</i>
1950	<i>Sunset Boulevard</i>

The Postwar Years

13



A trio of musicians plays the *Laura* theme at the restaurant where Waldo describes *Laura* to Mark in *Laura*.

The years following World War II brought significant changes to filmmaking. The initial euphoria of victory and the return home of the American armed forces led to Hollywood's single most profitable year in 1946. But the

postwar era was also one of social and political change, as the United States grappled with issues such as civil rights, McCarthyism, and the Cold War.

troublesome prewar issues in the industry did not vanish, and a dark cloud soon settled over Hollywood. A double blow was struck in 1948. Paramount lost an antitrust case and had to divest itself of its lucrative theater chain. In that same year, television established itself as a serious competing force with successful showings of the national political conventions and the Rose Bowl football game. These events took place during the time that the **House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC)** was investigating possible Hollywood links to the Communist Party. The infamous Hollywood **blacklist** began in 1947.

CLOSE-UP: BLACKLISTING

Hollywood under Attack

One of the darkest moments for Hollywood was the investigation by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) into Communist influence in the American film industry. Following World War II, the United States found itself thrust into the Cold War with the Soviet Union. Having paid the price of Europe's failed appeasement policies with Germany prior to the war, the United States was not about to appease the Soviet Union. Communism, which had been a viable political stance in the United States before the war, was now seen as subversive. While the rhetoric of the committee may have sounded patriotic, it allowed the extreme political right to punish and intimidate left-leaning members of the Hollywood film industry.

The hearings were held in two phases, beginning in 1947 and 1951, respectively. The initial hearings called a number of witnesses. "Friendly" witnesses, such as Louis B. Mayer, Gary Cooper (*High Noon*), and Ronald Reagan (the head of the Screen Actors Guild), were not under suspicion and were treated with respect. The HUAC also called eleven "unfriendly" witnesses. One of these was the German playwright Bertolt Brecht, known for works such as *The Threepenny*

Opera (1927) and *Mother Courage and Her Children* (1939). Brecht had contributed to the script of *Hangmen Also Die* (1943) and was involved in other productions. He quietly left the country and returned to East Germany.

The remaining unfriendly witnesses, known as the Hollywood Ten, refused to answer questions and pleaded the Fifth Amendment. By today's standards, this position would have been sufficient for their defense, but almost all of the Hollywood Ten spent six to twelve months in prison and were prevented from returning to work.

In 1951 HUAC continued its investigation, primarily targeting screenwriters. Those who were labeled Communists were denied work or blacklisted in Hollywood. Some worked under pseudonyms, but most had their careers ruined. The blacklist remained in force into the early 1960s. Among those who were investigated are the following:

John Garfield: Garfield was a major Hollywood star. Having appeared in many films, including *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947) and *Force of Evil* (1949), he was a large public target for the investigation. He refused to cooperate and was blacklisted. He died of a

heart attack in 1952; his family blamed his death on the stress caused by HUAC.

Charlie Chaplin: Chaplin was out of the country during the hearings. He was labeled a Communist and not allowed to reenter the United States until 1972.

Elia Kazan: Kazan was a director whose films, such as *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Rebel Without a Cause*, had a great impact on Hollywood. Kazan agreed with the purposes of HUAC, and in a controversial decision named other Communists in the industry. His film *On the Waterfront* can be viewed as a defense of his testimony. His position in Hollywood history is still debated.

Clifford Odets: Odets was one of America's finest playwrights. Although his plays often expressed leftist views, he was eventually cooperative and was not accused of being a Communist. He continued to work in Hollywood throughout the 1950s.

Lionel Stander: Stander was a character actor in Hollywood when he was brought before the committee. He was defiant—when asked if he knew of anyone engaged in un-American activities in Hollywood, he replied, “Only the members of the HUAC.” He later worked in Europe, appearing in a number of spaghetti westerns (see Chapter 20). He eventually returned to the United States, where he endeared himself in the role of the chauffeur in the television series *Hart to Hart*.

Sam Jaffe: Jaffe, who had appeared in such movies as *Lost Horizon* (1937) and *Gunga Din* (1939), was nominated for Best Actor in 1950 for his role in *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950). He was blacklisted and spent many years teaching mathematics in high school. Only later did he return to acting in roles such as Dr. Zorba on the *Ben Casey* television series.

Lee Grant: Grant was blacklisted for not testifying against her husband, screenwriter Arnold Manoff. She later returned to acting and received both an Oscar and an Emmy.

Musicians were not important targets for the committee. Yip Harburg, the lyricist for *Wizard of Oz* (“Over the Rainbow”) and such popular songs as “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?,” “It’s Only a Paper Moon,” and “Lydia, the Tattooed Lady,” was blacklisted from working on films, television, and radio from 1950 to 1962. Composers Hanns Eisler, Sol Kaplan, and George Bassmann were blacklisted, and their Hollywood careers ended. Jerry Field, also blacklisted, later returned to score *Advise and Consent* (1962), *The Wild Bunch* (1969), and the television series *Barnaby Jones*. Both Elmer Bernstein and Alex North, who had strong leftist connections, were “graylisted,” meaning that their careers were slowed but not halted. Of the 324 names on the blacklist, 212 were still actively working in Hollywood in the 1950s; most of them would lose their jobs.



Responding to these and other issues, many Hollywood films took on a darker tone. To be sure, genres such as comedies and musicals still provided entertaining escapes from daily life. For example, *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944), one of Hollywood’s greatest musicals, treats a growing problem—the relocation of families—in a humorous, sentimental, and entertaining manner, particularly with the singing of Judy Garland. But our focus in this chapter is on Hollywood’s more serious side, as we look at both film noir and message movies.

FILM NOIR

Film noir is a significant movement in American movie history. The term, first employed by French film critics in 1946, can designate both a style of filmmaking and a film genre. Viewed as a style, film noir is dark and pessimistic. The

images are black and white with strong contrasts of light and dark, creating deep shadows. Clearly indebted to *Citizen Kane*, the style can be found in a variety of film genres.

The term can also be applied to a subcategory of the detective or crime genre. The typical film noir plot is modeled after detective stories from the late 1920s and 1930s by American novelists such as Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler. These authors created an American detective archetype that was distinct from his refined, cerebral British counterpart. The American detective is tough, pragmatic, not necessarily above flouting the law, and smart enough to resolve complicated cases with dogged determination and a strong jaw. Scenes often take place at night, frequently in a city with rain-slicked streets, and the stories contain multiple twists. Many of these films feature voice-over narration by one of the main characters. Women in film noir tend to be alluring, sexually active, and dangerous. Typically, the detective falls in love with the “femme fatale,” but he remains strong enough to kiss and tell, if she is guilty. The prototype of the genre is *The Maltese Falcon* (1941), but the movement clearly burst on the scene in 1944 with classics such as *Double Indemnity* and *Laura*.

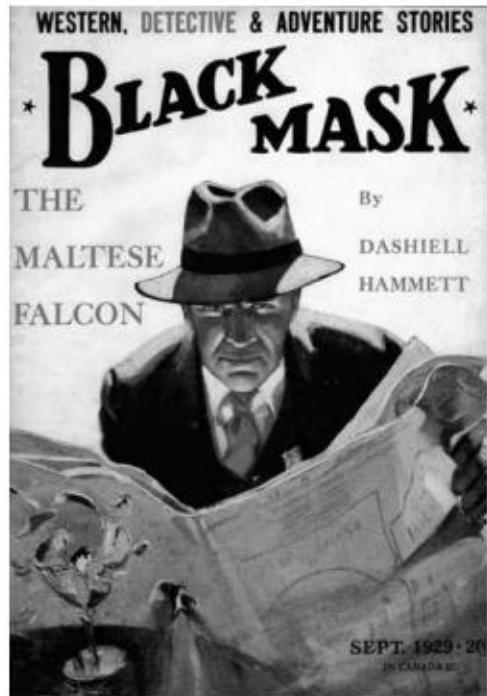


FIGURE 13.1 The pulp magazine *Black Mask* published stories in the 1920s that served as models for film noir.

CLOSE-UP: CHANGING CINEMATIC IMAGES OF WOMEN DURING THE 1940S

“It was the tragic combination of liquor and jazz which led to her downfall.”

—Richard Gere, *Chicago* (2001)

In the early silent-film era, serial melodramas often showed women tied to railroad tracks awaiting rescue from a man. Over one hundred years later, the resilient, resourceful Rey, the female protagonist of the *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015), essentially rescues an

entire star system. Between these points of time, the varied portrayal of women in film has consistently reflected trends stemming from attitudes of society.

Prior to World War II, Hollywood primarily made films with plots that reflect a man’s perspective. Yet

many also have strong female characters, and some show events from the woman's point of view. Most notable of the latter is *Gone with the Wind*, in which the focus is on Scarlett before, during, and after the Civil War (see Chapter 9). Still, the vast majority of films center on men, and the women in their lives often fit the archetypes of either seductress or redeemer. These contrasting types are personified in *Metropolis* by False Maria, who lures men to destruction, and Maria, who leads men to a higher spiritual level (see Chapter 8).

In film noir, a seductress is generally referred to as a *femme fatale*, literally a fatal woman. Such figures have been featured in dramas since the ancient Greeks (think of Odysseus and the Sirens). Though film noir begins in the 1940s, the prototypical characters for such stories were created in literature from the late 1920s. Often referred to as the "Jazz Age," this decade saw a revolution in attitudes toward American women, beginning with their winning the right to vote in 1920. Many women also sought to free themselves from the rigid rules of society in which their sexuality was guarded by their fathers and brothers, and then handed over to their husbands. The newly liberated women, often referred to as "Flappers," took charge of their own sexuality. They wore more makeup and less restrictive clothing than their predecessors, and were often associated with jazz and liquor, as in the preceding quote from *Chicago*. Prior to the implementation of the Hays Code, movies frequently dealt with stories about women and their more-open sexuality. In *Red Dust* (1932), for example, Clark Gable has sexual relations with two women, the free-spirited Jean Harlow (who is shown in a famous nude bath scene) and the married Mary Astor. After the code began to be

enforced rigidly in 1933, sex was strictly forbidden, both outside and inside marriage. Even married couples had to sleep in separate beds.

The stories of writers such as Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler, on which the film noir genre was based, were not kind to women. They centered on tough male detectives who often had misogynistic tendencies, and women were frequently depicted as deceptive and murderous. In the 1940s, these qualities seemed to appeal to a certain portion of the male public. During World War II, many women began working in factories and discovered that they were fully capable of doing "men's work." This new sense of confidence and independence marked another major step toward sexual equality, but many men returning from the war were not prepared for this development. The femme fatale in film noir became a way to express their fears about the female sex.

The images of women in film noir are not all bleak. While there are numerous femmes fatales who appear in such classic films as *The Maltese Falcon*, *Double Indemnity*, and *The Killers*, there are almost as many films that feature an *homme fatal*, a man that marries with the intent of driving an innocent woman insane or murdering her. There are also multitudes of redeeming women in film noir; some serve as inspirations for their men, and some do the actual detective work. For an example of the latter, we do not have to look any further than Ingrid Bergman in *Spellbound*, who unravels a complex mystery in order to save Gregory Peck from execution. The title character in *Laura* is a landmark in the cinematic portrayal of women; it presents a woman who has multiple sexual partners in a positive light. Representing the new American woman, Laura serves as a symbol of the changing times.

Arriving at the peak of Hollywood's Golden Age, film noir introduced disruptive elements to the prevailing trends of Hollywood. New visual techniques challenged classical traditions; happy endings, in which the boy gets the girl and good triumphs over bad, were replaced with tragic and ambiguous conclusions; and composers for film noir began to explore new roles for both modern and popular musical styles.

Miklós Rózsa

The leading composer for film noir is Miklós Rózsa. He brought unrelenting harshness to films such as *Double Indemnity* (1944) and *The Killers* (1946). The music director for *Double Indemnity* complained that the music was better suited to a war movie. This criticism is not about the use of dissonances, but about the type of scenes where they are heard. In the late 1940s, the harshness of modern music was expanding into new types of dramatic situations. For *The Killers*, Rózsa composed a curt four-note theme that was later "borrowed" as the theme for *Dragnet*, a popular series on radio and television in the 1950s. Rózsa filed and won a lawsuit, receiving some royalties and credit for the work.



FIGURE I3.2 Darkness shrouds two killers strolling into town with Rózsa's famous four-note motive during the credits for the film noir thriller *The Killers*.

Rózsa also made a sensation with the music for the noir-styled *Spellbound* (1945), directed by Alfred Hitchcock. To depict the dementia of the leading male figure, Rózsa employed an electronic instrument, the theremin (see FIGURE 2.1). Its wavering sound mimics a human voice, and it was eventually assimilated into scores for science-fiction movies. For his later noirs, Rózsa abandoned the full orchestral score and embraced the sparseness of neo-classicism, which is particularly evident in his music for the landmark *Asphalt Jungle* (1950).

Laura

Another composer active in bringing contemporary musical sounds to Hollywood was David Raksin. Yet he is best remembered for incorporating a popular music idiom into one of Hollywood's most influential scores—*Laura* (1944). The film's plot has many of the traditional features of film noir, but

the principal female, Laura, is treated in a new manner. Instead of portraying her sexual activity within a negative social stereotype, the film depicts her as a modern, sophisticated woman in charge of her own sexuality. Essential to building her positive image is the music, which relies heavily on the idiom of popular music.

Director Otto Preminger originally wanted to use Duke Ellington's "Sophisticated Lady" as the principal theme for *Laura*, but Raksin objected. Given the weekend to create a worthy substitute, Raksin responded by composing the hauntingly beautiful Laura theme. With the success of the film and its music, this theme was later adapted into a song, becoming one of the most popular melodies of the century. In the film, the theme (see EXAMPLE 13.1) is stated in its most complete form during the opening credits; the material is rich enough to provide virtually all of the musical material for the rest of the movie.

Raksin's theme has a floating quality due to harmonic ambiguities and the lack of a clear ending point. The tune moves essentially in four-measure phrases, creating an overall form of a-b-a'-c. Example 13.1 shows the first four measures of phrases a, b, and a', along with all of phrase c. Each phrase has similar material—an emphasis on beat 3 in the first measure, a triplet for the second half of measure 2, and (except for phrase c) a falling-fourth cadence. The a' phrase is the same as the first phrase, but at a higher pitch level (a fifth higher). Phrase c also resembles phrase b momentarily, but then at the end soars to the highest notes of the melody, which remains harmonically unresolved. Beyond the melodic shape, the delicate orchestration and complex harmonies are essential to the overall effect and become elements for development within the score.

Prior to *Laura*, popular music had been relegated to musicals and comedies, or as source music in dramas. Hence, the music that was part of the characters' daily lives in these films differed in style from the type of music used for underscoring. *Laura* changed that. Laura's theme is heard both as source music and in the underscoring. These dual roles can be observed best in an early scene at a restaurant, in which Waldo recalls Laura's rise to professional prominence (15:15). In the moments where we see Waldo talking to Mark, Laura's theme is heard as source music played by a trio of musicians, as shown in the image at the beginning of the chapter. But during the flashback montages, the orchestra picks up the tune and projects the image of a young woman rising through high society. The overall flow of the music as the story weaves in and out of the present is brilliantly seamless.

VIEWER GUIDE I3.I

Laura: Obsession

Composer: David Raksin



Timing

DVD: Fox Film Noir 01 (40:40– 47:15)

Setting

Police detective Mark McPherson (Dana Andrews) is investigating the murder of Laura Hunt (Gene Tierney). One of the suspects, the snobbish Waldo Lydecker (Clifton Webb), has been a major source of information, opinions, and humor during the early portion of the film. At this point, Mark has become obsessed with the stories and image (portrait) of Laura. He has come to her apartment on a rainy night to look at Laura's personal items, drink some of her liquor, and imagine what she was like. He is about to discover a major twist in the case.

Key Points

- Popular musical style
- Single dominant theme
- Music from a symphonic pops orchestra

Principal Theme

Example 13.1 Laura

Phrase a

Phrase b

Phrase a'

Phrase c

PLOT	MUSIC
Mark enters the apartment. He stops to look at Laura's portrait and remove his coat. He goes into the study.	Woodwinds softly play introductory material. The theme begins as we see the painting. The initial cadence of phrase a is repeated and developed. A bass clarinet solo is followed by two-note descending gestures.
Mark takes the packet of Laura's love letters. He begins to pace.	A quicker version of phrase a briefly turns passionate, reflecting his frustration. Quieter music follows in a low register.
Mark enters Laura's bedroom and looks around.	A musical stinger when the light is turned on. Prominent bass clarinet.
Mark goes to Laura's dresser and looks at her handkerchief and perfume. He then looks in her closet.	The introduction and phrase a return. Once again, the initial cadence is repeated. The music rises in tension.
Returning to the living room, Mark pours himself a drink.	After an introduction, phrase a is played by the piano with a distorted sound. The orchestra continues with a portion of phrase b.
Mark calls another policeman. Waldo enters and engages in a pointed conversation.	No music
Waldo leaves. Mark has another drink.	A sustained chord is followed by the quick passionate version of phrase a.
Mark sits in the chair near the portrait and continues to drink. He falls asleep.	The introduction material leads to another statement of the Laura theme (a' and c). The orchestra plays a soft stinger on the last note as Mark falls asleep; the chord is sustained.
Laura enters the apartment and is startled to see a strange man. Mark wakes and identifies himself.	No music

During the investigation, Mark enters Laura's apartment on a rainy night (see [VG13.i](#)). He is obviously obsessed with the stories and images of Laura, as indicated by the frequent visual of Laura's portrait above his head (like a thought bubble) and the continuous playing of Laura's theme in the underscore. Here, Raksin provides us with a free fantasy on the main melody. The first phrase of the theme, its most memorable part, is initially heard twice—when he first enters the apartment and looks at the portrait, and when he looks at Laura's personal items in her bedroom dresser. With both statements, the opening phrase of the theme is followed by repetitions of the descending cadential motion. The passages then continue with other developments of the theme, most of which are in the lower registers (the bass clarinet is prominent). Several passionate surges suggest Mark's frustration with his emotions.

The remainder of the scene contains fuller statements of the melody. When Mark returns to the portrait, phrase a and the beginning of b can be heard. Phrase a is particularly striking, as it is presented with a warbling, electronically altered piano. Throughout this scene, a wavering timbre (a common musical device in film noirs) suggests irrationality and Mark's alcohol-induced state. Following an extended dialogue break, phrases a' and c appear as Mark sits under the portrait with a drink. At the final cadence, he falls asleep. The last chord is sustained until Laura enters the apartment, very much alive—or is the rest of the film just a dream?

MESSAGE MOVIES

Cynicism and pessimism became prominent themes in the late 1940s, and the critically acclaimed movies after the war tended to deal with serious social issues, such as racism and euthanasia. The themes of the Best Picture winners from 1945 to 1950 mark a strong departure from the sunny optimism of 1944's winner, *Going My Way* with Bing Crosby:

- The Lost Weekend* (1945): alcoholism
- The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946): difficulties of veterans
- Gentleman's Agreement* (1947): anti-Semitism
- Hamlet* (1948): Shakespeare's classic drama of indecision and murder
- All the King's Men* (1949): the corruption and power of Huey Long
- All About Eve* (1950): intrigues on Broadway

Supporting these prevailing themes of anxiety and social problems was a correspondingly serious musical tone. Scores for films dealing with social issues created before the war often resorted to simple adaptations of American folk tunes,

such as "Red River Valley" in Alfred Newman's music for *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940). In the postwar years, scores for films about social issues like *The Lost Weekend* and *The Best Years of Our Lives* create a much more disturbing mood through increased dissonance, a smaller instrumentation, and the avoidance of tuneful melodic material.

The Lost Weekend, directed by Billy Wilder, takes a brutally realistic look at alcoholism. Hollywood, before this time, tended to glamorize drinking, but *The Lost Weekend* focuses on the destructive consequences of alcohol addiction. In underscoring the irrational cravings of an alcoholic, Rózsa added to the orchestra a theremin (used to depict madness in *Spellbound*). Its eerie wailings,



FIGURE I3.3 Birnam's cravings for alcohol are suggested by the theremin in *The Lost Weekend*.

in combination with dissonances, are critical to the impact of the film, including its two most powerful moments. In one of these, Don Birnam (Ray Milland), a writer, is trying to pawn his typewriter to get money for a drink, but finds that all the pawnshops are closed for Yom Kippur (1:03:50). In the other, Birnam has a delusion in which a mouse, eating through the wall, is devoured by a bat, causing the wall to ooze blood (1:24:30).

The Best Years of Our Lives

The most commercially successful of the message films is William Wyler's *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946), the biggest box-office hit since *Gone with the Wind* and the winner of seven Oscars, including Best Picture and Best Scoring of a Dramatic Picture. Inspired by an article in *Time* magazine, *The Best Years of Our Lives* interweaves the stories of three veterans arriving home after the war. While sharing the bond of a common war experience, the three servicemen come from different branches of the armed forces, are in different stages of relationships with women, and have different financial backgrounds. The youngest has lost both hands in a war injury, which are replaced by mechanical hooks. Harold Russell, a real-life paratrooper who lost both hands in a grenade explosion, plays the role of Homer Parrish. His ability to manipulate his hooks in such ordinary tasks as lighting a match and playing *Chopsticks* with songwriter Hoagy Carmichael (2:09:50) is part of the film's fascination. For this role, Russell won two Oscars—Best Supporting Actor and a special award for bringing hope and courage to veterans. He is the only actor ever to win two Oscars for one role.

The music for *The Best Years of Our Lives* is by one of the quiet masters of film music—Hugo Friedhofer. His gift for orchestration is readily apparent in many passages, such as the music accompanying Fred's nightmare (50:40). The strength of his score, however, is in the overall mood, which is indebted to Aaron Copland's **American nationalism**—melodies built on disjunct intervals, nontraditional harmonic progressions, syncopated rhythms, and warm orchestrations. Rather than conjuring up nostalgia for an unspecified past, this musical style is applied to contemporary issues of veterans' adjustments, urban life, and changing values. Friedhofer's music contributes a positive tone to the serious plot, which ultimately shows that all three men can overcome their difficulties through honest American values and, of course, the steadfast love of women.



FIGURE I3.4 Homer uses his hand hooks to play "Chopsticks" with Hoagy Carmichael in *The Best Years of Our Lives*.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Hugo Friedhofer (1902–1981)

California-born Hugo Friedhofer, a former cellist in a silent film orchestra, worked in the 1930s as an orchestrator for other film composers, including Max Steiner (for whom he orchestrated over fifty scores), Erich Korngold, and Alfred Newman. For many movies, including *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz*, he played a critical creative role beyond orchestration. In 1944 he began composing scores for Twentieth Century Fox, and he would eventually receive nine Oscar nominations, winning the award for *The Best Years of Our Lives*.

Important Film Scores

The Best Years of Our Lives 1946

The Bishop's Wife 1947

Joan of Arc 1948

Boy on a Dolphin 1957

An Affair to Remember 1957

The Young Lions 1958

= Best Picture Oscar

= Best Music Oscar

= Music Oscar Nomination

Each of the three principal characters has music associated with his individual story. Al Stephenson (Fredric March), an older army sergeant, returns home to his wife (Myrna Loy), two grown children, and a job at the bank. He has a serious drinking problem, but he is able to bring to his work a strong supportive voice on behalf of veterans. His primary theme, first heard on a solo cello as he approaches his front door (19:20), is “Among My Souvenirs,” which we later hear as source music played by Hoagy Carmichael. In one humorous scene, the tune is presented in a variety of settings, including a military march, as a hungover Al wakes up in his house for the first time (1:01:30).

Fred Derry (Dana Andrews), a younger Air Force bombardier, returns to his bride, only to find her less than devoted. Friedhofer employs a Gershwin-esque theme for Fred (55:00), which also suggests his wife’s sexually permissive lifestyle. Ultimately she leaves him when he cannot find a decent job, and this frees him to woo Al’s sweet daughter (Teresa Wright).

Homer, the sailor who has lost his hands, is not given his own musical theme. Still, he has more musical support than the others, as a number of themes are associated with him. Three of these are shown in **VIEWER GUIDE I3.2**—Best Years, Wilma, and Neighbors. Wilma’s theme is one of the most important melodies in the film. Initially heard as a sprightly tune, reflecting her youthful energy and adoration of Homer, it soon grows in depth and maturity.

VIEWER GUIDE I3.2

The Best Years of Our Lives: The Revelation

Composer: Hugo Friedhofer



Timing

DVD: MGM 1000682 (2:20:35–2:28:45)

Setting

Homer (Harold Russell) has returned from the war. His hands have been amputated and replaced by hooks. Because of his disability, Homer has been unable to return to his relationship with Wilma (Cathy O'Donnell), his girlfriend.

Key Points

- Warm tone
- Reduced orchestra, primarily strings
- Disjunct melodies
- Use of leitmotifs

Principal Themes

Example 13.2 Best Years



Example 13.3 Wilma



Example 13.4 Neighbors



PLOT

Homer is preparing a nighttime snack. Wilma knocks at the door and enters. She explains that her parents want her to go away.

MUSIC

The strings play Wilma's theme. The music is hesitant, reflecting a sense of awkwardness. As the serious discussion begins, the music remains unobtrusive. Motives are heard from the Neighbors theme (reflecting the mention of her parents) and Wilma (she wants to stay).

Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
She asks for a chance to see if she can deal with his disability.	The strings play the Best Years and Wilma themes.
Homer mentions that they have known each other a long time. He invites her upstairs.	The Neighbors theme is prominent. The Best Years theme played in imitation as they go upstairs.
In his room, Homer removes his robe and harness. He puts on his pajama tops.	A high-pitched chord is sustained. Variations of the Neighbors theme are played in the low register of the flutes.
Wilma buttons his pajamas. He tells of his difficulties. Wilma says that she loves him.	Wilma's theme sounds with more strength. Woodwinds play quietly. A fragment of Wilma's theme is heard. The Best Years theme enters.
They kiss. She puts his items away, then tucks him into bed. They kiss again.	The full strings play Wilma's theme. The Best Years theme is rendered by a clarinet, solo violin, and then string orchestra. The Wilma theme intermixes with Best Years.
Wilma leaves. Homer goes to sleep contentedly.	Woodwinds and then strings play the Neighbors theme. A solo violin with Wilma's theme suggests that he is happily thinking about her.

Not wanting to burden Wilma with his handicap, Homer has difficulty accepting her unconditional love. He has remained distant and aloof, and it appears as if the relationship will dissolve. Finally, Homer opens up to Wilma in a revealing, intimate scene (see VG 13.2). Friedhofer supports this moment with a continuous but, for the most part, subdued cue. The orchestration and harmonies play a significant role in creating a sense of tenderness as two people who love each other are reconnected. Friedhofer does not use a full orchestra but relies largely on the strings along with solo or small groups of woodwinds. The dynamics rarely become obtrusive, which adds to the intimacy of the scene. The harmonies are warmed with triads, sometimes moving in block chords.

Although the three melodic ideas shown in Viewer Guide 13.2 are disjunct, they are generally played in a lyrical manner. Each of the themes is recognizable in a four-note form, and many of the statements consist just of those opening pitches. In a complex web of musical ideas, Friedhofer moves freely between them and other material. The Neighbors theme is more prevalent when Wilma speaks of her home or parents, and the Best Years theme supports her declarations of love and their kisses.

Sunset Boulevard

Sunset Boulevard (1950) combines elements of both film noir and message films. Like *Spellbound* and *The Lost Weekend*, it presents a story about dementia. There are several clear links to noir, including extended night scenes, a gothic mansion, and the use of a narrator—the murder victim, Joe Gillis (William Holden). But Billy Wilder's film is also a harsh indictment of Hollywood and its star system. The real-life silent film actress Gloria Swanson portrays an aging former silent film star named Norma Desmond. Supported by other Hollywood film figures, such as actor/director Erich von Stroheim, director Cecil B. DeMille, comedian Buster Keaton, and Hollywood reporter Hedda Hopper, *Sunset Boulevard* exposes the fleeting, seductive, and all-consuming nature of fame.

At age fifty, Norma Desmond decides to make a comeback playing Salome. Although some may wish to argue that the age of fifty is hardly over-the-hill, the filmmakers have turned Norma into a rather grotesque caricature. In the original biblical story, Salome is a beautiful young woman, renowned for her alluring Dance of the Seven Veils. For musicians, the most famous retelling of this story is the expressionistic opera by Richard Strauss (1905), which is based on an Oscar Wilde play from 1893. In the opera, Salome's madness plays a pivotal role. After having John the Baptist beheaded for spurning her advances, she dances with and erotically kisses the Prophet's severed head. While not as gruesome as the opera, the plot of *Sunset Boulevard*, in which insanity drives a woman to murder, has obvious parallels.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Franz Waxman (1906–1967)

Born in Germany, Waxman began working in the German film industry and contributed arrangements for *The Blue Angel* (1930). After being beaten by Nazi hooligans, Waxman immigrated to the United States and was soon working in Hollywood. One of film's finest and ablest craftsmen, he scored films from the 1930s into the 1960s, adapting to many of the changes in musical taste. He won two Oscars for Best Score and was nominated an additional nine times, with at least one nomination in every decade of his career.

Important Film Scores

The Bride of Frankenstein 1935

Sunset Boulevard 1950 †

Captains Courageous 1937

A Place in the Sun 1951 †

Rebecca 1940 ♀ ⊗

The Spirit of St. Louis 1957

Humoresque 1946 ⊗

Taras Bulba 1962 ⊗

♀ = Best Picture Oscar

† = Best Music Oscar

⊗ = Music Oscar Nomination

Composer Franz Waxman, who won his first Oscar for the film, helps us feel the absurdity of her delusional self-image by assigning Norma an exotic theme that suggests the seductive Salome (see [EXAMPLE I3.5](#)). When the theme is first heard in the opening credits, it is set against a percussion accompaniment that is reminiscent of Strauss's music for the Dance of the Seven Veils. This theme dominates the film, just as Norma controls everything in her world. It is heard in the low woodwinds when she first appears (13:40), and a saxophone plays the theme when Joe, a reporter, recognizes her (16:35).

Two of the more striking appearances of the Norma's theme are related to Desmond's comeback. When she visits the studio set where she once worked, a lighting man shines a spotlight on her, and the actors and crew gather around in admiration (1:09:15). This should be a moment to bask in, but her theme remains subdued, accompanied only by an odd wavering sound. The disquieting music suggests that she is unable to grasp reality, even at a moment of potential triumph. Later, a montage shows her preparing for the comeback with a series of beauty treatments, and a lyric statement of her theme is presented in counterpoint with a frantic, scurrying violin line (1:16:20). At the end of the film, her theme returns as a tango with full orchestration in the style of Strauss, as she makes her final descent down the staircase (see [VG I3.3](#)).

VIEWER GUIDE I3.3

Sunset Boulevard: Conclusion

Composer: Franz Waxman



Timing

DVD: Paramount 04927 (1:41:40-1:49:40)

Setting

By a quirk of circumstance, Joe (William Holden) comes to the Sunset Boulevard home of Norma Desmond, a former silent film star (Gloria Swanson).

Here she lives as a recluse attended to by her faithful servant and former husband, Max (Erich von Stroheim). Joe remains there to edit her screenplay and serves as her companion. Norma lives with the delusion that she will be able to make a comeback in a movie as Salome, the seductive biblical dancer. Joe finally decides to leave and walks away from Norma's mansion, but she follows him with a gun.

Key Points

- Distorted and dissonant versions of Norma's theme
- Musical references to Richard Strauss's opera *Salome*
- Full and colorful orchestration
- Use of leitmotifs

Principal Themes

Example 13.5 **Norma**



Example 13.6 **Joe**



Example 13.7 **Max**



PLOT	MUSIC
Max declares that Norma is the greatest star of them all and takes Joe's bags.	The theme for Max
Norma is trapped in her self-delusions.	The strings sustain a tremolo pitch with motives in the English horn.
Joe descends the staircase. Norma follows with a gun.	Norma's theme, with dissonant harmonies
Joe continues to walk away outside the house as Norma pleads with him.	The Norma theme is repeated several times as the music grows louder.
She shoots him.	No music
He falls into the pool. Max comes running to the scene.	Low brass instruments play Joe's theme, and Max's theme follows.
Norma looks at the stars.	A disjunct oboe melody suggests Norma's total dementia.
We return to the present time, as the police pull Joe's body out of the pool. Reporters arrive.	A wavering woodwind sound connects the scenes. An eerie melody plays with random piano chords.
Hedda Hopper phones in a news report. Police ask Norma questions, but she is unresponsive.	No music
The word "cameras" catches Norma's attention.	The woodwinds sustain a trill.

Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
She asks Max about the cameras, and he suggests that they are ready for her to make an entrance.	The trill continues with sporadic flourishes of notes. Quiet dissonant chords lead to a distorted version of the Salome theme.
Max goes downstairs and prepares the cameramen.	The theme for Max
Norma appears.	The woodwind trills return.
Max orders "Lights!"	Muted trumpets play a fanfare.
Norma is confused, and Max explains the "scene."	The trills continue with quick gestures in the low strings. They continue with lyric material.
The narration returns. Norma descends the stairs.	The Norma theme returns with a distorted tango rhythm.
Norma pauses and asks to say a few words.	The music returns to quieter motives with trills. A saxophone enters with Joe's theme.
She is ready for her close-up.	Strings play the Norma theme lushly, and the orchestra comes to a full ending.

Another significant musical idea borrowed from Richard Strauss is a simple trill. In the opera, the trill signifies Salome's insanity, a detail that Waxman does not overlook. Linking the trill with the film noir cliché of a wavering pitch, Waxman frequently employs an oscillating sound in the score to signify Norma's dementia. In one scene, the sound is attributed to the wind blowing through the pipes of an organ (18:20). The trill subtly becomes more pronounced, leading to the final scene, when Norma hears that the cameras have arrived. In a direct quote from the opera, a trill begins in the woodwinds, signaling Norma's complete descent into her fantasy world.

The other principal character in the film is Joe, a struggling writer. While escaping creditors, he has a flat tire and pulls into Norma's mansion on Sunset Boulevard. Here he is seduced into living at the house, editing her movie script, and serving as her companion. Eventually, Joe decides to leave, but Norma shoots him, and his body falls into the pool. The story is framed, as the first and last scenes begin with his lifeless body floating in the pool. Joe's theme is heard twice in the closing portion of the film (see VG 13.3): first, in the low brass with an altered last note as he is shot and falls into the pool, and second, played by a solo saxophone, as Norma readies for her last close-up. At the end of the film, we hear a lush setting of Norma's theme as she walks straight at the camera, indicating that we, as the audience, are part of the Hollywood formula that created Norma Desmond.

TRAILER

By the end of the 1940s, the United States had turned from the certainty of moral victory of World War II to the uncertainty of the emerging Cold War. Hollywood, with its production ranging from optimistic films created within the traditions of the Golden Age to dark films showing disturbing realistic subjects accompanied by new musical sounds, reflected the country's range of insecurities. The American film industry, like its European counterpart, would never be the same, as both entered the turbulent and creative decade of the 1950s.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

American nationalism	House Un-American	theremin
blacklist	Activities Committee	Waxman, Franz
Copland, Aaron	(HUAC)	Wilder, Billy
film noir	Preminger, Otto	Wyler, William
Friedhofer, Hugo	Raksin, David	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. What types of music were inspired by film noirs? Include *Laura*, *Double Indemnity*, and *The Killers* in the discussion. Listen in particular to the harshness of the opening credits for *Double Indemnity*.
2. Locate vocal recordings of the *Laura* theme to illustrate how an instrumental melody can be turned into a popular song. Frank Sinatra has a popular rendition.
3. Research the theremin and how it produces its electronic sound. *Spellbound* contains numerous excellent scenes featuring the instrument.
4. How does the music of *The Best Years of Our Lives* sound different than earlier film scores? In what ways is it similar? Listen to some excerpts of Copland's music such as *Appalachian Spring*. Discuss the similarities in musical style to Friedhofer's score.
5. Discuss the mixture of traditional, modern, and popular scoring in Waxman's music for *Sunset Boulevard*.

1953	<i>The Robe</i>
1954	<i>On the Waterfront</i>
1955	<i>Rebel Without a Cause</i>
1956	<i>Forbidden Planet</i>

1958	<i>Vertigo</i>
1959	<i>Ben-Hur</i>

Expanding Modern Music, 1951–1959

14



In *Ben-Hur*, Romans are musically depicted by a series of unrelenting marches.

For Hollywood, the 1950s was the worst of times. For film history, it may have been the best of times. The American film industry, dealt major legal blows and facing fierce competition from television, suffered from decreasing revenues and increasing costs. The grand old man of the studios, Louis B. Mayer, resigned from MGM in 1951; several studios began to sell their lots or convert to



television production; and movie stars broke away from studio contracts. Like any other businesses, movie studios responded to these money woes by cutting expenses. By 1959 the average number of movies produced in Hollywood was around 250 a year, about one-half the level at the end of the 1940s. American filmmakers faced their many challenges and responded with a remarkable array of excellent films. If one considers the tremendous production of classic films in international centers, headed by directors such as Federico Fellini (Italy), Ingmar Bergman (Sweden), and Akira Kurosawa (Japan), then the decade may indeed be seen as one of the finest in the history of filmmaking.

The most important technological developments in Hollywood were largely in response to television. By the mid-1950s, television had become a permanent fixture in the American home. Feeling threatened, Hollywood launched a two-pronged attack. The first was an unsuccessful attempt to undermine the new industry. No movies were to be shown on television, and no movie stars were to appear on a television program. Studios soon softened their hard line by selling the rights to pre-1948 movies to television and lifting the ban on actors in 1956 (although a stigma still lingers today). The other response was to lure people out of their living rooms with innovations. The two most visible and enduring technical changes in film during the 1950s were the use of color film and the advent of **widescreen** cinematography. In conjunction with stereophonic sound, these visual effects successfully created a theatrical experience that television could not match.

CLOSE-UP: TELEVISION

"People will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night."

—Daryl Zanuck, 1946

Zanuck's prediction is fascinating for its classic miscalculation, shared by many in the film industry, and for its date (television had already been available publicly for almost ten years). The history of television can be traced back to the nineteenth century, prior to the first public showing of films. Practical developments took longer in television than in the film industry, but in 1927, the same year as *The Jazz Singer*, television images were sent from Washington, DC, to New York City, and Philo T. Farnsworth of the United States applied for a patent on his invention. By the next year the first American home had a television set, with a one-inch-square screen, and regular broadcasts had begun in the United States.

Experiments in broadcasting took place there and in Great Britain during the late 1920s and early 1930s. RCA set up 150 receivers in New York homes in 1936; the first broadcast entertainment was the cartoon *Felix the Cat*.

Film's greatest year, 1939, was also a significant year for television: NBC began regular broadcasts for the East Coast; the first musical was shown—Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Pirates of Penzance*; and the first professional baseball game and the first college football games were televised. The war interrupted television's progress, but after the war, it moved at an accelerated pace. In 1948 viewers saw the first broadcasts of the presidential conventions, the Rose Bowl game, and "Uncle Miltie"—Milton

Berle. Television sets were set up in homes all over the United States. There were fewer than ten thousand television sets in 1945; by 1950 there were six million, and by 1960, sixty million. In 1951, broadcasts were finally

shown coast-to-coast, and Lucille Ball began her astonishing reign as the queen of comedy. Within five years of Zanuck's reassuring prediction, the popularity of television was threatening to destroy the movie industry.



FIGURES 14.1-14.3 Television sets from different eras, clockwise from top left: (1) 1928, (2) 1939, and (3) 1950

Two competing systems made possible the birth of widescreen films—**Cinerama** and **CinemaScope**. Cinerama is a process requiring three cameras, three projectors, and a large curved screen. It debuted in 1952 with *This Is Cinerama*, a travelogue showing various worldwide locations with stimulating visual effects, such as a ride on a rollercoaster. *How the West Was Won* (1962), with Alfred Newman's rousing score, is the system's greatest creation. Despite these spectacular results, Cinerama proved to be too costly and impractical. CinemaScope, however, required only a single camera. Twentieth Century Fox introduced this system with the 1953 religious epic *The Robe*, and soon other studios adopted rival widescreen formats with names such as VistaVision, Todd-AO, and Panavision.

The industry also explored a variety of musical styles during the 1950s, encompassing both old traditions and new trends. We can group Hollywood's films from this time into three broad musical categories: films exhibiting strong ties to the classical score, films exploring modern music, and films exploiting the expanding number of popular styles. This chapter will discuss the first two of these tendencies, and popular music will be addressed in Chapter 15.

THE CLASSICAL SCORE: RELIGIOUS EPICS

With the threat of nuclear holocaust hanging over the world, religious stories proved to be popular subjects for films. Mindful of the scrutiny of HUAC, Hollywood produced a series of spectacular epics set in the ancient world or in antiquity that promoted strong religious and democratic values. Although the civilizations of Egypt and ancient Rome were fascinating and admired for their accomplishments, they also represented totalitarian states similar to the Soviet Union. Knowing that the struggle for freedom in each of these regions eventually toppled empires, American audiences found inspiration in the underlying themes. In case the connection was too subtle, Cecil B. DeMille addressed the issue directly in a filmed prologue to *The Ten Commandments*, a movie in which Moses's last speech is directed not at religion, but at liberty.



FIGURE 14.4 Moses parts the Red Sea to the music of Elmer Bernstein in *The Ten Commandments*.

TABLE 14.1 Epic films set in the ancient world or antiquity

YEAR	EPIC	COMPOSER OSCAR	OSCAR
1949	<i>Samson and Delilah</i>	Victor Young	✉
1951	<i>Quo Vadis</i>	Miklós Rózsa	✉
1951	<i>David and Bathsheba</i>	Alfred Newman	✉
1953	<i>The Robe</i>	Alfred Newman	
1953	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Miklós Rózsa	✉
1956	<i>The Ten Commandments</i>	Elmer Bernstein	
1959	<i>Ben-Hur</i>	Miklós Rózsa	✉ †

✉ = Best Picture Oscar † = Best Music Oscar ✉ = Music Oscar Nomination

Common to each of the epics listed in **TABLE 14.1** is a strong musical score generally from a veteran composer. All of the films received a nomination for Best Scoring of a Dramatic Picture except *The Robe*, composed by Alfred Newman—a snub that compelled fellow composer Franz Waxman to quit the Motion Picture Academy—and *The Ten Commandments*, composed by newcomer Elmer Bernstein. Many of these films have scores that reflect some aspects of modern music, but they all retain the essential qualities of the classical film score established in the 1930s.

The Robe

Because of the grandeur of their stories and their potential for pageantry, religious epics were well suited to the new widescreen systems. Forgoing the standard opening Twentieth Century Fox fanfare for *The Robe*, Newman composed a solemn passage to accompany the unveiling of the new system and to set a serious tone for Rome in the early years after the death of Christ. The music accompanying the opening credits features a wordless choir that exploits the innovative multichannel stereophonic system. When Marcellus (Richard Burton) and Diana (Jean Simmons) willingly sacrifice their lives at the end of the film, the chorus returns triumphantly singing “Alleluja,” a passage originally composed by Ernst Toch for *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1939).

Just as many of the scenes take full advantage of the new potential for visual effects, several of Newman’s musical cues explore the wide range of enhanced sounds provided by stereo technology. One of his finest cues



FIGURE 14.5 The crucifixion scene in *The Robe* features music from a wordless choir.

underscores the crucifixion (37:30). Initially, the swirling of a wordless choir suggests human and spiritual mourning. In a disturbing, layered effect, the sounds of laughter and banter from the Roman soldiers can be heard. The co-existence of the two contrasting emotions continues until the storm builds. The music then rises to an emotional climax with brass chords just as Marcellus is touched by the blood of Christ and is moved by Christ's final blessing, asking forgiveness for those who crucified him.

Ben-Hur

The winner of eleven Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Scoring of a Dramatic Picture, William Wyler's *Ben-Hur* (1959) smashed the record of eight Oscars garnered by *Gone with the Wind* twenty years earlier. General Lew Wallace, a fascinating historic figure from the Civil War, created the original story in a popular novel published in 1880. A number of theatrical renditions of this story had been created, including a stage version with live horses pulling chariots on a treadmill (see Chapter 4) and a spectacular silent film version directed by Fred Niblo (1925).

For this remake, Miklós Rózsa composed one of the finest film scores in the classical tradition. He maintains an overall stylistic unity by employing musical ideas associated with antiquity. Many of the melodies are **modal**, meaning that they are based on old scale patterns that formed the basis of Western music before the seventeenth century. Rózsa also employs **parallel harmonies**, which retain the same pitch relationships from chord to chord and lack any sense of harmonic progression. These musical features, although historically connected not to Rome but to music from the Christian Church many centuries after this story unfolds, are an effective compromise between authenticity and the need of a modern audience to hear harmony.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Miklós Rózsa (1907–1967)

Rózsa was born in Hungary and studied composition in Germany. He came to Hollywood with Alexander Korda, the great Hungarian producer and director who was a major force in British films of the 1930s. One of Rózsa's earliest scores, *The Thief of Bagdad* (1940), created a great sensation, and his music for *The Jungle Book* (1942) became the first film score recorded and sold as a record album by RCA Victor. His use of modern musical sounds in noir films of the 1940s helped usher in a new musical style. During the next decade, Rózsa would create his best-known works in a series of historical and religious films, headed by *Ben-Hur* (1959). In all, Rózsa received twelve Academy nominations and won three Oscars.

Important Film Scores

The Thief of Bagdad 1940 ☒

The Jungle Book 1940 ☒

Double Indemnity 1944 ☒

The Lost Weekend 1945 ♀ ☒

Spellbound 1945 !

The Killers 1946 ☒

A Double Life 1947 !

Asphalt Jungle 1950

Quo Vadis 1951 ☒

Julius Caesar 1953

Ben-Hur 1959 ♀ !

El Cid 1961 ☒ ☐

♀ = Best Picture Oscar

! = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination



In addition to the general stylistic uniformity, the score exhibits a complex and thorough system of leitmotifs. Rózsa uses themes to distinguish between the three cultures intermixed in the film: nascent Christianity, Judaism, and Roman. Christ is the principal spiritual figure, and his leitmotif (see [EXAMPLE 14.1](#)) is typically heard on an organ with a wavering sound. High strings with harmonics are frequently added, creating a halo effect around the melody. Also noteworthy is the pervasiveness of the number three, representative of the Holy Trinity in Christianity: the theme has three-note chords, a melody primarily using three pitches, and a meter with three beats in a measure—the only significant theme in the film in triple meter.

Melodies associated with Jewish figures contain a prominent interval of a fifth, often heard as an upward leap. This gesture occurs at the beginning of themes representing the land of Judea, the beautiful Esther, Miriam, and the restless and unpredictable Ben-Hur (see [EXAMPLE 14.2](#)). The Romans, by contrast, are primarily shown without underscoring, suggesting their lack of compassion and emotion. Their only music tends to be diegetic, including brass fanfares and relentless marches. The themes associated indirectly with Romans—such as Hatred (see [EXAMPLE 14.3](#))—incorporate the tritone, the most disturbing interval in traditional Western harmony. Similarly, the Rowing theme associated with the slave gallery of the Roman ships centers on an ostinato pattern that creates two tritones: A-D# and E-B♭ (see [EXAMPLE 14.4](#)).



FIGURE 14.6 The popular *March of the Charioteers* is one of five Roman marches in *Ben-Hur*.

VIEWER GUIDE 14.1

Ben-Hur: March to the Galley

Composer: Miklós Rózsa



Timing

DVD: WB 67535 (59:50–1:06:15)

Setting

Ben-Hur (Charlton Heston) has unjustly been condemned to be a galley slave on a war ship. He is sent on a tortured march to the sea, and the commanding guard refuses to give him water. He is saved only through the intervening hand of Jesus Christ. Invigorated, Ben-Hur continues his journey and begins his sentence by rowing for the Roman fleet.

Key Points

- Full orchestral score
- Range of emotions from suffering to uplifting
- Leitmotifs include Christ, Ben-Hur, and Rowing
- Ben-Hur's theme is initially distorted, but returns with energy

Principal Themes

Example 14.1 Christ



Example 14.2 Ben-Hur



Example 14.3 Hatred



Example 14.4 Rowing



PLOT	MUSIC
Judah Ben-Hur and other prisoners are led on a tortured desert journey to the sea.	The ponderous, descending, chromatic desert march incorporates intervals from the Hatred theme.
They pause in Nazareth for water. The soldiers and horses receive water first.	The music suggests desperation as the prisoners wait for water.
Water is given to Ben-Hur, but then taken away. Collapsing, Ben-Hur asks God for help.	Ben-Hur's theme sounds distorted.
Christ comforts Ben-Hur and gives him water. The guard moves to strike Christ but cannot do so.	Christ's theme appears in an extended statement. After the confrontation with the guard, the Christ theme returns.
The prisoners begin to march again, and a reinvigorated Ben-Hur looks at Christ.	Ben-Hur's theme returns strongly as he looks at the figure of Christ. A full brass setting of the Christ theme closes the scene.
The Roman fleet is at sea. Ben-Hur is a galley slave in one of the boats.	A strong rhythmic idea is followed by the Rowing theme.

VIEWER GUIDE 14.1 encompasses portions of three scenes: the desert march, Ben-Hur's encounter with Christ, and the galley of a Roman warship. During the desert march, we hear harsh dissonances and a tortured, chromatically descending melody with strong connections to the Hatred theme. When Ben-Hur is denied water at the village, his theme is distorted and sounds desperate. At this moment, Christ intervenes and offers him water. As Ben-Hur is invigorated and intrigued by this kindness, his theme emerges fresh and energetic, and the scene closes with the Christ theme in a full orchestration.

But the glorious sound of Christ is abruptly interrupted by the intrusion of Rome. The next scene opens with a view of Roman warships. Rózsa underscores this moment with a forceful fragment of the Rowing theme and an accompaniment that is clearly suggestive of "Mars" from *The Planets* (1914–1916), a set of symphonic poems by Gustav Holst. The connection to this concert work depicting the Roman god of war is certainly appropriate; John Williams, in his score to *Star Wars* (1977), uses the same piece for a similar effect to depict the Imperial fleet.

MODERN MUSICAL STYLES

Several Hollywood film composers of the 1940s made concerted efforts to incorporate elements of contemporary concert-music styles into their scores. During the 1950s, the number of films supporting scores influenced by modern music

increased. Even in Rózsa's "traditional" score for *Ben-Hur*, extended passages of dissonance and the lack of standard harmonic progressions reflect musical developments of the twentieth century. For the remainder of this chapter, we will examine four films from the 1950s with distinctly different approaches to musical modernism (review Chapter 3, pp. 38–39).

On the Waterfront

American nationalism was a strong influence on the music of Leonard Bernstein. One of the great figures of American music, Bernstein is better known outside the world of film music. Bernstein's immense popularity, flamboyance, and talent allowed him to develop separate musical careers as a concert pianist, conductor, and composer. As a conductor, he was the highly respected leader of the New York Philharmonic (1958–1969), and he later became director of the Vienna Philharmonic. Perhaps his crowning moment was the monumental performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in Berlin, celebrating the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989). As a composer, he is best remembered for *West Side Story*, which was adapted for film in 1961. He wrote his only original film score for *On the Waterfront* (1954), which is recognized as one of America's greatest movies.

Inspired by a Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper series entitled "Crime on the Waterfront," Elia Kazan's *On the Waterfront* deals with graft and the influence of organized crime on the Longshoremen's union. Filmed on location in Hoboken, New Jersey, the plot focuses on Terry Malloy (Marlon Brando), an ex-boxer who performs menial jobs for the union. In the opening scene, he discovers that he has helped set up the murder of his friend Joey. The film deals with his transformation, his redemption through a woman's love, and his ultimate heroic challenge to the mob and its control over the union.

Bernstein supports the realism of the film with a stark, disturbing score. He incorporates aspects of Copland's style, including disjunct melodies and an emphasis on small, colorful musical ensembles. Two features, however, distinguish his sound from that of Copland. Bernstein employs more dissonance, and—as he did so brilliantly in *West Side Story*—adds elements of jazz, including syncopated rhythms and the prominent use of drums and saxophone. Copland describes Bernstein's ability to work in the two styles:

Bernstein represents a new type of musician—one who is equally at home in the world of jazz and in the world of serious music. George Gershwin made something of an attempt to fill that role, but Bernstein really fills it—and with ease.*

*Aaron Copland, *Copland on Music*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1963, 172–73.

These divergent styles can be observed at the beginning of the film. Reflecting neo-classical qualities, the music for the opening credits is played by a small number of instruments. A solo French horn, an instrument associated with heroes, intones the initial statement of the Waterfront theme. A solo flute and trombone repeat the theme in imitation, and finally muted trumpets and woodwinds play fragments of the theme's cadential phrase. When the film opens, the music departs from these gentle sounds, as the drums and piano violently pound out syncopated rhythms. A saxophone blares out a theme associated with violence, and soon the entire orchestra joins the percussive sound. The music comes to an abrupt halt as the last strokes of the timpani suggest the impact of Joey's body hitting the ground.

VIEWER GUIDE 14.2

On the Waterfront: Conclusion

Composer: Leonard Bernstein



Timing

DVD: Columbia Picture 78409 (1:38:10–1:47:20)

Setting

Terry Malloy (Marlon Brando) has unwittingly helped set up the murder of Joey. After falling in love with Joey's sister Edie (Eva Marie Saint), and with the urging of Father Barry (Karl Malden), Malloy testifies before a Senate hearing. He is now considered a stool pigeon and has become an outcast. But rather than hiding, he goes to the docks wearing Joey's jacket and ready for work. The foreman chooses everyone on the docks to work except for Terry, who remains standing alone. Unafraid, he goes to challenge union boss Johnny Friendly (Lee J. Cobb).

Key Points

- Musical style of Copland at climax
- Dissonant harmonies
- Syncopated rhythms
- Use of leitmotifs

Principal Themes

Example 14.5 Waterfront

A musical score for Example 14.5 Waterfront. It consists of two staves of music. The top staff is in common time (C) and the bottom staff is in 3/4 time (3). The music features various instruments including a solo French horn, a solo flute, a trombone, muted trumpets, woodwinds, drums, and a piano. Syncopated rhythms are prominent throughout the score.

Continued on next page

Example 14.6 Violence



PLOT	MUSIC
Terry stares at John Friendly's office.	A solo French horn intones the Waterfront theme, much like at the beginning of the film.
Terry walks to the office and challenges Friendly as workers watch.	No music
Terry and Friendly fight. Losing, Friendly calls for help from his thugs, and Terry is beaten badly.	A version of the Violence theme is played loudly, with dissonances, repeated chords, and syncopated accents.
The workers stare sadly. Father Barry and Edie arrive and go to Terry. The longshoremen refuse to work unless Terry joins them; Joey's father pushes Friendly into the water.	Silence signals the end of the fight. A soulful string variation of the Violence theme follows. Music stops with the arrival of Father Barry.
The workers ask Terry to join them and see his beaten face.	The soulful strings return, followed by woodwinds with the Violence theme.
Father Barry and Edie help Terry to stand, and he heroically walks to work.	The Waterfront theme is presented in a variety of instrumentations, building to a grand climax.



The score is largely unified by three principal themes ([EXAMPLES 14.5–14.7](#)). The Waterfront theme is used sparingly (Example 14.5). It functions as a musical frame for the film, appearing in its most complete form at the beginning and end. The Love theme (Example 14.7) is first heard in the park when Edie says that she remembers Terry from her youth (29:20). This disjunct melody is often heard gently scored for individual instruments, and it can even be heard as source music when they dance (43:40). It also grows in passionate intensity with full orchestration in several scenes, such as their first encounter on the rooftop (35:20) and when Terry breaks Edie's door down (1:16:15).

Example 14.7 Love



The Violence theme is the dominant motive of the film (Example 14.6). Because of its presence in the opening scene, it is also associated with Joey. It is heard when we see Joey's pigeon coop on the rooftop, and it also appears as

source dance music (45:30). Later, and more subtly, it develops into a melody heard when Terry and his brother Charley (Rod Steiger) talk in the cab (1:13:50). One of the more intriguing sounds in the film occurs when Terry tells Edie (Eva Marie Saint) about his role in Joey's murder (1:02:10). No dialogue or music is heard, just the pounding of the machines at the dock. Yet the rhythm of these sounds is identical to that of the Violence theme, and when the music finally enters, it is synchronized with the dock sounds.

The musical highpoint of the film occurs at the climax (see [VG 14.2](#)). Terry is beaten badly by the corrupt union boss's men, accompanied by an intense version of the Violence theme, combining the dissonances of modern music and the syncopated rhythms of popular music. Later, a plaintive, dissonant version of the Violence theme returns in the woodwinds as we see his bloodied face. When Terry says, "Put me on my feet," the Waterfront theme is stated heroically by a solo horn, and then repeated quietly by a harp and vibraphone. The full orchestra begins to accompany his courageous walk and builds to a climax. The American nationalist sound suggests the courage of one American, standing up to the forces of the mob-controlled union. While the wide leaps of the melody and the powerfully moving bass line are sounds clearly indebted to Copland, the intensity of the dissonances is pure Bernstein.



FIGURE 14.7 A lyrical theme plays as Terry talks to his brother Charley in the backseat of a cab in *On the Waterfront*.

Rebel Without a Cause

In 1955 Leonard Rosenman debuted as a film composer with three sensational scores. The score for the least known of the three, *The Cobweb*, contains music created with the serial techniques developed by Schoenberg. The other two films, among the finest of the decade, star James Dean—*East of Eden* and *Rebel Without a Cause*. Both deal with the angst of being a teenager.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Leonard Rosenman (1924–2008)

A key figure in expanding the role of modern music in film, Leonard Rosenman studied music with Roger Sessions, Ernst Bloch, and Arnold Schoenberg. Rosenman was active as a composer of concert music when he was asked to write the score for *East of Eden* (1955), primarily because his piano student, the future movie star, James Dean, insisted on it. Rosenman then enjoyed a long career scoring for both film and television. His television

Continued on next page

credits include work on *The Defenders*, *Marcus Welby*, and *The Twilight Zone*, and he won Emmys for two TV movies, *Sybil* (1976) and *Friendly Persuasion* (1979). For his work in film he was nominated for an Oscar four times and won the award twice.

Important Film Scores

East of Eden 1955

Bound for Glory 1976 †

Rebel Without a Cause 1955

Cross Creek 1983 ☒

The Cobweb 1955

Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home 1986 ☒

Beneath the Planet of the Apes 1970

RoboCop 2 1990

Barry Lyndon 1975 †

† = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination



During the 1950s, the concept of the “teenager” was a relatively new phenomenon. The term itself had first appeared in print in 1941, signaling the nation’s recognition that a distinct population of youths who were between childhood and adulthood had developed. In earlier generations, this gap did not exist; children became adults in their early teens and were expected to work, bear children, and handle responsibilities like all other adults. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, there was not enough work for younger adults, so teens began to be herded into another relatively new cultural institution, the high school. With ample free time, fewer responsibilities, active minds, growing bodies, and adult hormones, this segment of the population often resorted to rebellious activities, much to the dismay of older generations. Concern over this phenomenon led to a series of films dealing with rebellious teenagers, including *The Wild One* (1954), *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), *The Delinquent* (1957), and *West Side Story* (1961).



FIGURE 14.8 The Love theme emerges during this scene with Judy, Jim, and Plato at the edge of the cliff after the death of Buzz in *Rebel Without a Cause*.

Nicholas Ray’s *Rebel Without a Cause* focuses on three dysfunctional families trying to raise troubled youths: Jim (James Dean), Judy (Natalie Wood), and Plato (Sal Mineo). In telling this story, Ray attacks the essence of 1950s values—the family unit—by exposing its underlying weaknesses, such as neglect, ineffectual parenting, and sexual repression. This film continued to fascinate audiences in part because of the real-life tragedies of its three stars. James Dean, who exploded on

the Hollywood screen in 1955 with three major films, died that same year in a car accident at age twenty-four, just months before *Rebel without a Cause* opened in the theaters; Natalie Wood drowned at age forty-three, and Sal Mineo was murdered near his home at age thirty-seven.

Two themes dominate Rosenman's score. Judy's theme is frequently presented in a jazz idiom that suggests her burgeoning sexuality. The other principal musical idea, the Rebel theme, has no clear association. It is generally heard behind scenes featuring Jim and Plato, a lonely youth who has befriended Jim. Both melodies are presented during the opening credits. Judy's theme is used as a fanfare, the Rebel theme enters in a jazz style, and Judy's theme returns in a lush, romantic setting. The first four notes of the Judy theme are distinctive, and they are often heard in developmental and improvisational passages.

Example 14.8 Judy



Example 14.9 Rebel



Harsh dissonances underscore three episodes: the vision of the exploding earth at the planetarium (27:00), the knife game between Jim and the gang leader Buzz (35:15), and most dramatically, at the "chickie run" (52:05). In the latter scene, the music achieves an intense climax after Buzz is killed. Judy stares over the edge of the cliff at the wreckage, possibly considering suicide. At that moment, Jim offers her his hand and the music softens into a romantic setting of Judy's theme, marking a major turning point in their lives.

Vertigo

Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958) incorporates a number of film noir characteristics—a twisted mystery, nighttime settings, an ambiguous love relationship, a detective's indignation over the culpability of his lover, and an abrupt, unhappy ending. Bernard Herrmann's music features some of the film noir traditions as well, with its sustained moods, use of low woodwinds, and wavering tones. Yet the film fully embraces Hollywood's latest technology with both widescreen and color. Its color, of course, runs counter to the uses of light and shadow in black-and-white films that are critical to the visual style of noir. Whether or not one views this film as a true noir, it represents the closing of the noir era in the late 1950s.

CLOSE-UP: COLOR

"We're Not in Kansas Anymore"

Dorothy's observation is a delightful understatement, as the audience is taken visually from the drab black-and-white world of Kansas to the stunningly colorful world of Oz. Color in films such as *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, and *Gone with the Wind* may seem quite startling in comparison to earlier films. But color film was not an invention of the late 1930s, and color at this time did not take over completely, as the vast majority of films in the 1940s and early '50s were shot in black and white.

Attempts to bring color to film began in the late nineteenth century. In *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), selected objects, such as the dresses of some of the dancing girls, were hand-painted frame by frame. Most striking is the use of color for the explosion and the final gunshot. A different and more typical color effect can be seen in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), where the night scenes are paler, and the scenes in Mary's bedroom are awash with a blue tint.

The Technicolor Corporation, so named because the inventors had attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was founded in 1917 and maintained a monopoli

stic hold on all color equipment used in American films. It introduced a two-color process favoring red and green hues in the 1920s; this system is found in several films from that time, including a striking scene in *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925). By 1933 Technicolor had developed a superior three-color process, using red, blue, and green filters. Among the early experiments with this process was the first color cartoon, Disney's *Flowers and Trees* (1932).

Unfortunately, the color process was expensive, requiring special film and cameras. The cost, combined with other technical problems and the financial crunch of World War II, prevented the use of color from becoming widespread. Throughout the 1940s, color was reserved for the most lavish spectacles. In the 1950s, the appearance of a cheaper and more efficient color system designed called Eastmancolor and the competition from black-and-white television forced the film industry to convert to color quickly. By 1960, black-and-white films were in the minority, and separate Oscars for black-and-white films were discontinued in 1967.



The music of Bernard Herrmann does not easily fit into any generalized modern musical styles. He was a unique composer who used dissonances and other modern musical elements freely, as can be observed in *Vertigo*. During the opening credits, the music establishes an ominous mood with a disturbing ostinato (see EXAMPLE 14.10) offset by dark brass chords, wavering sounds, and imitations of the ostinato. Once the action begins, scurrying strings, cacophonous wind chords, and glissandos combine with dizzying visual effects to dramatize the vertigo attack that Scottie (James Stewart) suffers and the tragic death of a policeman.

Example 14.10 *Vertigo*: The highest line of the ostinato from the opening credits



The story then takes place in two distinct parts. During the first portion, a fascinating mystery unfolds, and both its resolution and our expectation that vertigo will play a part, as suggested by the title of the movie, build enormous tension. Since many of the scenes contain little dialogue or action, Herrmann's moody musical cues, often repetitious in character, are essential in sustaining suspense. Most striking are the combination of high strings and the bass clarinet at Carlotta's grave (23:15), the disturbed sounds as Madeleine (Kim Novak) leaps into the bay (42:10), and the wavering, distorted sounds heard in the forest (1:00:20).

After Madeleine dies (1:17:00), the second portion of the film commences. Gradually the audience learns that the first half of the film has been a deception—a carefully calculated misdirection. Seeing a woman named Judy that resembles Madeleine, Scottie begins to make her over so that she looks identical to his former love. When he is finally successful in this attempt, a passionate cue with strong references to Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* denotes the fulfillment of both of their desires (1:55:35). But shortly thereafter, the detective in Scottie sees jewelry that Madeleine had worn, signifying that Judy is actually Madeleine, and that he had been used in a murder scheme. At the end, Scottie conquers his vertigo, but the results are still tragic, as he loses Judy the same way he had thought he lost Madeleine. Hitchcock abruptly ends the film without resolution, leaving many questions unanswered.

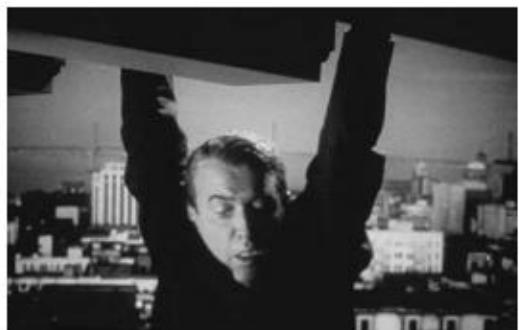


FIGURE 14.9 Scurrying music accompanies Scottie's dizziness at the opening of *Vertigo*.

Forbidden Planet

Forbidden Planet (1956) is a landmark science-fiction movie. Expanding the conventions of the genre, it is the first to show travelers from Earth exploring the galaxy, a story line that is particularly important to the *Star Trek* television and movie series. *Forbidden Planet* contains a mixture of science-fiction imagination, special effects (some of which were produced by Disney Studios), Jungian psychology, fears of nuclear energy, romance, and plot elements from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. It is also notable for its use of **avant-garde** music.

Louis and Bebe Barron created an all-electronic score for *Forbidden Planet*. No acoustic instruments—strings, winds, or percussion—are used. Pioneers in electronic music, the Barrons established one of the earliest studios for **electronic music** in 1948; the renowned avant-garde composer John Cage composed his first electronic works there. For *Forbidden Planet*, the Barrons (primarily Bebe) created a score that functions as underscoring, serves as sound effects, and suggests the musical style of a futuristic world. The latter is reinforced when Morbius plays a recording of Krell musicians from a half-million years ago (51:35). Humorously, this electronic cue includes a recurring low-pitch sound that is similar to a bass pizzicato in jazz.

VIEWER GUIDE 14.3

Forbidden Planet: Krells, Liquor, and an Invisible Monster

Composer: Bebe Barron



Timing

DVD: WB 65059 (1:01:55–1:07:05)

Setting

In the 23rd century, a space vehicle from Earth lands on a distant planet looking for members from an earlier expedition. Commander Adams (Leslie Nielsen), Dr. Ostrow (Warren Stevens), and the rest of the crew encounter Dr. Morbius (Walter Pidgeon). Morbius, his beautiful young daughter Altaira (Anne Francis), and Robby the Robot are the only remaining survivors. Morbius reveals that the Krells, an advanced civilization that once inhabited this planet, mysteriously disappeared, leaving their machinery and knowledge behind. He does not mention the presence of an invisible monster.

Key Points

- Music created electronically
- Music suggesting diegetic sounds (sound effects)
- Association of certain sounds with aspects of the drama

PLOT

Dr. Morbius continues to reveal the secrets of the Krell civilization to Commander Adams and Dr. Ostrow.

Adams asks about the purpose of the machine.

MUSIC

The pulsating music suggests the sound of the energy flow in the Krell machinery.

A high pitch is sustained while lower pitches are subordinate.

PLOT	MUSIC
Morbius shows part of the power unit. He increases and then lowers the power.	Lower pitches give way to a rising sound as the power surges. The pitch descends when the power is turned off.
The film cuts to the spacecraft, where an electric fence defends against the intruder. The cook asks for permission to go outside of the fence.	No music, although a zapping sound occurs at the testing of the fence.
The cook hurries to meet Robby, who has made liquor for him. The cook crawls toward the bottles.	Humorously sporadic, low beeping sounds, associated with drinking alcohol. Bubbly sounds are added.
Robby detects an intrusion to the camp.	A sustained high-pitch sound, with repeated rising pitches in a lower register.
An invisible force tries to pass the electronic fence.	The same sounds continue until the zapping sound of the fence begins.
The men react to the intrusion.	No music
Footsteps from the invisible monster can be seen as it comes to the ship and climbs the stairway.	A single pitch is sustained, the lower register contains a generally rising line, and recurring blips suggest the sound of the footsteps of the walking monster.
A scream comes from inside the ship.	No music



The dual role of the music as scoring and as sound effects can be heard in the several adjacent scenes described in [VIEWER GUIDE 14.3](#). In the first, Dr. Morbius shows Commander Adams and Dr. Ostrow the Krell machine complex that generates power. Initially, the electronic sounds suggest the acceleration of the shuttle car (59:55). Subsequently, similar tones appear to be sound effects, as the electronics mimic the working mechanisms of the machines and the surging of energy. Morbius demonstrates a power unit, and the pitch rises and falls as the energy is raised and lowered.

Following a cut and some dialogue, music returns when the cook leaves the spaceship area to find the robot Robby, who has promised to provide him with alcohol. Here, the electronic sounds function purely as scoring, establishing a syncopated pulse that suggests inebriated staggering. Soon bubbly sounds are added. (These were heard earlier when Robby drank liquor for the first time, which ended with a robotic belch [38:15].) At the conclusion of the Viewer Guide scene, the score mimics the steps of the invisible monster as he

approaches the ship (1:06:10). The music alternates strong accents (left foot) with weaker ones (right foot). The stronger pulses continue as the creature climbs the ship's stairway. After a brief silence, we hear the scream of a victim in the ship.

TRAILER

Forbidden Planet represents the most radical incorporation of modern music in our survey. The use of a variety of modern musical styles would continue through the 1960s and into the 1970s. But another, more prevalent trend was also developing in the 1950s—popular music.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

avant-garde	DeMille, Cecil B.	Ray, Nicholas
Barron, Bebe and Louis	electronic music	Rosenman, Leonard
Bernstein, Elmer	Holst, Gustav	Toch, Ernst
Bernstein, Leonard	Kazan, Elia	widescreen
CinemaScope	modal	
Cinerama	parallel harmonies	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Discuss the negative and positive impacts of television on moviemaking, including the music.
2. In the genre of biblical films, compare stories from the Old and New Testaments from the perspective of filmmaking. What type of music would you use for the various types of stories?
3. How does Miklós Rózsa's score for *Ben-Hur* embody the qualities of the classical Hollywood film score? What is new in this music?
4. What are the unique sounds of Leonard Bernstein's music as heard in *On the Waterfront*?
5. Watch *The Cobweb*, *East of Eden*, or *Rebel Without a Cause*, which all have music by Leonard Rosenman. Discuss the use and impact of modern music in those films.
6. Bernard Herrmann's music for *Vertigo* contains loud, dizzying music for bouts of vertigo, quiet, disturbing timbres for Carlotta, and lush romantic cues for Scotty's passion for Madeleine. How does Herrmann make this mixture work?

7. Using *Forbidden Planet* as a model, discuss the avant-garde movement in music and the thin line separating music from sound effects.

FOR FURTHER READING

- Bushard, Anthony. *Leonard Bernstein's On the Waterfront: A Film Score Guide*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2013.
- Hickman, Roger. *Miklós Rózsa's Ben-Hur: A Film Score Guide*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2011.
- Wierzbicki, James. *Louis and Bebe Barron's Forbidden Planet: A Film Score Guide*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2005.

SIGNIFICANT
FILMS

1951	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>	1956	<i>Around the World in 80 Days</i>
	<i>An American in Paris</i>	1958	<i>Touch of Evil</i>
1952	<i>High Noon</i>	1959	<i>Anatomy of a Murder</i>
	<i>Singin' in the Rain</i>		<i>Some Like It Hot</i>
1955	<i>The Blackboard Jungle</i>		

Country, Rock, and All That Jazz, 1951–1959

15



Josephine and Daphne rehearse with an all-female band in *Some Like It Hot*.

The number and variety of popular music styles increased rapidly in the 1950s. Some of the newer types of jazz created a more agitated and disturbing mood. Characterized by hard accents, rapid notes, and increased volume and intensity, these newer styles began to accompany scenes of violence and sexual encounters. Most notably, film noir introduced a jazz sound featuring a cutting and somewhat coarse melodic line from a saxophone or trumpet, which

was used to suggest seedier aspects of life. Other popular trends of the 1950s included **country and western**, ideal for westerns, and **rock and roll**, a natural for movies aimed at teenagers. Hollywood quickly learned that popular music was less expensive than symphonic scores, attracted young audiences, and created additional revenue through record sales. The expanded role of popular music is the most significant development in film music during the 1950s.

JAZZ

Jazz is particularly useful for underscoring, as it is the only contemporary popular music type to have a substantial repertory without voices. The three films employing jazz discussed next contain primarily instrumental cues. In these films, jazz has an edgy quality that is appropriate for the contemporary plots dealing with sex and violence.

A Streetcar Named Desire

Alex North employs jazz effectively in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951), director Elia Kazan's adaptation of the classic Tennessee Williams play. The setting of New Orleans, the birthplace of jazz, allows North ample opportunity to include jazz as source music. Jazz naturally emanates from barrooms, restaurants, and the radio, providing a fitting atmosphere for this tale of lust, instability, and passion. The music often remains in the background, not directly connected to the intense dialogue or physical action.



FIGURE 15.1 Stella descends the stairs accompanied by a saxophone in a steamy scene from *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

Jazz underscoring also suggests the sexually charged atmosphere of Stanley's house. The saxophone, which was rapidly becoming the standard instrument for depicting an attractive female, here accompanies Stanley (Marlon Brando) in his many poses with a wet shirt or bare chest. The restrained but sultry music underlying Stanley's famous yelling of Stella's name, her slow descent down the staircase, and their embrace as he carries her into the house provides a new, earthy dimension to the film love scene (40:15). The lack of musical contrast for this moment suggests the inevitability that Stella will return to Stanley. Into this coarse world comes Stella's

crazed sister Blanche. Traumatized by events that precede the film, Blanche often escapes into the world of fantasy, as suggested by the elegant and aristocratic waltz she imagines playing in her head. The clash of these two worlds and musical styles is symbolically depicted when Stanley grabs the radio, which has been playing a waltz, and throws it out the window (38:30).

COMPOSER PROFILE

Alex North (1910–1991)

American-born Alex North was the son of Russian parents. Trained at the Curtis Institute, Juilliard, and the Moscow Conservatory, he studied with Aaron Copland and began composing for theater and dance, receiving commissions from Martha Graham and Agnes de Mille. After the war, he wrote incidental music for the Broadway production of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, which proved to be his gateway to Hollywood. When director Elia Kazan decided to convert *Death of a Salesman* into a movie in 1951, he asked North to provide the score. In that same year, Kazan teamed with North in a filmed version of Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and it is this score that caught the attention of Hollywood. The low point of his career was the decision by director Stanley Kubrick not to use any of the nearly fifty minutes of music that North had composed for *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). North received fifteen Academy Award nominations and was awarded an honorary Lifetime Achievement Award in 1986.

Important Film Scores

Death of a Salesman 1951 ☑

A Streetcar Named Desire 1951 ☑

Spartacus 1960 ☑

Cleopatra 1963

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? 1966 ☑

Under the Volcano 1984 ☑

☐ = Music Oscar Nomination



When necessary, North subtly moves away from popular music in order to underscore moments of extreme emotions. The most powerful of these is Stanley's rape of his sister-in-law while his wife is having a baby. The music begins innocently, as a quiet blues melody drifts down from the nearby tavern (1:42:40). But as the emotions begin to rise, North deftly changes to non-diegetic music. At the climactic moment (1:52:40), the music erupts, and ripping horn glissandos provide a substitute for the unheard screams of Blanche from offscreen, as the restrictions of the Hays code prevented them from showing the actual assault.

Touch of Evil

One of the most fascinating films to appear in the 1950s, described by many as the last significant film noir, is Orson Welles's *Touch of Evil* (1958), with music by Henry Mancini. Controversy surrounds the film. Welles left production at the last moment to work on another project, and the studio editors did not follow his instructions in creating the final cut. Welles later disowned the film and left a lengthy memo detailing how the film should appear. In 1998, *Touch of Evil* was restored following the intent of Welles's memo, so two versions of the film are now available—the original studio release and the Welles version. No new scenes were added in the revision, and both versions run the same length. The DVD for the latter has a longer running time only because of an opening statement about the revision and the addition of closing credits. Within the film, the order of several scenes is altered with crosscutting, but the major difference between the two versions is the absence of credits in the Welles opening scene (as in *Citizen Kane*) and the use of music at the beginning and end of the film.

The opening scene is a stunning visual accomplishment, as the first four minutes are presented without a cut. Beginning with a close-up of a time bomb, an uninterrupted crane tracking shot takes us backwards to the border between the United States and Mexico. In the studio version, this scene contains credits and a lively big-band tune by Henry Mancini. In the Welles version, the credits and most of Mancini's music are eliminated. Replacing the opening number, diegetic music emanates from a number of sources. The resultant clash of sounds is not only musical, but cultural as well. American rock music from the Senator's car radio conflicts continually with the Latin music from local bars. Musically, the sound is more cacophonous and less satisfying than Mancini's energetic beginning, but for the effect of the film, Welles's opening is more realistic and allows us to focus on the people, the location, and, of course, his extraordinary camera shot.

A variety of other popular musical styles are heard in the film. Country and western music is heard at the hotel (32:35), rock music is heard as Mexican youths abduct Susan (Janet Leigh) in a scene that suggests a gang rape (1:09:40), and loud, intense jazz accompanies Hank Quinlan's murder of Uncle Joe Grande (1:23:20). Another unusual musical sound is provided by a pianola, a piano that plays automatically through the use of a piano roll. Associated with Quinlan's old relationship to Tana (Marlene Dietrich), the instrument



FIGURE 15.2 Ramon and Susan Vargas stroll to the border with the clashing sounds of American and Mexican popular music in *Touch of Evil*.

plays the same nostalgic tune whenever Hank visits her. At the end of the film, the music returns in the underscoring as Tana gazes at Hank's body in the river. In this final moment of the film, we hear the other major musical difference between the two versions. In the studio version, Mancini's music is brought back for an obtrusive Hollywood ending. Welles allows the piano-la to linger hauntingly, and the film segues quietly into the closing credits.

Anatomy of a Murder

In 1959, director Otto Preminger wanted to incorporate the sounds of jazz in *Anatomy of a Murder*. Turning away from Hollywood composers, he hired the greatest contemporary figure in jazz to compose the entire score—Duke Ellington.

Typical of courtroom dramas, there is no music during the trial portions of this film. Ellington's work is primarily heard as source music, during transition scenes, and at the end, where it closes the film on an extremely high note. Although used sparingly, the music has a strong impact. Justified by the jazz piano playing of lawyer Paul Biegler (James Stewart), the often-intense sound contributes to the overall mood of overt sexuality in the film that introduced frank discussions of rape, semen, and "panties." In 1959, many audience members considered these topics to be too risqué for a major motion picture.

CLOSE-UP: DIRECTORS OF THE 1940s AND '50s

Delivering the Message

The postwar and Cold War years saw a number of directors exploring the dark sides of society, creating meaningful message films, and pushing the limits of the weakening Hays Code. The following are among the most prominent names.

Elia Kazan (1909–2003) is one of the most controversial figures in Hollywood. Born in Turkey to Greek parents, he came to the United States when he was four. He began acting on stage and soon established himself as one of Broadway's top directors. He directed his first feature film, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, in 1945 and won an Oscar for his portrayal of anti-Semitism in the United States in *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947). In the 1950s he directed his finest films, including *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951), *On*

the Waterfront (1954), and *East of Eden* (1955). These films used progressive musical styles and helped create a new Hollywood sound. In the '50s hearings in front of the House Un-American Activities Committee, he also admitted his Communist background and named other Hollywood figures (see Close-Up: Blacklisting, p. 198).

Stanley Kubrick (1928–1999) was born in the Bronx, New York. Entering film through his interest in photography, he began directing in the 1950s and gained attention with two well-crafted film noirs, *Killer's Kiss* (1955) and *The Killing* (1956), and an anti-war movie, *Paths of Glory* (1957). After winning an Oscar for *Spartacus* (1960), Kubrick was launched into the forefront of American directors, justifiably earning a

Continued on next page

reputation for unique creations. After his controversial *Lolita* (1962) and his comic masterwork *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), Kubrick produced his greatest work, *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1969). The use of adapted music in *2001* continued in his startling *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) and *Barry Lyndon* (1975). These films were followed by Jack Nicholson's darkest role in *The Shining* (1980), the powerful Vietnam War film *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), and his last film, the erotic *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999).

Otto Preminger (1906–1986) was born in Vienna and came to the United States in 1935 to direct a play on Broadway. He soon began working in Hollywood for Twentieth Century Fox as a producer and director. His two major films for the studio, *Laura* (1944) and *Forever Amber* (1947), were both scored by David Raksin. Gaining independence from studios in the 1950s, Preminger forged a number of powerful films that challenged the Hays Code. *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1955) deals with drug addiction, and *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959) contains frank discussions of sex and rape. Both, like *Laura*, are important films for their use of jazz in film scores.

Billy Wilder (1906–2002) was born in Austria and came to the United States in 1933, the year that

Hitler took power in Germany. Initially establishing himself as a writer, he turned to directing within a decade and earned an early reputation for hard-hitting stories, including *Double Indemnity* (1944), *The Lost Weekend* (1945), and *Sunset Boulevard* (1950). In the '50s, he changed moods and gave us some of his most endearing comedies. *Some Like It Hot* (1959) is rated by the AFI as America's greatest comedy film, and *The Apartment* (1960) garnered Wilder a remarkable three Oscars—Best Director, Best Picture, and Best Writing (Original Screenplay).

William Wyler (1902–1981), a Swiss immigrant, began his film career as a publicity writer during the silent film era and worked his way up to directing for Universal Studios and later for Sam Goldwyn. Known for his fine craftsmanship and perfectionism, he received more Oscar nominations (twelve) than any other director and won Academy Awards for Best Director and Best Picture for *Mrs. Miniver* (1942), *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946), and *Ben-Hur* (1959). He was trained as a violinist at the Paris Conservatory, and music often played a significant role in his films. During World War II, he enlisted in the Air Force and endeared himself to the American public by his filming of bombing raids.

THEME SONGS

Dimitri Tiomkin, one of Hollywood's veteran composers, introduced a major innovation to film music with his use of a country and western song in his landmark score to *High Noon* (1952). The ballad, released four months before the film, created a great sensation and quickly reached the top of the *Billboard* charts. Not only did recording sales provide a new source of income, but every playing of the tune on the radio or phonograph served as free publicity for the movie as well. *High Noon* would become the first film to win Academy Awards for both dramatic scoring and song.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Dimitri Tiomkin (1894–1979)

Born in Russia, Tiomkin was trained at the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music and played piano in Russian silent film theaters. He came to the United States in 1925 and performed on the vaudeville circuit. In 1928 he played the European premiere of George Gershwin's Piano Concerto in F, but a broken arm nearly ten years later ended his concert career. He began writing for Hollywood during the 1930s and became a dominant figure in the 1950s. He is one of Hollywood's most honored composers, with four Oscars and numerous nominations to his credit.

Important Film Scores

Lost Horizon 1937 ☒

You Can't Take It with You 1938 🎻

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington 1939 ☒

Meet John Doe 1941

It's a Wonderful Life 1946

High Noon 1952 ! !

The High and the Mighty 1954 ! ☒

Dial M for Murder 1954

Giant 1956 ☒

The Old Man and the Sea 1958 !

The Alamo 1960 ☒ ☒

The Guns of Navarone 1961 ☒

Town without Pity 1961 ☒

55 Days at Peking 1963 ☒ ☒

袆 = Best Picture Oscar

! = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination



Theme songs quickly became a rage, especially those whose titles were identical to the film that featured them. *Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing* repeated *High Noon*'s double Oscar in 1955, and popular new melodies appeared in numerous dramatic films, such as *The High and the Mighty* (1954), *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957), and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1956, discussed later). Even Hitchcock's remake of the 1934 film *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956) was altered in order to include Doris Day's Oscar-winning hit song "Que Será, Será."

High Noon

Considered by some to be Hollywood's greatest western, *High Noon* is a classic showdown between good and evil. The film lacks the standard features of westerns at the time: there are no Indians, no scenes of the wide-open West, and relatively little violence. The essence of the drama is not the showdown itself, but the tensions leading up to the climax. Will Kane (Gary Cooper), having just resigned as marshal (thus becoming Citizen Kane), is leaving town with his Quaker bride Amy Fowler (Grace Kelly). News arrives that Frank Miller (Ian MacDonald), a man Kane sent to prison, is arriving in town on the noon train.



FIGURE 15.3 Will and Amy wed with the ever-present clock in the background in *High Noon*.

Miller intends to rejoin his gang, seek revenge against Will, and retake control of the town.

Will decides to remain and help the town; he expects his friends and the community to assist, but as time ticks toward noon, his wife, his ex-lover, his deputy, his friends, and virtually everyone in the town abandons him. (Part of the fascination with this film is that it is set in real time, as opposed to reel time.) Most compelling is the scene in the church, in which good Christians debate what to do. A number want to help, but they become resigned to inaction because the majority feels that the problem will disappear if nothing is done. The symbolic parallel to the attitudes of appeasement toward Hitler's Germany is clear,

but the drama can also be seen as representing the silence of Hollywood during the onslaught of the Congressional hearings on communism. The sacrificial death of one man was seen as a reasonable price for the security of their society.

VIEWER GUIDE 15.1

High Noon: High Noon

Composer: Dimitri Tiomkin



Timing

DVD: Artisan 53486 (1:08:00-1:17:00)

Setting

Will Kane (Gary Cooper) has unsuccessfully tried to obtain help from his friends and other town people in order to fight Frank Miller (Ian MacDonald) and his gang, who are arriving at noon. Even his bride (Grace Kelly) is going to the train station to leave town. Realizing that he will likely be killed in the ensuing battle, Kane draws up a final will and testament.

Key Points

- Ticking motive creates tension during the montage
- Leitmotifs are drawn from the opening song
- Orchestra underscores tension and action
- Silence suggests Will's isolation
- Colorful orchestrations

Principal Themes

Example 15.1 Will and Amy



Example 15.2 Frank Miller



PLOT	MUSIC
Will begins writing.	At first, only the clock ticking, but then music starts, synchronized with the clock.
Will looks at the clock at two minutes till noon. A montage shows the clock, train, church, saloon, the empty town, individuals waiting, and finally, Frank's chair.	The musical pulse is sustained throughout, synchronized with the clock's pendulum. Frank's motive is played repeatedly, and the music grows in volume and dissonance until the train whistle.
Will finishes, releases a prisoner, and goes outside. He stands alone and watches Amy and Helen go to the train station on a wagon.	No music
Frank arrives and meets his gang. He sees Helen leaving. Putting on his gun, he leads his gang toward town.	Music returns. The low brass help establish a menacing mood. Frank's motive appears and mixes briefly with Helen's.
Will stands waiting, and a tracking shot shows his complete isolation.	An eerie setting of Will and Amy's motive, accompanied by the piano and string harmonics, creates a foreboding mood.
The adversaries march toward their inevitable encounter.	A cymbal crash breaks the mood, leading into a menacing march with a pounding pulse in the piano.
Ben Miller smashes a window, alerting Will to their presence. Will hides until they pass, calls to them, and shoots Ben Miller. The fight has begun.	The music suddenly becomes quieter, suggesting Will's hiding. Just before the fight, both of the principal motives are heard.
Amy hears the gunshot and runs from the train. She sees a dead body in the street and is relieved that it is not Will's.	After a brief statement of Frank's motive, Will and Amy's theme is played with great urgency. Tiomkin also mixes in the sound of the leaving train with the snare drums. Tension builds with the return of Frank's motive as Amy sees the body, but the tension releases when she sees who it is.



The score for *High Noon* centers on Tiomkin's ballad "Do Not Forsake Me," sung by the well-known country and western singer Tex Ritter. During the opening credits, Tiomkin uses the ballad instead of an orchestra. This is the only

time that the tune is heard in its entirety, and the melody unfolds in a standard a-a'-b-a' form. The distinctive parts are the opening phrase ("Do not forsake me, oh my darlin'"), the contrasting b phrase ("Oh, to be torn 'tweenst love and duty"), and the closing cadence ("Until I shoot Frank Miller dead").

During the film, Ritter sings portions of the ballad seven times. The sound of the solo voice with its sparse accompaniment serves as a constant reminder of the marshal's isolation. Each entrance of the voice coincides with a vision of Will being abandoned, beginning with his wife's departure. Only in the final moment, after his wife has courageously compromised her religious beliefs by shooting a man in order to save her husband, do we see Will and Amy together during the song. Eschewing the typical Hollywood ending, the quiet fading of the song as the two ride out of town reinforces the seriousness of the drama.

Tiomkin's ballad is well integrated into the orchestral underscoring. There are four principal themes in the film, two of which are derived from the song. Will and Amy's theme is taken from the first phrase (see [EXAMPLE 15.1](#)). For Frank Miller and his gang, Tiomkin uses the b phrase, with its repetitive, menacing character (see [EXAMPLE 15.2](#)). Helen (Katy Jurado), the former girlfriend of both Will and Frank Miller, has an independent theme with a strong Spanish flavor. Perhaps the most interesting motive is also the simplest: the ticking motive for the clock. The drama is set against the tension created by the passing of time. Clocks are conspicuous in the background of many of the interior shots, and the frequent close-ups of clocks are accompanied by Tiomkin's pulsating motive.

The finest musical moment in the film occurs just before the climax (see [VG15.1](#)). During the last two minutes before noon, Kane writes out his last will and testament. A montage, showing the variety of characters in the drama, is synchronized with the music; the images change every measure (four beats). Thirty measures, occupying 120 seconds, tighten the tension with the incessant ticking pulse and Frank's menacing motive. The mounting intensity peaks as we look at the chair where the convicted Frank Miller had vowed to take revenge, and the shrill whistle of the arriving train diverts us from the musical climax.

The silence that follows is unsettling. Once Will walks into the street, the audience expects to hear Tex Ritter's voice again, but now there is no sound. Finally breaking the silence is the noise of the wagon taking Amy and Helen to the train station. Kane's isolation is complete. After showing Frank's arrival, the film returns to Will's image in a remarkable shot. Pulling backward and up, the camera reveals Will standing alone in an empty town. Tiomkin underscores the eeriness of the solitary figure with a colorful setting of the Will and Amy motive, complete with string harmonics, piano, and bells.

Tiomkin effectively captures the menacing character of Frank Miller and his gang in a march that precedes the initial confrontation. The pounding piano, low brass, and percussion evoke the sound of Shostakovich, the prominent composer from Tiomkin's native country (see Chapter 12). Following the shooting of Frank's brother Ben, Tiomkin reprises the Will and Amy motive as Amy leaves the train. By now, the audience associates this theme with the words "Do not forsake me, oh my darlin'" and the motive builds anxiously as Amy runs to rejoin her husband. Mixed into the background is a musical suggestion of the departing train heard in the accelerating snare drum.

ROCK AND ROLL

Rock and roll exploded upon the popular music scene in the mid-1950s. The most distinctive elements of the new sound were the drummer's hard accents on beats two and four of a measure and the inclusion of electronically amplified guitars. The rock era began in earnest in 1955 when Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" became the first rock tune to top *Billboard*'s hit chart, a position it maintained for eight weeks. *Billboard*, a trade magazine founded in 1894, began publishing its "Music Popularity Chart" in 1940 with its first number-one song, Frank Sinatra's "I'll Never Smile Again." The dominant performers through the next fifteen years included Bing Crosby, Perry Como, Patti Page, and the Andrews Sisters. But after 1955, rock music was king. By the end of the decade, the foundations of classic rock had been laid by a number of legendary performers, including Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, Jerry Lee Lewis, Roy Orbison, Fats Domino, and Little Richard.

Blackboard Jungle

The rock phenomenon was fueled in part by Hollywood movies: "Rock Around the Clock" was released in 1954 with only moderate success, but it was propelled to the top of the charts when it appeared in *The Blackboard Jungle* (1955), a film that deals with juvenile delinquency. Haley's rendition of the song is heard only during the opening and closing credits, but the melody also appears in the underscoring during a savage attack on two teachers by teenage hoodlums (36:55). For adults, the association of rock music with rebellious youth was clear, but teenagers quickly adopted this exciting new kind of music.



FIGURE 15.4 New teacher Richard Dadier (Glenn Ford) arrives at a school that literally swings to "Rock Around the Clock" in *Blackboard Jungle*.

Hollywood saw the financial potential of the new genre and turned to rock music to lure younger audiences to the movies. Stars of rock and roll, both white and black, soon appeared on the screen. Two films filled with rock came out in 1956. Fats Domino, the Platters, and Little Richard perform in *The Girl Can't Help It*, in which curvaceous Jayne Mansfield sings "Rock Around the Rock Pile." Columbia Pictures' *Rock Around the Clock* features not only Bill Haley and the Comets, but also the Platters and Freddy Bell and His Bellboys. By the end of the 1950s, a rebellious young rock star had also become a movie star. *Love Me Tender* (1956), *Jailhouse Rock* (1957), and too many others to name brought Hollywood stardom to Elvis Presley.

OLDER POPULAR STYLES

The previous examples have illustrated the newer types of jazz and the emergence of country and western and rock and roll music in films of the 1950s. More traditional types of popular music were also common, as can be seen in Best Picture-winner *Around the World in 80 Days* and in one of Hollywood's funniest comedies, *Some Like It Hot*.

Around the World in 80 Days

Around the World in 80 Days (1956), shot in color with Todd-AO and recorded with stereophonic sound, is a travelogue with a narrative. Built on an episodic plot—Phileas Fogg wagers that he can, with the assistance of his servant Passepartout, travel around the world in eighty days—the film takes us on an exuberant tour of some of the world's most scenic spots. Accompanying the beautiful wide-screen effects is a colorful and tuneful score by Victor Young, one of Hollywood's finest composers.

Each area of the world is accompanied by appropriate music, either using ethnic instruments or evoking Western stereotypes of regional styles. Quotations of well-known tunes suggest locations, such as "Rule Britannia" for Great Britain, "Auprès de ma blonde" for France, and numerous familiar melodies for the United States, such as "Yankee Doodle" and "Oh! Susanna." The most memorable music in the score is the waltz tune composed for the film, "Around the World in 80 Days." Typical of the treatment of popular melodies



FIGURE 15.5 The balloon glides over Paris to the melody of "Around the World in 80 Days."

in film scores, the tune is initially heard in an extended travel montage in which a balloon soars over French locales (30:20). Later, the melody is treated as the love theme between Fogg and a princess from India, played by Shirley MacLaine. Lacking opening credits, the film is one of the earliest to include lengthy closing credits that last for over six minutes, allowing Young the opportunity to reprise numerous musical highlights, including the waltz. Although the scoring to *Around the World in 80 Days* is primarily in the tradition of the Golden Age, its inclusion of a dominant popular tune points to the future of epic film scores.

Some Like It Hot

Some Like It Hot (1959), rated by the American Film Institute as America's greatest comedy, is a hilarious cross-dressing farce. As in many great comedies, music plays a significant role. Hollywood veteran composer Adolph Deutsch, who received three Oscars for his adaptations of Broadway musicals, was an excellent choice for this film. In the story, two musicians, Joe (Tony Curtis) and Jerry (Jack Lemmon), don women's apparel and join an all-women jazz band in order to escape execution by the Chicago gangster Spats Columbo. The featured soloist of the band, Sugar, is played by Hollywood's foremost sex symbol, Marilyn Monroe.

Portions of the film are structured like a musical. Monroe performs three period-appropriate songs: "Runnin' Wild" from 1922 (31:10), "I Wanna Be Loved by You" from 1928 (1:09:15), and "I'm Thru with Love" from 1931 (1:55:35). The melodies for the first two are used to create a modest medley for the opening credits. The last of the songs, heard during the climax of the plot (see VG 15.2), exhibits the standard a-a'-b-a" chorus structure of the 1930s.

Deutsch's underscoring serves two opposing roles—to make the story seem serious and to underline the humor. To make the plot appear plausible, Deutsch calls upon traditional symphonic scoring to support the perceived danger from Spats and his gang, just as one would hear in a serious drama. But elsewhere, Deutsch freely incorporates popular music to underscore the fun, including a growling muted trumpet for several of Marilyn's steamy appearances and a scurrying saxophone line for Joe and Jerry's narrow escapes. One of the film's highlights is a crosscut between two dates; Joe (as a millionaire with the voice of Cary Grant) shares a romantic evening with Sugar, and Jerry (as Daphne) has gone dancing with the actual millionaire Osgood. Each pair has their own music;



FIGURE 15.6 Daphne and Osgood dance to "La Cumparsita" in *Some Like It Hot*.

VIEWER GUIDE 15.2

Some Like It Hot: Conclusion

Composer: Adolph Deutsch



Timing

DVD: MGM 1001738 (1:54:40–2:01:00)

Setting

Joe (Tony Curtis) and Jerry (Jack Lemmon) witness the Saint Valentine's Day Massacre masterminded by Spats. They flee for their lives. The only way to get out of Chicago without being noticed is to dress as women (now Josephine and Daphne) and join an all-female band heading to Florida. On the train ride, they encounter Sugar (Marilyn Monroe), the lead singer of the band. Joe falls in love with Sugar, but in order to woo her, he has to assume a second disguise, as a millionaire. As part of the deception, "Daphne" goes on a date with a real millionaire name Osgood (Joe E. Brown) so that Joe can have a romantic evening on Osgood's yacht with Sugar. All seems well afterward, but Spats arrives at their hotel with his gang. Once again, Joe and Jerry need to run, leaving poor Sugar behind.

Key Points

- A big band playing the action music
- Marilyn Monroe singing "I'm Through with Love"
- The romantic themes for both couples heard at the end of the film

Principal Themes

Example 15.3 Joe and Sugar: "Park Avenue Fantasy," Matty Malneck and Frank Signorelli (1935), better known as "Stairway to the Stars"

Example 15.4 Daphne and Osgood: "La Cumparsita," Gerardo Matos Rodriguez (1916)

PLOT	MUSIC
Joe and Jerry are chased upstairs.	The big band plays a series of loud chords.
The elevator descends, and Josephine and Daphne exit.	The strings sustain a high pitch and then descend with the elevator movement. No music for the exit.
Members of the gang do not recognize the boys, but say they have all possible escape routes covered. Joe convinces Jerry that they need Osgood's yacht.	Source music, a big band dance, emanates from the Peacock Room.
Joe hears Sugar singing and goes into the Peacock Room.	Sugar sings the chorus of "I'm Through with Love."
Joe, still dressed as Josephine, kisses Sugar and then tries to comfort her. Chased by the gangsters, he races upstairs.	The band plays the break in the song. The music stops after the kiss.
Sugar realizes that Josephine is Joe.	Joe and Sugar theme is played, primarily in the strings.
Joe and Jerry run from the gang.	The scurrying chase music returns with a big-band sound.
The dead body of Spats is wheeled out.	The music becomes more serious, and the low brass play <i>Dies irae</i> .
Joe and Jerry run out from under the gurney and head outside where Osgood is waiting. Sugar follows on a bicycle.	Chase music returns.
Joe tries to convince Sugar that he is no good for her, but to no avail.	Joe and Sugar theme is played, primarily in the strings.
Jerry tries to convince Osgood that they cannot get married, but to no avail.	Daphne and Osgood theme is played quietly and hesitantly. When Jerry says that he cannot have children, the solo violin plays the tune sympathetically. At the end, the tune comes to its emphatic close.

Joe and Sugar listen to a lush arrangement of "Stairway to the Stars" (1935), and the two dancers struggle over who should lead as they tango to "La Cumparsita" (1916).

The classic ending of the film (see VG 15.2) is filled with humor—Joe and Jerry are able to change into Josephine and Daphne in an instant, Josephine kisses Sugar and then runs up the stairs in an unladylike manner, the guys hide under the gurney of the murdered Spats, and the two couples are reunited in a motorboat headed to the yacht. The music contributes greatly to the humor. The chase sequences are accompanied with scurrying and action sounds from a big band, the body of Spats brings out *Dies irae* (the

Gregorian chant for the Mass for the dead, **EXAMPLE 8.9**), and the two musical numbers from their double date sound for each couple as they ride away safely in the boat.

MUSICALS

Entering the 1950s, Hollywood, and specifically MGM under the leadership of Arthur Freed, continued to produce a large number of elaborate, high-quality musicals. Although the number would diminish toward the end of the decade, the golden age of Hollywood musicals would extend into the 1960s. Broadway adaptations were common in the 1950s, but the three most highly acclaimed musicals of the decade were original productions: *An American in Paris* (1951), *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), and *Gigi* (1958).

An American in Paris contains a dazzling score by George Gershwin that features several previously composed songs by Gershwin and excerpts from his 1928 symphonic poem, *An American in Paris*. The musical highlights of the film include several extended dance sequences and a performance of the third movement of Gershwin's Piano Concerto in F (1:05:30), with a daydreaming Oscar Levant humorously playing the piano solo, conducting the orchestra, playing violin and percussion, and also leading the bravos at the end. *An American in Paris* became only the second musical to win an Academy Award for Best Picture; *Broadway Melody* (1929) was the first, and seven years later, *Gigi* would become the third.

Singin' in the Rain

Although receiving relatively little Academy recognition, *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) is the best movie musical of the decade and one of the all-time great American films. The American Film Institute places it as number one on its lists of America's Greatest Movie Musicals (just ahead of *The Wizard of Oz*). The impetus for this film came from producer Arthur Freed. Having just completed a catalog of songs in MGM's collection that were composed by Nacio Herb Brown with lyrics by himself, Freed asked writers Adolph Green and Betty Comden to create a movie using these tunes from ten or twenty years ago. The result is a humorous tale of Hollywood during the transition from the silent film era to sound. Not only are the situations based on actual problems faced during that time—such as microphone placement, ridiculous dialogue, and soundproof booths for the camera—specific silent film scenes are also mimicked, and the characters of Roscoe Dexter and R. F. Simpson are modeled after Busby Berkeley and Arthur Freed.

Musical numbers account for well over half of this 103-minute film. Nacio Herb Brown composed most of the songs during the late 1920s and '30s. Several of them, such as the title song, appeared in multiple films prior to *Singin' in the Rain*. Dance sequences extend many of the songs. Donald O'Connor's "Make 'em Laugh" (27:40) and Kelly's "Singin' in the Rain" (1:07:50) are justifiably considered to be among the greatest dance routines in all of film, and "Good Morning, Good Morning" features an energized romp by the trio of stars (1:01:45). A relatively brief *pas de deux* follows "You Were Meant for Me" (44:15), but the dancing highlight is the thirteen-minute "Gotta Dance" segment (1:15:30). This complete interruption of the story, highlighted by a *grand pas de deux* featuring Gene Kelly and Cyd Charisse, is a remarkable artistic achievement. Unheralded in most discussions of this film is the excellent orchestral score by Lennie Hayton.



FIGURE 15.7 Gene Kelly sings and dances in *Singin' in the Rain*.

Animated Musicals

The Walt Disney Studios, which had taken a break during the war, created another popular series of animated musicals beginning in 1950 with *Cinderella*. In keeping with the Disney tradition, music plays an important role in the success of the film, as *Cinderella* received two Academy nominations—for Best Scoring of a Musical Picture and Best Song ("Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo"). As shown in TABLE 15.1, Disney continued to create outstanding animated features throughout the decade. The musical highlights of this series are the song-filled *Alice in Wonderland*, and *Sleeping Beauty*, with substantial music adapted from Tchaikovsky's ballet of the same name.

TRAILER

The early 1950s witnessed a rapid change in the sounds of popular music. During that time, the dominance

TABLE 15.1 Major Disney animated features from the 1950s

YEAR	ANIMATED FEATURE	COMPOSER	SCORE	SONG
1950	<i>Cinderella</i>	Oliver Wallace and Paul Smith	☒	☒
1951	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i>	Wallace		☒
1953	<i>Peter Pan</i>	Wallace		
1955	<i>Lady and the Tramp</i>	Wallace		
1959	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i>	George Bruns		☒

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination

of jazz styles from the previous decade was challenged by the sensational popularity of rock and roll. Film music benefited greatly from this expanding array of musical styles. Musicals tended to retain the popular styles of earlier decades, but a significant number of films began to incorporate the newer styles of popular music as Hollywood headed into the 1960s.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

Billboard Top 40	Haley, Bill	rock and roll
Brown, Nacio Herb	Hayton, Lennie	Young, Victor
country and western	Mancini, Henry	
Deutsch, Adolph	North, Alex	
Ellington, Duke	Ritter, Tex	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Discuss the various types of popular music in the traditions of Western music. Consider the various qualities that they share in common, such as their frequent links to songs and dances. How are the various styles of jazz and rock music similar to and different from earlier types of popular music?
2. Watch the "Stella" scene from *A Streetcar Named Desire* (40:15) and discuss the style and impact of the music.
3. Compare the two openings of *Touch of Evil*, the studio version and Welles's original. Both are included in the 50th Anniversary Edition DVDs, Universal 61103474.
4. Listen to Duke Ellington's music for the opening credits of *Anatomy of a Murder*. Discuss the moods it brings to the movie.
5. After listening to "Do Not Forsake Me," discuss other well-known theme songs. Where do these songs occur in the movie and what functions do they serve?
6. What mood does "Rock Around the Clock" set during the opening scene of *Blackboard Jungle*? Was that the intention of the filmmakers?
7. Watch all or portions of *Around the World in 80 Days*. How does Young musically depict each setting in the story?
8. Watch *Some Like It Hot* in its entirety. Discuss how Deutsch contributes humor to the story and how he also adds dramatic tension when needed.
9. Discuss the traditional features of *Singin' in the Rain*. What is innovative about the film and its music and dance?
10. What is your favorite Disney film from the 1950s? Does the music play a role in your choice?

1948	<i>Bicycle Thieves</i>	1956	<i>La strada</i>
	<i>Hamlet</i>	1957	<i>The Bridge on the River Kwai</i>
	<i>The Red Shoes</i>		<i>The Seventh Seal</i>
1949	<i>The Third Man</i>		<i>Wild Strawberries</i>
1950	<i>La ronde</i>	1958	<i>Elevator to the Gallows</i>
	<i>Rashômon</i>	1959	<i>Black Orpheus</i>
1954	<i>Seven Samurai</i>		

The Revitalization of International Filmmaking

16



Gelsomina plays the drum during Zampanò's strongman act in *La strada*.

Following World War II, the traditional film centers in Europe quickly began to rebuild their industries. Once again, they found themselves lagging behind Hollywood technologically and commercially, but the war and postwar

experiences provided material for a rich variety of dramas and inspired many to create a greater sense of reality. By the late 1950s, international filmmaking had achieved new heights in quality and influence. France once again took center stage, but international attention soon focused on three major new auteurs, Federico Fellini in Italy, Ingmar Bergman in Sweden, and Akira Kurosawa in Japan. Also significant at this time were burgeoning schools of filmmaking in India and in countries south of the US border.

ITALY

Essentially dormant since 1913, Italian filmmaking boldly asserted itself immediately following the end of the Nazi occupation. Rejecting the happy endings of Hollywood plots, Italians created a new style termed **neorealism**, characterized by visions of people, society, locations, and situations as they really are, not as we would like to envision them. The foremost product of this movement is Vittorio De Sica's *Ladri di biciclette* (*Bicycle Thieves*, 1948), which is recognized as one of the greatest films of all time. Focusing on ordinary people and using amateur actors, this simple story unfolds in the streets of Rome against the backdrop of postwar economical and social problems.

Bicycle Thieves

Much of this film centers on Antonio and his boy Bruno. Desperate to support his wife and family, Antonio accepts a job offer that requires a bicycle. In exchange for some cherished family items, he retrieves his bicycle from a pawnshop and happily goes to work. Within the first day, someone steals his bike. Accompanied by Bruno, Antonio desperately searches for his property and for the thief through the streets of Rome. Ultimately, he is unsuccessful, and, in despair, he becomes what he detests—a bicycle thief (1:24:30). He begins to ride off with someone else's bike but is caught and mishandled by an angry group of men. Although he is allowed to go free, the crushing of his spirit and his humiliation in front of his son close the film in a somber mood.



FIGURE 16.1 A lament plays at the end of *Bicycle Thieves*, as Bruno takes the hand of his devastated father.

Alessandro Cicognini composed a fairly substantial score for the film. The music sounds different, and functions differently, than that for typical Hollywood films. The musical ensemble is smaller, and the woodwinds include a saxophone, an instrument rarely heard in American films at that time outside of jazz. The individual cues create general moods and do not necessarily reflect the action or drama on the screen. The heart of the score is a recurring lament written in the operatic style of Giacomo Puccini. At the beginning of the narrative, the melody is associated with the desperate lives of the unemployed in postwar Rome. When every seemingly good break for Antonio is quickly followed by failure, Cicognini's theme plays sorrowfully in the background, most notably during Antonio's slow walk home at the end of the film (1:26:45). The recurrence of this theme sets a tragic mood for the death of a man's hopes and of a society that is unable to break out of the poverty cycle.

La strada

Italian filmmaking continued to make an impact on world cinema during the 1950s, led by the masterful works of Federico Fellini. *La strada* (*The Road*) appeared in the United States in 1956, when it won the first Oscar in a new category, Best Foreign Language Film. Stemming from neorealism, *La strada* centers on the relationship between strongman Zampanò (Anthony Quinn) and his purchased assistant Gelsomina (Giulietta Masina), a diminutive, childlike young woman who her mother describes as being "a little strange." Together, they travel through the heart of Italy encountering people in villages, ceremonies, and public entertainments. Although treated harshly, Gelsomina enjoys being a performer and her association with a celebrity.

Nino Rota, Fellini's lifelong musical collaborator, composed a main theme for *La strada* that is haunting, much like the principal character herself. Derived from the Larghetto of Dvořák's Serenade, Opus 22, the melody became a national sensation in Italy. Gelsomina's theme is initially heard with the opening title, but she later sings the tune as well (34:15). Near the end of the film, Zampanò hears someone else singing the melody (1:39:35), and then learns that Gelsomina has died. The theme returns in the score as he sits on a beach (reminiscent of where he first met her) and laments.



FIGURE 16.2 Zampanò plays the trumpet for Gelsomina in *La strada*.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Nino Rota (1911–1979)

A child prodigy, Rota established an international reputation as a composer of chamber music, concertos, and operas before he began composing for films. His studies in the United States at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia introduced him to the popular world of Gershwin, and his music easily flows between European and American and classical and popular styles. He scored over one hundred fifty films and is best known in the United States as the composer for *The Godfather*.

Important Film Scores

La strada 1954

Romeo and Juliet 1968

Le notti di Cabiria 1957

The Godfather 1972

La dolce vita 1960

The Godfather: Part II 1972

8½ 1963

= Best Picture Oscar

= Best Music Oscar



GREAT BRITAIN

After their success with *Henry V* (see Chapter 12), Sir Laurence Olivier and William Walton collaborated on another Shakespeare play, *Hamlet* (1948). In this adaptation, Olivier reduced *Hamlet* from a four-hour drama to a two-and-a-half-hour, black-and-white film. The action was filmed in a studio, not on stage, and interior monologue sometimes replaced spoken soliloquies. *Hamlet* received seven Academy nominations and won the Oscar for Best Picture, becoming the first foreign film to win that coveted award. Hollywood was stunned, and the major studios threatened to pull out their support of the award ceremonies in the future. No British film was nominated for Best Picture in 1949, despite the appearance of the highly acclaimed *The Third Man*.

For the Oscar-nominated music to *Hamlet*, Walton assigned musical motives to characters and judiciously underscored some of the dialogue and soliloquies, including Hamlet's famous "To be or not to be" (1:02:40), with appropriate music. One of the most fascinating musical settings is for the "play within the play." Walton scores the accompaniment to sound like

Renaissance dance music, but effortlessly moves into orchestral scoring when the King reacts to the stage depiction of his murderous deed (1:16:15). Walton's brooding music did not win the Oscar in 1948; it went instead to an energetic score for *The Red Shoes* by Walton's compatriot Brian Easdale.

The Red Shoes

This classic ballet film directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger features Moira Shearer, a charismatic British ballerina who earned international acclaim as a dancer and actress. She plays the role of Victoria Page, a rising ballet star under the guidance of ballet producer Boris Lermontov (Anton Walbrook). Boris's character is modeled after Sergei Diaghilev, the impresario for the famous Ballets Russes. Reinforcing this connection, Léonide Massine, who was a choreographer for Diaghilev and the successor to the company's most famous star, Vaslav Nijinsky, plays the role of Grischa Ljubov, Lermontov's principal choreographer. The film features dance scenes with excerpts from several traditional ballets and an extended, fifteen-minute performance of a new ballet entitled, like the movie, *The Red Shoes* (1:06:10). Films involving ballet were popular at this time in Great Britain and in the United States. In the 1950s, movies such as *An American in Paris*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *Carousel*, and *Oklahoma!* contained substantial ballet scenes.

A composer of music for film, stage dramas, and opera, Brian Easdale employed a contemporary musical idiom in his Oscar-winning music for the ballet *The Red Shoes*, which successfully captures the idealistic, bold compositional style of a young composer and intensifies the strong emotions of the principal characters. Two adjacent scenes encapsulate the use of music in the film. Initially, we observe Victoria and Julian contentedly in love (1:35:00). Easdale's cue begins with pulsating strings (perhaps suggesting the view of the ocean), and a gentle French horn solo enters with a melody that serves as the love theme for this scene (see [EXAMPLE 16.1](#)). It is set in triple meter (sounding somewhat like a waltz), but with its wide leaps and extended range, this melody is not your typical Hollywood love theme. The musical setting gives the moment an intimacy that is appropriate for the two artists who are in love. The theme is heard twice more during the scene, once played by the woodwinds and then again by the French horn.



FIGURE 16.3 *The Red Shoes* ballet

Example 16.1 Love theme from *The Red Shoes*



In the next scene, the music of the ballet rehearsal matches the inner rage of Boris, who wants to possess his great ballerinas both emotionally and professionally. The *Swan Lake* theme is given in its two versions, the serene “White Swan” statement in the oboe, and the dark “Black Swan” repetition in the low brass. With the former, we see the two lovers, and with the latter, we see Boris brimming with rage.

These segments establish the essential dilemma that Victoria has to face. She must choose between two men—one who is linked to her heart, and the other to her ambition and career. At this point, we can see this is not just a story about a ballerina, but about a decision facing many women. Unable to choose, Victoria tragically ends her life, a conclusion that was foretold in the stories of both *Swan Lake* and the ballet *The Red Shoes*.

The Third Man

In 1999, the British Film Institute (BFI) listed *The Red Shoes* as the ninth greatest British film of all time. Number one on that list is *The Third Man*. Directed by Carol Reed, the film teams *Citizen Kane* actors Joseph Cotten and Orson Welles. Whether Welles assisted in directing is not clear, but Reed did work with David O. Selznick, the producer of *Gone with the Wind*. Postwar Vienna is the setting for this British film noir. Much of it was shot on location, and the background visions of the rubble from bombings bring a somber sense of realism to the screen. Reed adds to this mood by using harsh lighting, nighttime settings, and Dutch (tilted) camera angles. Running counter to the dark visual tone and plot is a pervasive black humor, which is apparent in the dialogue and some of the incidents.

The physical wreckage of the city has parallels in the human wreckage of the story. Cotten plays Holly Martins, an American writer of western novels. He has come to Vienna with a work offer from his best friend, Harry Lime (Orson Welles). Once he arrives, he learns that Harry has been killed; unhappy with the official attitudes toward his death, Holly begins to investigate on his own. Subsequently he learns from the police that his friend profited from selling watered-down penicillin that has caused the death of many, including children. Holly also discovers that there was a third man present when Harry was killed, not mentioned in the official account of the incident. During this search for an answer, Holly falls in love with Anna (Alida Valli), Harry’s lover.

VIEWER GUIDE 16.1

The Third Man: Identity Revealed

Composer: Anton Karas



Timing

DVD: Janus TH1060 (1:00:10-1:07:40)

Setting

Holly has come to Vienna to work with his friend Harry Lime. He discovers that Harry is dead and is later told that Harry was illegally profiting from the black market. Holly has also learned that a mysterious third man was present at Harry's death. Having fallen in love with Anna, Harry's lover, he goes to her apartment after having too much to drink.

Key Points

- Music by zither only
- Popular musical style emphasizing melody
- Main theme is the leitmotiv for Harry, the third man

Principal Theme

Example 16.2 *The Third Man (Harry)*

A musical score in common time (C) featuring a treble clef (G-clef). The melody consists of eighth-note patterns primarily in the upper register of the zither. The notes are grouped by vertical bar lines, and the rhythm is steady, creating a sense of quiet intensity.

PLOT	MUSIC
Holly wakes Anna, and they talk in her apartment. He plays with the disinterested cat.	The zither plays a quiet melody in the upper register.
The cat jumps out the window, and the discussion turns toward the new information that Harry was crooked.	The same melody continues, but in a lower register.
The camera gives us an outside view where a man hides in a doorway. The cat finds him and plays with his shoes.	The music becomes louder and repetitive. A fragment of the Third Man theme is played. The opening melody returns.
We return to Anna and Holly. They talk of Harry and love.	The melody continues more quietly.
Holly walks home in the streets. He notices the cat and someone in the dark.	A portion of the Third Man theme
Holly calls to the mysterious man.	No music

Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
A light shines from a window, and we see Harry's face. Holly calls to Harry.	The opening of the <i>Third Man</i> theme
In the dark, Harry disappears. Holly follows the sound of footsteps.	No music
Holly arrives at a plaza, and Harry is nowhere to be seen. Holly throws water on his face from a fountain.	The <i>Third Man</i> theme begins. The music gets louder when Holly flicks the water in frustration.

The scene described in [VIEWER GUIDE 16.1](#) is pivotal to the story, as Holly discovers that the third man is actually Harry. (The man that was buried was a substitute victim.) Ultimately, Holly aids the police in the hunt for Harry and will end up shooting his friend in the sewers of Vienna. At the film's conclusion, Holly is left disillusioned with his friend and rejected by Anna for his role in Harry's death. In the truest tradition of Hollywood film noir, the ending is both unhappy and ambiguous.

Anton Karas composed and played the haunting music for this film on a zither, a plucked or hammered many-stringed instrument often used to perform popular music in Central Europe. As in *Laura*, the underscoring is the same type of music that is used as source music (note that the zither even accompanies a play, 18:20). In this film, unlike *Laura*, the music stems from a single instrument. Several Hollywood films followed suit in the next few years and employed "ethnic" instruments, such as a guitar for depicting regions south of the American border. Karas's main theme (see [EXAMPLE 16.2](#)), which generally represents the third man in the film (Harry Lime), became a major hit and catapulted the composer-performer into international fame.

Despite the limitation of a single instrument for producing the music, the score fills a variety of supporting roles. Most of the cues are melodic with a dance-like accompaniment. There are occasional interactions with the plot, largely through dynamic changes and the use of non-tuneful repetitive figures. Two such moments occur in the scene outlined in Viewer Guide 16.1, the cat's discovery of Harry and Holly's frustrated flick of water when he cannot find his old friend. There is also a suggestion of leitmotifs, with diverse tunes signifying Harry and Anna. For the most part, the music is cheerful in nature, which



FIGURE 16.4 A zither, used in *The Third Man*

supports the underlying tone of black humor. The contrast between cheerful music and the images adds greatly to the noir story of a decadent postwar Vienna still lying in rubble from the war.

The Bridge on the River Kwai

The excellence of British filmmaking continued through the 1950s. One of the decade's most critically acclaimed movies is *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957), the winner of seven Oscars, including Best Picture, Best Director for David Lean, and Best Score for Malcolm Arnold, a prominent British concert composer. The film features a single memorable tune known as the "Colonel Bogey March." Ironically, although Arnold won the Oscar largely on the strength of this tune, he did not compose it. The original melody was a march from 1914 written by Fredrick Joseph Ricketts under the pen name Kenneth J. Alford. Arnold fleshed it out and provided it with a sensational setting, beginning with whistling and then adding the sounds of a band and a newly composed countermelody (7:30). The added winds and percussion are not only musically satisfying, but also suggest the pride of the British, who are imagining a formal British parade while they march in a stark Japanese prison camp.

Filmed on location in Sri Lanka in CinemaScope, the film would seem to invite extensive underscoring with broad, lyrical melodies. But the score seldom settles into a lush style, and the few combinations of beautiful scenery and music are brief, such as when Shears, an escaped American prisoner, boats down the river (58:10). The most extended lyrical statement occurs when the two adversaries admire the completed bridge at sunset (2:05:30). For the most part, music is used sparingly, and many cues use dissonant harmonies in keeping with a story about the futility of war.

CLOSE-UP: MAJOR INTERNATIONAL DIRECTORS

The growth of postwar international film centers was due in part to a handful of creative directors who became a leading figure in their country and gained international recognition for their works. The following are among those who rose to prominence in either the late 1940s or the 1950s.

Ingmar Bergman (1918–2007), Sweden's foremost film director, had extensive credits in film, television, and theater. Bergman began as a writer and started

directing at midcentury. Bergman gained international recognition with a Palme d'Or nomination for *Smiles of a Summer Night* (1955). He followed this with two of his best-known films, *The Seventh Seal* and *Wild Strawberries*, both from 1957. The former was again nominated for the Palme d'Or and won the Jury Prize at Cannes. The latter was one of his five Oscar nominations as Best Writer. He was also nominated twice as Best Director. Among his other major works

Continued on next page

are *Persona* (1966), *Cries and Whispers* (1972), *Autumn Sonata* (1978), and *Fanny and Alexander* (1982). Bergman notably worked with an outstanding troupe of actors, including Max van Sydow and Liv Ullman. Erik Nordgren provided a variety of musical styles for Bergman's films into the 1960s.

Federico Fellini (1920–1993), like Bergman, entered the film industry as a writer, earning an Oscar nomination for co-writing Rossellini's *Roma città aperta* (*Rome, Open City*; 1945). He would eventually earn eight nominations for writing and four for directing. In 1993 he received the Honorary Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Academy. Three of his films also won Oscars as Best Foreign Film—*La strada* (1954), *Le notti di Cabiria* (*The Nights of Cabiria*; 1957), and *8½* (1963). *La dolce vita* (*The Sweet Life*, 1960) won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival, and other internationally recognized films include *Giulietta degli spiriti* (*Juliet of the Spirits*; 1965), *Fellini Satyricon* (1969), and *Amarcord* (1973). For all of these films he collaborated with composer Nino Rota, who would score sixteen films in all for the Italian auteur. Rota often composed light, popular music that ran counter to the events on the screen (see Composer Profile, p. 260).

Akira Kurosawa (1910–1998) entered the Japanese film industry as an assistant director in the 1930s. He began directing his own films during World War II and established himself as a major figure in Japan during the postwar years. Kurosawa became an international sensation with *Rashōmon* (1950). Prior to this point, most of the world was oblivious to the Japanese industry, but *Rashōmon* astonished critics by winning the Golden Lion award in Venice. This success was followed with international accolades for films such as *Seven Samurai* (1954), *Throne of Blood* (1957), and *Yojimbo* (1961). All three of these films have ties to well-

known dramas in the West. *Throne of Blood* is based on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, and the other two were used as models for popular western movies—the American *The Magnificent Seven* and the Italian *A Fistful of Dollars*, with Clint Eastwood. Fumio Hayasaka provided excellent scores for *Rashōmon* and *Seven Samurai*, but further collaboration was cut short with the composer's death from tuberculosis at age forty-one.

David Lean (1908–1991) is best remembered as a master of epic films shot in exotic locations. The British director won Best Director and Best Picture Oscars for *The Bridge on the River Kwai* and *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962). The latter, with music by Maurice Jarre, is considered to be one of the greatest films of all time. Picturesque settings and beautiful Oscar-winning scores by Jarre also characterize *Doctor Zhivago* (1965) and *A Passage to India* (1984). Among Lean's earlier films, *Brief Encounter* (1945), *Great Expectations* (1946), and *Summertime* (1955) earned Best Director nominations.

Satyajit Ray (1921–1992) helped establish international recognition for the film industry in India with three films known as *The Apu Trilogy*: *Pather Panchali* (1955), *Aparajito* (1956), and *Apur Sansar* (1959). Based on a Bengali literary work, these movies follow a young boy named Apu into marriage, tragedy, and recovery. *Pather Panchali* was nominated for the Palme d'Or and won the Best Human Document award in Cannes, and *Aparajito* won the Golden Lion in Venice. All three films were nominated and won numerous other international and national awards. Ray also garnered international attention with the comedy *Paras-Pather* (1958), *Charulata* (1964), and *Ashani Sanket* (1973). Ravi Shankar, an internationally famous sitar performer, composed the music for the Apu trilogy. Beginning in the 1960s Ray began composing the music for his own films, and he continued to mix Western and Indian musical styles as heard in his earlier works.

FRANCE

French auteurs created a number of outstanding works in the postwar years. The collaboration of director Jean Cocteau and composer Georges Auric is particularly noteworthy. Auric provided colorful, dreamy scores that match the fantastic visual imagery for two of Cocteau's finest films, the fairy story *La belle et la bête* (*Beauty and the Beast*, 1946) and the updated Greek myth *Orphée* (1949).

Music also plays a prominent role in the films of Max Ophüls. *La ronde* (*The Round Dance*, 1950) is a delightful, amorous vision with parallels to the lighthearted Rococo painting movement of the eighteenth century. The music by Oscar Straus lends unity to the episodic story. The principal waltz theme, associated with the merry-go-round, becomes a leitmotif for lust and love, and recurs in each episode. The choice of a waltz is perfect, as the dance swirls in circles at various levels, like the film itself. The tune is subject to numerous transformations: we hear the waltz piped from the merry-go-round, sung by the narrator (4:55), played as an elegant waltz for aristocratic couples (45:55), and even transformed into a march for the young French soldier (11:40). A light, melodic style also plays an important part in Georges Auric's music for another dazzling masterpiece by Ophüls, *Lola Montès* (1955).

Elevator to the Gallows

The most innovative use of music in France during the 1950s is for Louis Malle's *Ascenseur pour l'échafaud* (*Elevator to the Gallows*, 1958). In this tense thriller, a man commits the "perfect" murder of his boss, the husband of his lover. But a mistimed phone call causes him to forget the rope he used to climb to the upper floor of the office building where the crime was committed. Seeing it from outside the building, he goes to retrieve the rope but is trapped in an elevator when all of the electricity in the building is turned off for the night. As he struggles to get out, several complications occur in the outside world that doom both him and his lover.



FIGURE 16.5 The beast talks to Belle accompanied by the atmospheric music of Georges Auric in *La belle et la bête*.

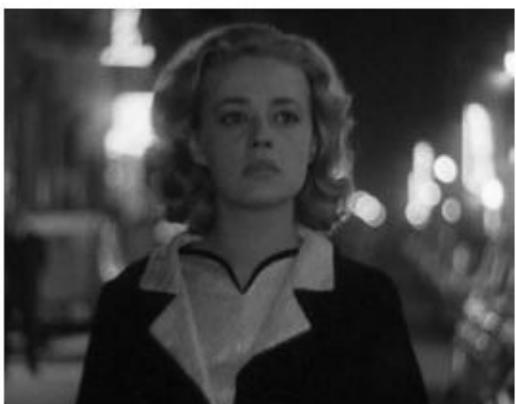


FIGURE 16.6 The despondent Florence walks the streets of Paris to the lonely trumpet improvisation of Miles Davis in *Elevator to the Gallows*.

Jazz great Miles Davis created the music for this film. The famed trumpeter was at the forefront of several important jazz movements, including bebop, cool jazz, and modal jazz. Davis, along with four other members of the combo, literally improvised music while watching the movie on a screen. Sad and sultry, the music captures the essential mood of the story, as can be heard during the opening credits. *Elevator to the Gallows* can be viewed as a French film noir, but it can also be considered as a forerunner to a movement in France known as the New Wave. Although this significant development begins in 1959, it will be considered in the next portion of the text, as its impact is felt primarily in the 1960s.

SWEDEN

Joining the ranks of great directors in the 1950s is Sweden's Ingmar Bergman. Bergman was thrust into the international spotlight in 1957 with two brilliant works, *The Seventh Seal* and *Wild Strawberries*. Erik Nordgren supplied the music for both. The infrequent musical cues for *Wild Strawberries* are essentially Romantic and sentimental in style. In contrast, Nordgren's music for the apocalyptic visions of *The Seventh Seal* is dark and ominous. Although sparse, the music supports Bergman's atmosphere through the use of low, dark registers for voices and wind instruments, with the addition of percussion. The dissonant opening choral statement of the *Dies irae* ("Day of Wrath"), supported by brass instruments, sets the mood of the film. For the most part, the instrumental groups are small, and the frequent pairing of the low register of the clarinet with a bass voice befits a story that includes the personification of death.



FIGURE 16.7 A game of chess with Death is accompanied by dark, foreboding music in *The Seventh Seal*.

JAPAN

Akira Kurosawa, Japan's most celebrated director, created two masterful films in the early 1950s: *Rashōmon* (1950), which first brought him international acclaim; and *Seven Samurai* (1954), the model for Hollywood's *The Magnificent Seven* (1960). The scores for these two films, by Fumio Hayasaka, present two opposing musical approaches. *Rashōmon* is set primarily in a European style, with Western instruments and harmonies, and

would have been quite accessible to European audiences. In one extended scene during the woman's story (38:55), Hayasaka even adapts Ravel's *Bolero* to a Japanese setting. In general, traditional Japanese melodic styles and instruments play a small role in this film.

Seven Samurai

By way of contrast, *Seven Samurai* features a mixture of musical styles. Employing occasional Japanese instruments and voices, the score generally incorporates elements of traditional Japanese music. The dramatic effect of the music comes from the texts, their general moods, and their placement. In an effort to make the film appeal to international audiences, Kurosawa did not avoid European musical influences. Western instruments play many of the melodies, passages of drumming reflect the influence of Western popular music, and the monophonic texture prevalent in Japanese music is often compromised with a contrasting bass line or even Western harmonies (note the Hollywood sound at the close of the film).

VIEWER GUIDE 16.2

Seven Samurai: Death of a Samurai

Composer: Fumio Hayasaka



Timing

DVD: Janus Films (2:13:15–2:22:05)

Setting

Farmers discover that bandits will attack their village. During this desperate time, they are able to enlist the services of seven samurai in exchange for food.

The samurai detect the nearby presence of the bandits and decide to make an early strike against them. Three samurai and a guide set out. The wild one, Kikuchiyo, is given an untamed horse for the expedition.

Key Points

- Japanese melodic style
- Primarily Western instruments
- Western harmony is often implied
- The use of a leitmotif for the samurai

Continued on next page

Principal Theme

Example 16.3 Samurai



PLOT	MUSIC
The guide and three samurai ride away from the village. Kikuchiyo has trouble with his horse and curses.	Over a repetitive, galloping accompaniment, a Japanese-styled melody is heard alternating between woodwinds and brass.
They approach the enemy camp under a waterfall. Finding everyone asleep, they decide to burn the enemy shelter.	The percussion instruments maintain a four-beat pattern.
A woman in the camp wakes. She sees the fire but does not warn the bandits.	A high-pitched wooden flute plays a non-Western melody.
The bandits wake to the fire and flee. Many are executed by the samurai.	No music
The woman walks out of the burning building, sees the guide, and runs back into the fire.	The wooden flute melody returns.
The guide attempts to go after her. One of the samurai pulls him back but is shot. The woman had been the guide's wife.	No music
The samurai dies. The film cuts to the burial. A mound of dirt with his sword marks his grave.	A French horn intones the Samurai theme, initially without accompaniment.
The farmers kneel in reverence, and the leader of the samurai comments on the situation. Wailing breaks out, to the displeasure of Kikuchiyo.	The theme is repeated with an added bass line. The brass instruments enter with contrasting material and full triadic harmonies.
Kikuchiyo runs to get the banner of the seven samurai and places it for everyone to see.	The opening of the melody returns with a bass-line accompaniment.
The banner flutters in the wind.	A trumpet presents the opening of the Samurai theme without accompaniment. The music stops, and we hear only the sound of the fluttering banner.



All of these qualities can be observed in the music described in [VIEWER GUIDE 16.2](#).

The excerpt opens on a humorous note, as the crazy one, Kikuchiyo (Toshiro Mifune), tries to ride a wild horse. Although the melody for this section is distinctively Japanese, the setting suggests a Hollywood western with its orchestration, running accompaniment, and syncopated rhythms. Once the invaders begin to

approach the enemy camp, a passage for drums and a low-register piano begins. Indebted to *kumi daiko* (a mass drumming style from the early 1950s), the ensemble uses traditional Japanese drums known as *taiko*. Typical of such drumming at the time, the rhythms conform to basic four-beat patterns, similar to what is heard in American popular music. When a woman wakes, a traditional Japanese melody is suggested with a high-pitched wooden flute playing freely over the percussion ostinato. The flute returns shortly thereafter when she sees her husband as a member of the invaders and runs in shame back into the burning hut. She had been caught sleeping with the enemy.

One of the samurai is killed by a gunshot. The presence of guns in the film provides another indication that the age of the samurai is quickly drawing to an end. With his death, the principal theme of the film, the samurai leitmotif, sounds in the French horn. In Western traditions, this instrument has signified heroism since the time of Beethoven. As we shift to his burial, the tune repeats with a bass line, and this leads to contrasting material with the brass section playing full triadic harmonies. The eventual return of the original melody points to one other tie to Western music—an overall a-a'-b-a" shape. After the samurai banner has been planted, an unaccompanied trumpet repeats the opening of the theme. In this brilliant score, Hayasaka has achieved a musical balance between the traditions of Japan and the needs to communicate with Western audiences.

OTHER EMERGING FILM CENTERS

India

India's film industry achieved international recognition in the 1950s. An already strong school of filmmaking gained new energy after the country gained independence in 1947. Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali* (*The Song of the Road*, 1955) won the Jury Prize at Cannes in 1956, and Mehboob Khan's *Bharati Mata* (*Mother India*, 1957) received India's first Academy nomination for Best Foreign Language Film. *Pather Panchali* is the first film in Ray's *Apu* trilogy, all three segments of which are accompanied with Indian music created by the internationally famed sitarist Ravi Shankar. Centered in Bombay (Mumbai), or **Bollywood** as it is generally known, the Indian film industry would become the most prolific in the world by 1971.

Many Indian films are distinctively formulaic, particularly in the incorporation of musical numbers. Indian critics have described the formula as "a star, six songs, and three dances," a loose structure that is applied to even serious dramas. The music for these films provides a fascinating mixture of three distinct styles: traditional Indian, European, and popular American. At first, the abrupt

insertion of a song-and-dance sequence into a serious dramatic moment may seem odd to Western observers, but the tradition has endured and produced many outstanding and entertaining films. One of the finest musical scores from the era is Naushad's colorful music for the epic *Mughal-E-Azam* (1960). Naushad predominantly uses instruments and styles from India, but he calls on Western traditions as needed for drama. Particularly striking is the singing competition to win the love of the handsome young prince (56:10).

Brazil

Among the many excellent films from Mexico and South America during the 1950s, French director Marcel Camus's *Black Orpheus* (*Orfeu Negro*, 1959) from Brazil stands out. Winner of an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film and the coveted Palme d'Or from the Cannes Film Festival, the film adapts the Greek myth about Orpheus to a setting during Carnaval in Rio de Janeiro. Since the mythical Orpheus was a renowned musician, this story has been the basis of a number of well-known operas, including those by Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643) and Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714–1787). According to the myth, Orpheus falls in love and marries Eurydice. She soon dies, and the distraught Orpheus descends into Hades armed only with his lyre (a plucked string instrument) and his plaintive voice. He successfully secures her release, but fails to bring her back when he disobeys Hades' command and looks at her before they reach the surface. Upon arriving back home, Orpheus is killed by an angry mob, according to one version of the story.

Many of these plot details are assimilated into *Black Orpheus*, including the names of the two lovers. Rather than using a lyre, Orpheus plays a guitar.

The local children admire him and believe that his singing makes the sun rise every morning. He meets Eurydice just as Carnaval is about to begin. They soon become lovers, but he discovers that she is being tracked by death, and both will eventually die in a tragic manner.

This fascinating retelling of the Greek myth is energized with the music and dancing of the Brazilian Carnaval. The plentiful music in the film is all diegetic, primarily featuring the dance rhythms of the samba and the **bossa nova**. Brazilian composers Antonio Carlos Jobim and Luiz Bonfá created songs for the film, the most famous of which, "Manhã de Carnaval" (Morning of Carnival), became a major international



FIGURE 16.8 Orpheus sings the bossa nova hit "Manhã de Carnaval" in *Black Orpheus*.

hit and helped establish the identity of the bossa nova. The song is first introduced as Orpheus sings for two young boys (27:00), but it quickly becomes the love theme for Orpheus and Eurydice as they meet and bond while one of the boys picks out the tune on the guitar. After the tragic ending, that boy takes the guitar, plays for the sunrise, and becomes the new Orpheus.

TRAILER

The late 1940s and the 1950s were exciting years for international filmmaking. Traditional centers rebounded from the war, and new centers emerged on the strengths of individual directors. This energy would continue into the next few decades, most notably with the influential New Wave movement in France and a resurgence of filmmaking in Germany (see Chapter 20).

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

Arnold, Malcolm	Easdale, Brian	Ophüls, Max
Auric, Georges	Fellini, Federico	Powell, Michael
Bergman, Ingmar	Hayasaka, Fumio	Pressburger, Emeric
Bollywood	Karas, Anton	Puccini, Giacomo
bossa nova	Kurosawa, Akira	Ray, Satyajit
Camus, Marcel	Lean, David	Reed, Carol
Cicognini, Alessandro	Malle, Louis	Rota, Nino
Cocteau, Jean	Naushad	Straus, Oscar
Davis, Miles	neorealism	
De Sica, Vittorio	Nordgren, Erik	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. This is a good time to review the concept of an auteur. Discuss the various relationships that a director might have with a composer.
2. Does the music add or detract from the realism in *Bicycle Thieves*? The opening credits and the final scenes make excellent excerpts for consideration.
3. Discuss how the music creates the moods in *La strada*.
4. Watch portions of *The Red Shoes* and discuss ballet in movies, either as a diversion or as a central plot thread.
5. How does a movie version of a Shakespeare play differ from its original? In particular, note the difference in the use of music in such scenes as Hamlet's soliloquy ("To be or not to be").

6. Find a recording or video of Anton Karas playing the Harry theme from *The Third Man* on the zither. Follow this immediately with the scene where Holly discovers that Harry is the Third Man. Does Karas employ leitmotifs?
7. Watch the stirring performance of “Colonel Bogey March” from *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. What does the music say about the prisoners and their situation?
8. Listen to the music of Miles Davis for *Elevator to the Gallows*. Many have argued that true jazz has to be improvised. From that point of view, is this one of the rare examples of a jazz score?
9. Watch the opening scene for Bergman’s *Seventh Seal*. Discuss how the music sets a somber mood for the entire film.
10. Listen to and watch excerpts from the movies of Kurosawa. What Asian and Western musical elements are intermixed?
11. Enjoy the many scenes with songs and dancing in *Black Orpheus* and discuss some of the differences and similarities of popular music from the United States and Brazil.

5

THE NEW CINEMA,
1960-1974

1960	<i>Spartacus</i>
	<i>Psycho</i>
1962	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>

1968	<i>Planet of the Apes</i>
	<i>2001: A Space Odyssey</i>

The Tumultuous '60s

17



Strolling musicians play in a bath during *Spartacus*.

American society underwent a significant transformation during the 1960s and early 1970s. This turbulent period saw the peak of the Cold War and the threat of total nuclear annihilation, confrontations over civil rights and sexual liberation, assassinations, a moon landing, the Vietnam War, and the resignations of both the vice president and president of the United States. Television cameras recorded these events, bringing both spectacular and horrifying visions into our living rooms. Rather than bonding us together, television illuminated the issues that separated us. Divisions based on race, sex, and age led to open and often violent confrontations. Traditions and authority were questioned in every aspect of American life.



FIGURE 17.1 An action painting by Jackson Pollock

In this environment of frustration and alienation, artists clung to the aesthetic voiced by Ezra Pound: “Make it new.” Challenges to traditions in the art world had already escalated in the 1950s. Action painting, the Theater of the Absurd, and chance music had redefined the boundaries of their disciplines. Originality became the foremost element of an individual work of art, and the process of making art became as important as the product itself. With the continued growth of the university as patron supporting the artist-professor, the gulf between the so-called serious arts and the popular arts widened even further. The split is particularly apparent in music; “New Music” concerts attracted handfuls, while rock concerts were witnessed by thousands.

Commercially oriented Hollywood films clearly lie in the realm of the popular arts. Yet filmmakers were not immune to artistic revolutions. Moreover, they did not need to rebel against traditions—traditions were crumbling all around them. Hollywood studios were being taken over by large corporations, who were selling the movie lots to television. Increasingly, major studios financed and distributed pictures that were made abroad, especially in Great Britain. Studios no longer had exclusive contracts with actors or directors, and even the Hays Code was abandoned. Bare breasts were shown on the screen once again, beginning with *The Pawnbroker* (1964). Forced to be independent, filmmakers also became more original.

CLOSE-UP: A NEW RATING SYSTEM

Censorship vs. Self-Regulation

The Hays Code, which had helped shape films for over two decades, was officially abandoned in 1966. Clearly, the standards that it had created had been discarded years earlier, as scenes of sex and violence grew more graphic. In order to avoid government regulation, the Motion Picture Association of America created a new rating system on November 1, 1968. The four initial ratings were:

- **G** for General audiences
- **M** for Mature audiences
- **R** for Restricted audiences (no one under seventeen without an adult)

- **X** for films that could not admit anyone under seventeen

These ratings underwent a number of changes. The designation M became GP and eventually PG-13 in 1984 (“parental guidance” suggested), and NC-17 replaced the X rating in 1990. Individual films also have been reevaluated. *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), with its explicit scenes of homosexuality, was the only X-rated film to receive an Oscar for Best Picture, but in subsequent years, as attitudes toward morality on film changed, the rating was changed to an R.

Controversy still surrounds this system. Since teenagers make up a substantial portion of the viewing audience, a restricted rating can have a major impact on the financial success of a film. Many films have modified their content in order to be open to the younger market. Critic Roger Ebert

and MPAA president Jack Valenti engaged in a public debate over Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999), in which an orgy scene was digitally altered by the studio in order to avoid an NC-17 rating. Ebert and others argued that the current system encourages censorship.



Another factor affecting filmmaking at this time was the emergence of a canon of classic films. In the 1930s and 1940s, movies were made for immediate distribution, with little thought that these films would be viewed far into the future. But once movies were shown on television, films such as *King Kong*, *Gunga Din*, *The Maltese Falcon*, and *The Wizard of Oz* were regarded as classics. Filmmakers now had films to study and be inspired by, but also films to compete with. Moreover, they had to deal with the issue that their films might be available for future generations to scrutinize. Composers of the early nineteenth century faced a similar crisis with the birth of "classical" music and the subsequent competition for concert time with music from earlier centuries. They responded by assimilating the old and turning to newer, innovative compositional styles. Filmmakers reacted in a similar manner, and the films of the 1960s pulled away from the standard genres established in the Golden Age. Many films either redefined their genre or defied standard generic classification. With these changes came further explorations of the use of modern and popular musical styles.

TRANSITIONING TO A NEW AGE

In Europe, a new era of filmmaking began decisively in 1959 with a movement known as the New Wave (see Chapter 20). There is no such clear date for the emergence of a new American era. Arguments have been made for 1962, 1964, 1965, and 1967, but for all practical purposes we can say only that by 1967, Hollywood had absorbed the New Wave and a new, invigorated production of films had begun. In terms of film music, the year 1960 makes a good dividing point. In 1959 Hollywood produced one of the last monumental film scores

in the classic tradition (*Ben-Hur*) prior to the revival of the style in 1977 with *Star Wars*. In 1960 *Spartacus* and *Psycho* were released, representing a break from these traditions. Among the most important characteristics of music in this new age were:

- Sparing use of music
- Increased prominence of popular and modern musical styles
- Fewer scores for a full symphony orchestra
- Use of music to generate moods rather than to mirror dramatic developments

Spartacus

After the enormous popularity and success of *Ben-Hur*, Hollywood continued to produce epic stories set in antiquity, including *King of Kings* (1961), *Cleopatra* (1963), and *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (1965). Retaining the qualities of the 1950s, these films were lavish, featured a multitude of major stars, used wide-screen color cinematography, and were supported by musical scores written by some of Hollywood's finest composers. But the magic was gone, and these films tend to be weaker both artistically and in popular appeal than the religious epics of the previous decade.

The major exception is Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus* (1960), a powerful story about a slave rebellion against Rome. Part of the success of this film is its mood, which runs counter to the uplifting optimism of the other epics. The plot appears to be a mixture of the late 1950s epic and the pessimism of the 1960s. Instead of the hoped-for triumph of freedom-seeking slaves, we see Rome crush their rebellious spirit. While the 1950s epics seem to symbolize freedom's victory over communism, *Spartacus* seems to have more-ominous implications about contemporary American society.

This darker message is reflected in the musical score composed by Alex North. One of the most successful composers of the decade—he received five Oscar nominations in the 1960s—North creates a sound that is distinct from the epic film scores of Rózsa. Brass fanfares still dominate, but North includes prominent low brass instruments in addition to trumpets, a thicker texture, syncopated rhythms, and dissonances. Although critics have equated this sound to the decadence of Rome, it seems rather to suggest its brutality and cruel power. Historically, Rome was about to enter



FIGURE 17.2 *Spartacus* closes in a somber mood and with dissonant harmonies.

its most dominant era. The music leaves us with the feeling that while Rome, perhaps symbolizing the United States, is building its mighty empire, it is also planting the seeds of its own decay.

Psycho

Matching the innovative spirit of his French and Italian counterparts, Alfred Hitchcock broke with many of the current Hollywood trends in making *Psycho* (1960). He chose to shoot in black and white in order to highlight the starkness of the story (and to lower production costs). The visual images of *Psycho* can thus be linked with the European imports that were already having an impact on the film industry in the United States. Over the next few years, a significant number of America's finest films continued to be shot in black and white. The awarding of an Oscar for black-and-white cinematography continued until 1967.

Psycho contains numerous creative shots, including the opening city view that settles into a voyeuristic peep through a hotel window, an overhead angle for the murder of Arbogast, and in the final scene, the superimposition of the face of death on a smiling Norman. But the single most stunning effect is the shower montage (see [VG 17.1](#)). In a sequence lasting forty-five seconds, Hitchcock rapidly moves between eighty-seven shots with a cutting technique that seems as violent as the scene itself. By the end, the audience imagines that it has seen nudity and a knife stabbing a body, but both are implied, not shown.

The visual shock of the shower scene is more than matched by Hitchcock's treatment of the narrative. The film stands as a classic model of the exploitation of sex and violence. The sexual tension of the opening segment of the film, showing an unmarried couple in a hotel room, was unprecedented since the Hays Code. The scene even includes a never-shown-before backside of a bra; at the time, men were not supposed to know how such a contraption worked. Our protagonist is a woman who not only is having an affair, but steals \$40,000 as well. The moral ambiguity in this film stands in stark contrast to the values expressed in *Ben-Hur*.

In setting up the shower scene, Hitchcock lets us follow a standard narrative in which we align ourselves with Marion, despite her moral flaws. After several close calls, we expect her to succeed in either reaching Sam or returning the money in Phoenix. Her murder forty-five minutes into the film is stunning. The story is no longer about Marion, Sam, and stolen money; it is now about Norman, a psychotic killer. In the process, Hitchcock redefines the horror genre. *Psycho* is the horrifying story not of a terrorizing monster but of the boy next



FIGURE 17.3 The music never changes mood while Marion drives in *Psycho*.

percussion instruments. Moreover, the treatment of the strings is often harsh and percussive, with frequent hard accents and pizzicato effects. Rarely are the strings allowed to play in the lyrical fashion normally associated with these instruments.

With these limited orchestral colors, Herrmann created a unified score that is consistently dissonant. There are certainly contrasts in mood, ranging from the tender, loving sound of the hotel room (4:35 and 6:00) to the terror of the shower, but all of the cues project a disturbed quality through the frequent use, both harmonically and melodically, of minor seconds and major sevenths. These related intervals are the most dissonant in traditional Western harmony. The harsh opening chords include the interval of a major seventh (see [EXAMPLE 17.1](#)), and the following frantic eighth notes obsessively emphasize the half step or minor second. The most striking use of this clash is the famous Murder theme. Herrmann created a unique sound using swooping pitches that build a cluster of minor seconds and major sevenths; the microphones were placed close to the instruments to make the sound even more strident (see [EXAMPLE 17.3](#)).

Also essential to this new approach in film scoring is the lack of contrast in a given cue. Once a cue begins, it is repetitive and does not change moods. Herrmann occasionally juxtaposes cues with different qualities, but there are no transitions within a cue. When Marion is trying to purchase a car (17:50), the scene is accompanied by streams of diminished-seventh chords similar to those at the opening of the story. One might expect a rise in tension in the music when the highway patrolman stops to watch her, or at least some musical reaction when Marion sees the officer. But the music remains aloof throughout, and continues changing chords in a detached and neutral manner. Like the music in New Wave films, the score for *Psycho* serves the primary function of creating a mood.

Hitchcock spends a substantial amount of time at the end of the film showing how this could happen to anyone, and for a while, people all over the country stopped taking showers.

Music for *Psycho*

Supporting Hitchcock's visual and narrative effects is an innovative score by Bernard Herrmann. Reflecting the stark black-and-white cinematography, the sparse score is written for a string orchestra, forgoing the variety of colors provided by wind and per-

VIEWER GUIDE I7.I

Psycho: The Shower Scene

Composer: Bernard Herrmann



Timing

DVD: Universal 20251 (40:20-49:50)

Setting

Marion (Janet Leigh) has stolen \$40,000 from her work. She immediately begins to drive from Phoenix to Los Angeles to join her boyfriend Sam. At night in a storm, she stops at the Bates Motel, where she meets the owner-manager named Norman (Anthony Perkins). They share sandwiches, and Norman talks about his mother.

Key Points

- Music is consistently dissonant
- The timbre is limited to string instruments
- Each cue has its own unchanging mood

Principal Themes

Example 17.1 Opening Chords



Example 17.2 Mother



Example 17.3 Murder



PLOT

The conversation turns sour when Marion suggests that Norman's mother should be in an institution.

Marion concludes the conversation.

MUSIC

The Mother theme is heard in numerous variations within an overall dissonant setting.

No music

Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
Marion goes to her room and begins to undress. Norman observes her through a peephole and then returns to his house.	A rhythmic pulse is sustained throughout. The melodic line consists mostly of pairs of notes a half step apart. This line moves into a disturbing high register as Norman observes Marion.
After making some financial notes, Marion flushes them down the toilet.	The parallel chords from the beginning of the narrative return. The half-step gesture continues.
Marion takes a shower.	No music
Mother opens the shower curtain. Marion is stabbed multiple times.	The piercing Murder theme is heard for the first time.
The camera scans the shower, Marion's face, and the stolen money.	No music
Norman runs to the motel from his house. He sees Marion's body.	A brief variation of the Murder theme plays, and then the music stops.

Four distinctive musical cues occur during the excerpt shown in Viewer Guide 17.1. The first begins when Norman refers to a “madhouse.” The strings sustain quiet, dissonant harmonies while presenting multiple variations of the disjunct Mother theme (see [EXAMPLE 17.2](#)). The music stops when Marion excuses herself, saying that she is going back to Phoenix to redeem herself. The second cue begins with a rhythmic pulse just after she states that her name is Miss Crane. Norman recognizes that Marion used a fictitious name in signing in at the motel—a moment that seems to trigger his lust. The music for this cue contains an unnerving rhythmic ostinato that combines with a variety of other ideas, most notably a half-step fall or rise. When Norman watches Marion undressing with an unblinking eye, eerie high pitches are heard, suggesting his psychological state. As the cue continues, we can hear the opening chords of the narrative as Marion calculates her expenses, and it concludes only when Marion flushes the notes down the toilet, in a gesture that foreshadows what is about to happen to her life.

The next two cues underscore Marion’s murder. The slashing Murder theme begins when Mother opens the shower curtain and begins stabbing (see [Example 17.3](#)). After the killing, Hitchcock takes the time to show the circular shapes of the showerhead, drain, and eye of Marion. As if justifying the death of our protagonist, he reminds us that Marion was a thief by showing the newspaper containing the stolen money. The final cue, a variation of the Murder theme, begins just after Norman realizes what has been done and races to Marion’s room.

Initially, Hitchcock wanted no music for this scene, but after listening to what Herrmann wrote, he changed his mind, and the passage would become one of the most recognizable in all of film music. Some hear in the strident swooping sounds the sounds of birds, an obvious image in Norman's world; note also that Marion's last name is Crane, a type of bird. Herrmann, however, denied this connection, and perhaps it is better to think of the sound as the slashing of a knife. In addition to the shower montage, the theme appears two other times: during the stabbing of Arbogast (1:16:55) and during the attempted murder of Lila (1:40:50).

THE NEW ERA EMERGES

Among the best of the early manifestations of the new era are *The Hustler* (1961), *Lonely Are the Brave* (1962), *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962), *Hud* (1963), *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), *The Pawnbroker* (1965), and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1966). All of these films are in black and white, and all use music sparingly. As we saw in *Psycho*, the music tends to create general moods rather than to depict individual or changing emotions. Modern musical styles are well suited to this end. For the remainder of this chapter, we will consider one film incorporating an American nationalist style and two with links to the avant-garde. Two of the composers of these scores would be leaders in Hollywood for the next four decades—Elmer Bernstein, who wrote the music for *The Ten Commandments* (see Chapter 14) and Jerry Goldsmith, whose most famous work was yet to come (see Chapter 19).

To Kill a Mockingbird

To Kill a Mockingbird (1962), directed by Robert Mulligan, is one of the finest Hollywood adaptations of a novel. Originally appearing in 1960, Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning *To Kill a Mockingbird* is based on her experiences growing up in a small Alabama town. Although the story deals with issues of racism and prejudice, the overall mood is optimistic, as it captures the spirit of the country in the 1930s. American nostalgia, family strength, and childish innocence are underlying themes that run throughout, themes that are supported by the black-and-white photography and Elmer Bernstein's American nationalist musical score.



FIGURE 17.4 Atticus Finch remembers his wife to the poignant string sounds of Elmer Bernstein in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.



FIGURE 17.5 A quiet hymn sounds as African Americans in the gallery stand to pay honor to Atticus in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Gregory Peck plays one of the strongest roles in film—Atticus Finch, a small-town lawyer and single parent of two young children. In 2003 the American Film Institute voted his character as the greatest hero in American film history, just ahead of Indiana Jones, James Bond, Rick (*Casablanca*), and Will Kane (*High Noon*). Two principal stories unfold in the film, both dealing with prejudice. Atticus has been asked to defend a black man wrongly accused of rape. In keeping with the tradition of courtroom dramas, there is no music for the trial scenes. When the verdict of guilty is read, Bernstein composes a quiet hymn, which resounds with dignity as the African Amer-

icans in the gallery stand to honor Atticus's effort, emphasized when the minister admonishes Scout to stand because her “father’s passing” (1:42:00).

Although the trial leads to a tragic conclusion, the other story ends with optimism. In his own way, Finch’s neighbor, Boo Radley, is subject to prejudices. As people with special needs were often treated in the 1930s, he was virtually locked up in his house with no outside contact. Without knowing what Boo looks like, the Finch children and their neighbors imagine him to be a dangerous boogeyman. Bernstein depicts Boo Radley with a variety of motives, some of which suggest the mystery and potential danger of this unknown man, and some of which—notably a waltz-like theme—suggest his innocence.

The score, Bernstein’s personal favorite, plays a major role in creating the overall atmosphere of the film. The diversity of his American nationalist style can be heard in two adjacent scenes. When young Scout asks her older brother Jem about their deceased mother (15:15), Bernstein gently underscores the poignancy of the loss for both the children and for Atticus. Minutes later, an exuberant sound with clear ties to Copland is heard accompanying the children’s play that will result in Scout, rolling inside a tire, landing abruptly at the porch of feared Boo Radley (18:05).

COMPOSER PROFILE

Elmer Bernstein (1922–2004)

Elmer Bernstein was born in New York and only gradually showed interest in music. After studying with Roger Sessions, he began making musical arrangements for the Army Air Corps. His first film score was composed in 1951, and he quickly established his compositional diversity with such contrasting styles as the jazz score for *The Man with the Golden Arm* and the epic music for *The Ten Commandments*. During a career that spans over half a century, he has sustained a prolific output of high-quality scores that reflect a wide variety of musical styles. He has received fourteen Oscar nominations, but won the award only once, for the musical *Thoroughly Modern Millie*.

Important Film Scores

The Man with the Golden Arm 1955 ☒
The Ten Commandments 1956
The Magnificent Seven 1960 ☒
To Kill a Mockingbird 1962 ☒
The Great Escape 1963
Hawaii 1966 ☒

Thoroughly Modern Millie 1967 !
True Grit 1969 ☒
Airplane! 1980
Trading Places 1983 ☒
Ghostbusters 1984
Far from Heaven 2002 ☒

! = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination



Both stories in this film are seen through the eyes of Scout, and the music reflects her point of view. Despite the great variety of emotions and events in this film, the music retains an overall mood of childlike simplicity and innocence. The opening Innocence theme (see EXAMPLE 17.4) is first heard as a response to Scout's humming, and its unusual melodic contour suggests a child singing randomly. In the initial presentation of this theme, it is accompanied by a single sustained pitch. For the most part, this theme and Boo Radley's waltz (see EXAMPLE 17.5) are given simple settings, often evoking the sound of a music box. Bernstein writes for a small ensemble, which includes an accordion that suggests the Southern locale, and a harp, piano, and celesta. His score stands as a model of how much can be achieved with minimal musical forces.

VIEWER GUIDE 17.2

To Kill a Mockingbird: Halloween

Composer: Elmer Bernstein



Timing

DVD: Universal 20252 (1:51:10–2:01:30)

Setting

The two principal stories of the film converge in this climactic scene. In a small town, lawyer Atticus Finch (Gregory Peck) is a single father of two children, Scout and Jem. In the adult world, Atticus has defended a black man for a crime he did not commit. Even though he lost the case, Atticus has humiliated Bob Ewell, who lied in court. In the children's world, mysterious Boo Radley (Robert Duvall) serves as the neighborhood boogeyman, and they have been increasingly more daring in approaching his house.

Continued on next page

Key Points

- American nationalist style
- Use of a small ensemble
- Mood of gentle innocence

Principal Themes

Example 17.4 Innocence



Example 17.5 Boo Radley



PLOT	MUSIC
The narrator (the adult Scout) tells us that it is October and that Scout (shown staring over a fence at Boo's house) looks for Boo every chance that she gets.	Gentle music is presented by the piano and in the woodwinds. The tune and a halting two-note accompaniment have been associated with Boo during the film.
It is Halloween night, and Jem accompanies Scout to a pageant.	Source music: the pageant band
After the pageant, Scout cannot find her dress, so Jem walks her home through the park while she still wears her ham costume.	The Innocence theme is stated simply with a flute and then the full orchestra.
Jem hushes Scout as he thinks that he has heard a noise, but they resume their journey home.	Softer underscoring, with motives (a rising and falling harp arpeggio and a two-note alternation) associated with danger. The Innocence theme resumes in the piano with the accompaniment of the harmonica.
Jem stops for a second time. Scout also hears the sound, but thinks that it is a schoolmate trying to scare them.	No music
There is no response to Scout's shouting, so they continue walking.	The two danger motives are heard again, along with some tension-building motives.
Suddenly a man wearing dark clothes knocks Scout down and attacks Jem. Scout is unable to get out of her ham outfit. Jem tries to help her get up, but is grabbed again and knocked unconscious.	The music gets louder, with a high-pitched trill and the addition of trombones. Syncopated rhythms indicate a struggle as Jem comes to Scout's aid, but the trill returns along with the timpani as Jem is grabbed again. Violent chords suggest his beating.

PLOT	MUSIC
The attacker grabs Scout, still in the ham costume, but another adult wearing lighter clothes reaches out to protect her. The two adults struggle. The attacker again grabs for Scout, but is pulled away. Finally, one adult triumphs.	Fighting music is built on a repeating pulse and syncopated accents. The trill returns as the attacker grabs for Scout a second time. Fighting music with trombones continues, leading to a sustained pitch that gets louder and ends with an accent, suggesting a falling body.
We see the legs of the protector. He picks up Jem and walks away. Scout gets out of her costume, sees the man taking Jem to her house, and races home to the arms of Atticus.	A march pulse, which begins with the man walking, alternates with an eerie clarinet motive accompanied by the harp. The pulse quickens as Scout runs, and the music begins to fade when Scout embraces her father.
The doctor is called; Jem will be all right. Sheriff Tate arrives and identifies the attacker as Bob Ewell, who was stabbed and killed. He questions Scout as to the identity of the defender.	No music
Scout sees him hiding in the room behind the door. She realizes that he must be Boo Radley and takes his hand.	Boo's two-note motive leads to his waltz theme gently played by the orchestra.

These two principal themes frame the central scene described in **VIEWER**

GUIDE 17.2. After the pageant, the Innocence theme is played just as it was at the beginning of the film. The gentle melody continues despite the visual of blowing wind, which suggests danger. The segment closes when we see Boo for the first time (Robert Duvall, in his screen debut) and learn of his gentle and protective spirit toward the children, as reflected in his waltz theme. In between, the music projects tension, danger, and eventually violence with the attack on the two children. Even in these portions, Bernstein's score is economical, with much of the material played by the harp, piano, and accordion. Following the orchestra outburst for the struggle, a quiet and somewhat macabre march accompanies Boo, the children's rescuer, as he carries Jem to safety.

Planet of the Apes

The music for *To Kill a Mockingbird* is number 17 on the AFI list of Greatest Film Scores. Number 18 on that list is Jerry Goldsmith's *Planet of the Apes*. For contemporary audiences, *Planet of the Apes* (1968), directed by Franklin J. Schaffner, was far more than just a clever science-fiction story. The underlying symbolism of the plot, in which a white human is trapped in a world dominated

by black apes, was clear; the struggles of Charlton Heston against prejudice and an oppressive government was an inversion of the current political situation for African Americans. Moreover, the stunning twist at the end of the film delivered a strong message about our potential future in the nuclear age.

Goldsmith's music for *Planet of the Apes* reflects the nightmare-like experiences of the hero in an upside-down world. Set in avant-garde style, it stands as one of the most modernistic scores created for a popular Hollywood film. The numerous unusual musical sounds employed by Goldsmith include tuned aluminum mixing bowls, a ram's horn, and brass instruments blown with inverted mouthpieces. With these elements Goldsmith supports the drama while maintaining a consistent, distorted mood. One of the most striking scenes shows the escape of the hero (54:30). The music follows his actions, with pizzicato timbres to suggest his efforts to hide from view. Ultimately he is recaptured, and the music stops just before he stuns the apes by speaking.

2001: A Space Odyssey

One of the most original films of the era is Stanley Kubrick's epic *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Expanding upon Arthur C. Clarke's short story "The Sentinel," Clarke and Kubrick created a grand science-fiction tale of the evolution of ape

into man, and man into a higher spiritual being. In essence, it is a science-fiction version of Christian theology, which suggests that man will evolve into a higher form sometime after the turn of the second millennium (2001).

In addition to its remarkable visual effects, this film is also notable for its use of previously composed music, as it reestablishes the tradition of the adapted score. Kubrick, who had worked with Alex North on the epic film *Spartacus*, had asked the composer



FIGURE 17.6 *2001* concludes with *Also sprach Zarathustra* as the Star Child returns to Earth.

to create a score for *2001*. After a significant portion was composed, Kubrick decided to discard North's music and instead used music borrowed from the following sources:

Richard Strauss: opening to *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1896)

Johann Strauss Jr.: *Blue Danube Waltz* (1867)

Aram Khachaturian: *Gayane Ballet Suite* (1942)

György Ligeti: *Atmospheres* (1961) [orchestra, no voices]

György Ligeti: *Lux Aeterna* (1966) [voices, no orchestra]

György Ligeti: *Requiem* (1965) [voices and orchestra]

György Ligeti: *Aventures* (1962)

Kubrick used these excerpts with certain associations to the story. The Richard Strauss theme accompanies moments of evolution, the Johann Strauss and Khachaturian dance works accompany scenes of space travel, and Ligeti's music is linked to the monolith. Outside of these general connections, the music remains detached from the details of the drama. In particular, the music of Ligeti (used without his permission) reflects an avant-garde style that emphasizes texture and sound masses, rather than melody and rhythm. The final approach to Jupiter, with its avant-garde images and music (1:57:05), is stunning. With this film, Kubrick made the ultimate statement about music in the new era: music no longer needed to be tailored to fit a film. By using previously composed works and leaving them intact, Kubrick allowed the music merely to coexist with the visual elements.



FIGURE 17.7 Apes discover the monolith in *2001* accompanied by the music of Ligeti.

TRAILER

Seeds for new musical styles in Hollywood films had been planted in the early 1940s. These grew through the '50s and came to full fruition in the '60s. One need only listen to the scores for *Ben-Hur* and *Psycho*, composed just one year apart, to hear the vast differences of conception. Modern musical styles were on the rise in the '60s, but they would still take a backseat to popular musical styles.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

Bernstein, Elmer	Kubrick, Stanley	Ligeti, György
Goldsmith, Jerry	Lee, Harper	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Discuss the “assault” on tradition in the arts of the 1950s and '60s. Look for examples in visual arts, music, and literature. Do these challenges relate to events of the time period?
2. Listen to the dissonant brass conclusion of *Spartacus*. Discuss the effect of this sound in contrast to the brass fanfares in *Ben-Hur*.
3. Review the innovations in Hitchcock’s *Psycho*, particularly in Herrmann’s score. How does it differ from the classic Hollywood score? What is similar?

4. A study of Bernstein's score for *To Kill a Mockingbird* is another good opportunity to listen to the concert music of Copland and compare the musical styles.
5. Alex North's original music for *2001: A Space Odyssey* is available on CD (Varèse Sarabande 5400). Listen to the Main Title to show how North mimicked the sound of Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra*. Also play the excerpt entitled "The Dawn of Man" while watching the first portion of the film, which Kubrick left unscored. Discuss the different effects of North's music and the lack of music for this scene. Which do you prefer?

1960	<i>The Magnificent Seven</i>	1965	<i>Doctor Zhivago</i>
1961	<i>Breakfast at Tiffany's</i>	1967	<i>The Graduate</i>
	<i>West Side Story</i>	1969	<i>Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid</i>
1962	<i>Lawrence of Arabia</i>		<i>Easy Rider</i>
	<i>Days of Wine and Roses</i>		
	<i>Dr. No</i>		

The Rockin' '60s

18



Audrey Hepburn
sings "Moon River" in
Breakfast at Tiffany's.

The 1960s was one of the greatest decades for popular music. Diverse performers—including Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Ray Charles, and the Beatles—were idolized by millions of fans. Hollywood capitalized on these various musical tastes and employed popular music that would appeal to older audiences,

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younger ones, or both. Among the highlights of the decade are many outstanding musical themes and songs. The '60s would also mark the last glory years of the Hollywood musical.

INSTRUMENTAL MOVIE THEMES

During the 1950s, Hollywood had discovered the financial rewards of having popular musical themes in film scores, especially if they appealed to the younger generation. Inspired also by the success of themes for television shows, many filmmakers began to consider a hit musical theme an essential element of a successful movie. The finest of these would not only appeal to the audience, but also capture the essence of the film, as in the epic films *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Doctor Zhivago*.

Lawrence of Arabia

Lawrence of Arabia (1962) is a sweeping story that follows the odyssey of T. E. Lawrence during World War I as described in his autobiography *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Reflecting a trend toward realism, the film does not present the standard glorification of a British hero. Rather, the portrayal of this pivotal figure in the Middle East retains numerous contradictions. Was he a hero or a charlatan? Was he a voice for civilization or for barbarism? Was he a homosexual? All of these questions are left unanswered. At the heart of the film is a portrayal of two men, Lawrence from civilized England and Sherif Ali ibn el Kharish, who makes his initial appearance in the brutish act of killing Lawrence's guide (28:30). By the end of the film, we see both characters transformed, as Ali becomes a civilized politician, and Lawrence is leading barbaric charges.

Director David Lean was particularly adept at incorporating beautiful landscapes into his films. For *Lawrence of Arabia*, Lean filmed on location in the Arabian desert. Faced with enormous obstacles, foremost of which was the oppressive heat, he fashioned some of the most memorable visions in all of film history. Essential to the power of these landscapes is Maurice Jarre's lush score featuring a beautiful principal theme that made the *Billboard* Top 40 with several different renditions. The powerful theme also propelled this otherwise (pardon the pun) lean score to the position as number 3 on the AFI list of Hollywood's greatest scores.

In the tradition of the classic Hollywood score, Jarre employs a full symphony orchestra. But unlike the fully scored epics of the 1950s, *Lawrence of Arabia* is scored with restraint. In addition, Jarre introduces unusual sounds by including

an electronic instrument (**ondes martenot**), a plucked string instrument from the zither family (cithara), and an Arabian hand drum (darbuka). With these musical forces, Jarre creates two distinct types of melodies: English-sounding tunes representing the British side of Lawrence, and Arabian-sounding tunes representing both the land and Lawrence in Arabia. Both styles can be heard in the overture, played against a dark screen, and later during the opening credits.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Maurice Jarre (1924–2009)

Trained at the Paris Conservatory, Maurice Jarre began composing for French films in the 1950s. He was catapulted into international recognition with his scores for two grand epics in the 1960s, *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Doctor Zhivago*, and he later divided his time between composing in Europe and in Hollywood. In films such as *Witness*, he used a synthesizer effectively. He has received nine Academy nominations and three Oscars.

Important Film Scores

Lawrence of Arabia 1962  

Dr. Zhivago 1965 

The Tin Drum 1979

The Year of Living Dangerously 1982

A Passage to India 1984 

Witness 1985 

Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome 1985

Fatal Attraction 1987

Dead Poets Society 1989

Ghost 1990 

 = Best Picture Oscar

 = Best Music Oscar

 = Music Oscar Nomination



Once the story begins, music is withheld until Lawrence begins his initial trek through Arabia (17:50), where the eerie sounds of the ondes martenot and the cithara lead to a lush statement of the *Lawrence of Arabia* theme (see EXAMPLE 18.1). As with all the Arabian themes, this melody presents a mixture of Middle Eastern qualities (pitched drums, the melodic interval of an augmented second, and modal harmonies) with Western orchestration and triadic harmonies. The augmented-second interval between B-flat and C-sharp in the second measure is emphasized by an extended triplet rhythm. The versatility of this theme allows Jarre to imitate the sound of Middle Eastern music, as when Lawrence talks to Tafas at night (21:15), and to use a sweeping gesture for the grandiose visions of the Arabian desert.



FIGURE 18.1 Arabian landscapes are accompanied by Jarre's lush theme in *Lawrence of Arabia*.

Much of the story is told through striking images. During the scene where Lawrence rescues Gasim (see [VG 18.1](#)), Lean lets the camera and music sustain the drama. The visions of Gasim walking into the rising sun, discarding his belongings, and eventually collapsing are crosscut with segments showing Lawrence riding in his direction, Daud (Lawrence's servant) waiting in the heat, and the ever-brightening sun. Jarre's music unifies these images by sustaining certain recurring sounds, including prominent percussion. At the

same time, Jarre is able to project the growing intensity of the heat. With each cut to the burning sun, the music produces a strong accent that gets louder throughout the scene, matching the sun's brightness. As Gasim becomes more desperate, the music begins to accelerate to a frantic pace.

VIEWER GUIDE 18.1

Lawrence of Arabia: Rescue of Gasim

Composer: Maurice Jarre



Timing

DVD: Columbia Tristar 05832 (1:13:00–1:22:40)

Setting

Lawrence (Peter O'Toole) has devised a daring plan to take the city of Aqaba from the Turks by crossing the Nefud Desert and attacking by land. Although Sherif Ali ibn el Kharish (Omar Sharif) believes that the crossing is impossible, he joins Lawrence in the attempt. Lawrence takes two boy servants, Daud and Ferraj. They successfully cross the desert, but one man, Gasim, has fallen and been left behind. Against all odds, Lawrence reenters the desert in order to rescue him.

Key Points

- Musical depiction of arid desert
- Emotional outburst with rescue based on Arabian theme
- Use of ondes martenot and cithara

Principal Theme

Example 18.1 *Lawrence of Arabia*



PLOT	MUSIC
Crosscutting shows Gasim walking into the rising sun, Lawrence riding into the desert, Daud waiting at the desert edge, and the searing sun.	The music creates an arid character with dissonances and the sounds of percussion, the high register of violins, and the low register of a piano. With each vision of the sun, the music becomes louder and, eventually, faster as well.
The other tribesmen and Ferraj are shown waiting at a waterhole.	No music
Daud sees Lawrence approaching and gallops toward him on his camel.	A distant drum, signaling success, is joined by strings and the cithara playing motives from the Lawrence of Arabia theme. A crescendo and an accelerando lead into a full statement of the theme, which accentuates the triumph.
At camp, Ferraj waits, and Ali is frustrated.	No music
Ferraj sees the riders and alerts the camp. They all rise to see Lawrence.	The Lawrence of Arabia theme is suggested along with other Arabian material.
Ferraj and Daud greet each other, and the focus returns to Lawrence.	Lawrence's English and Arabian themes are played by the orchestra.
Ali greets Lawrence with water, showing his acceptance of the Englishman as a fellow Arab.	The Lawrence of Arabia theme is played in full by the strings.
Lawrence declares, "Nothing is written."	The cithara briefly plays the melody, and the orchestra quickly joins in.
Several Arabs offer their beds to Lawrence, and he accepts that of Ali. Symbolically, he tries to take off his English clothes, but he is too tired and collapses onto the bed.	Arabian music is heard, including motives of the Lawrence of Arabia theme.



The climax of the scene is set up by both cinematography and music. Just as the music and visions of Gasim reach their most dramatic moments, Lean cuts to the waterhole, where Ferraj, Ali, and the other Arabs are waiting. The sudden absence of music adds further tension. Cutting back to Daud, Jarre brings in a faint drumbeat, our first signal that Lawrence has been successful in rescuing Gasim. Although we cannot see Lawrence in the distance, Daud reacts, suggesting that his Arabian eyes are sharper than ours. The music grows in excitement, and the full orchestra enters with the principal theme, underscoring the triumph of this defining moment for Lawrence. In the eyes of the Arabs, he has just become Lawrence of Arabia. Also note in this excerpt the brief appearance of the English-sounding theme and the use of other Arabian material, including the sound of the cithara.

Doctor Zhivago

Lean and Jarre also collaborated on the epic *Doctor Zhivago* (1965), based on the novel of the Nobel Prize recipient Boris Pasternak. The score of *Doctor Zhivago*, like that of *Lawrence of Arabia*, includes relatively sparse musical cues the incorporation of a folk instrument (the balalaika), and the dominance of a single melody (Lara's theme). Although the landscape is not quite as spectacular as Arabia, the combination of a romantic story with beautiful cinematography and music proved to be a success once again: Jarre won his second Oscar.

Other Instrumental Themes

Matching the popularity of the two Jarre melodies is Elmer Bernstein's energetic theme for *The Magnificent Seven* (1960), Hollywood's adaptation of Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* (1954; see [VG 16.2](#)). Kurosawa's film is a brilliant study of society in the midst of change; *The Magnificent Seven* retains this theme, well suited to the United States in 1960, as seven men in various stages of their lives have difficulties adjusting to the changing world. Coming together, they defend a Mexican village of farmers, whose lives are the epitome of order. The final message—"The farmers are the winners, we are the losers"—is less forceful than in Kurosawa's film, but still meaningful in the context of the film. For many, however, the message was obscured by Hollywood's star power, the exciting action sequences, and the rousing musical score.

Seven Samurai included Japanese music, and Bernstein similarly created the sounds of Mexican folk music, supported by a prominent role by guitars and other instruments associated with Mexican music. Overall, the score is dominated by Bernstein's energetic main theme. Heard in numerous transformations and primarily associated with Chris (Yul Brynner), the theme has become the signature sound of the western spirit. Bernstein's music, clearly indebted to the American nationalism of Copland, established a western sound that was distinct from the ballads of Tiomkin, heard in *High Noon* (1954, see [VG 15.1](#)) and *The Alamo* (1960).

A number of other instrumental themes achieved prominence in the early 1960s. Bernstein created a different mood for *The Great Escape* (1963), in which the idea of humor in the face of adversity is depicted by a cocky march. On the lighter side, Henry Mancini's jazz theme for *The Pink Panther* (1963) remains one of the most humorous and memorable of all movie themes.



FIGURE 18.2 The theme for *The Magnificent Seven* is primarily associated with Chris Adams.

Another entertaining theme by Mancini, unfortunately a bit of an emotional mismatch for its story, is “Baby Elephant Walk” from *Hatari!* (1962).

THEME SONGS

Although the orchestral themes just described were successful, moviemakers soon recognized that songs are more popular with the general public than are instrumental melodies. Moreover, the inclusion of a song makes a film eligible for one additional Academy nomination—Best Song. Since the number of Oscar nominations given to a film is a major marketing advantage, theme songs far outnumber instrumental themes.

Theme songs can also create dramatic liabilities. In evaluating the quality and suitability of a song for a film, we consider a number of issues:

- Where does the song occur? (see Chapter 3)
- Does the mood of the song represent the overall mood of the film?
- Do the words of the song reflect some aspect of the story?
- Does the song blend into the musical style of the film score as a whole?
- Does the placement of the song support or detract from the dramatic flow?

Some films created workable solutions to these issues, but there are also many songs that are problematic.

Breakfast at Tiffany's

At the beginning of the decade, Henry Mancini was the top songwriter in the film industry, winning Oscars for “Moon River” from *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961) and “Days of Wine and Roses” from *Days of Wine and Roses* (1962), both directed by Blake Edwards. The first of these, listed as number 4 of the AFI greatest Hollywood songs, meets every criterion for an outstanding theme song. The melody and lyrics of “Moon River” successfully capture the spirit of two drifters who meet and fall in love. The song can be divided into two parts, both of which begin with the identical melodic phrase. A simplistic diagram of the melody would be a-b-a-c (the a sections begin with “Moon River” and “Two drifters”). But there are also numerous internal repetitions. For example, a tender descent appears in the a phrases (marked as “X”) with the texts “wider than a mile,” “crossing you in style,” “off to see the world,” and “such a lot of world.”



FIGURE 18.3 The Pink Panther is accompanied by Mancini's sassy saxophone theme.

This motive recurs twice in succession during the final phrase with “waiting ‘round the bend,” and “my huckleberry friend,” as the c phrase both provides a climax and links back to earlier portions of the melody.

The tune is presented without words during the opening credits. A harmonica initially plays the theme, a subtle foreshadowing that Holly Golightly (Audrey Hepburn) is not a sophisticated city woman but comes from the country. Renditions by the strings and a wordless choir follow. The words of the song are introduced when Holly sings while accompanying herself on a guitar (42:00). The natural quality of her voice adds to the sincerity and impact of the melody. The tune, representing a growing love relationship, is then used in the underscoring, blending well with the overall popular style of the score.

In the final scene (see [VG 18.2](#)), the song receives its fullest rendition. Mancini leads up to this moment carefully. He withholds music for the extended dialogue in the taxi. Once Paul Varjak (George Peppard) walks away from Holly, the cue begins with a mixture of big-band sounds, a prominent piano, and developmental treatment of various portions of the theme in the strings. Fragments of the tune continue to be played as Holly joins Paul in the search for Cat. Functioning like any traditional symphonic score, the cue projects Holly’s anxiety and sadness as she looks in vain. The music dramatically surges forth with the sound of a meow, and the full orchestra and chorus present the final vision of the song with words while Holly and Paul are huggin’ and kissin’ in the rain.

VIEWER GUIDE 18.2

Breakfast at Tiffany's: Conclusion

Composer: Henry Mancini



Timing

DVD: Paramount 06505 (1:48:10–1:54:10)

Setting

Holly (Audrey Hepburn) is a free-spirited woman seeking marriage with a millionaire. She has developed a close relationship with Paul (George Peppard).

Among their playful adventures, they had a ring from a box of Cracker Jacks engraved at Tiffany & Co. By the end of the film, Holly is expecting to marry the “future president of Brazil.” In a taxi on the way to the airport, Paul informs her that her fiancé has sent a message canceling their marriage. Holly still insists on going to Brazil anyway to find another millionaire, leaving Paul and her cat (named “Cat”) behind.

Key Points

- Big-band sound with strings
- Prominent piano
- Develops fragments of the theme song
- Theme song at the end with full orchestra and chorus

Principal Theme

Example 18.2 Love: "Moon River"



PLOT	MUSIC
Paul confesses his love for Holly and tries to convince her to stay with him. She spurns his suggestion and sends Cat out into the rain to find a new home. Paul responds by giving her the toy ring engraved at Tiffany's and walking out to find Cat.	No music
Holly looks at the ring and ponders what has been said and her own feelings.	The music includes a sustained chord by the big band, the piano playing a succession of chords, and the strings playing fragments and variations of the Moon River theme.
Holly decides to join Paul and look for Cat. She enters an alley and searches for her pet.	The music gains a rhythmic pulse with prominent syncopated chords from the piano. More recognizable phrases of the Moon River theme can be heard in the strings.
Holly is unable to find Cat.	The rhythmic pulse stops, and the music projects a sense of sadness while developing phrases of the theme.
Holly hears Cat and retrieves and comforts her pet.	The theme surges forth in the orchestra.
Holly returns to Paul, and they embrace and kiss. The film closes.	The chorus enters with "Moon River."



Other Mancini Songs

Mancini's "Days of Wine and Roses," another classic love song, perfectly represents the early relationship of the film's protagonists, Joe (Jack Lemmon) and Kirsten (Lee Remick). But since the film is about the destructiveness of alcoholism, the tune is an odd theme song for the movie as a whole. In the

closing scene, when Joe talks to his daughter Debbie about her mother, Mancini places the tune in a child's instrument, a glockenspiel. The effect is potent, but the meaning is ambiguous. Anyone drawn to the film because of the implied romance of the song would have been surprised by the film's content.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Henry Mancini (1924–1994)

Henry Mancini was one of Hollywood's most beloved composers. Trained as a piccolo player and pianist, Mancini attended Juilliard and played piano in Glenn Miller's big band. He was asked to make arrangements for the film *The Glenn Miller Story* (1954), for which he received an Oscar nomination. His reputation rests largely on the quality of his theme songs, both for movies and television (*Peter Gunn* and *Mr. Lucky*), but his scoring abilities and versatility were exceptional. He received four music Oscars, two for Best Song and two for Best Score, and fourteen other nominations.

Important Film Scores

The Glenn Miller Story 1954 ☒

Touch of Evil 1958

Breakfast at Tiffany's 1961 !!

Days of Wine and Roses 1962 !

Charade 1963 ☒ ☒

The Pink Panther 1963 ☒

Wait Until Dark 1967

10 1979 ☒ ☒

Victor/Victoria 1982 !

! = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination

Completely out of sync with its plot is Mancini's song "Wait Until Dark" from the 1967 thriller *Wait Until Dark*, directed by Terence Young. A change of pace for both Henry Mancini and Audrey Hepburn, this film features a surprisingly modern score that includes two pianos tuned a quarter-step apart; the strong out-of-tune quality suggests the disturbed character of a psychotic killer. It also links to an out-of-tune musical doll, which is sought after by the film's antagonist. The moment that "startled a nation," when the killer leaps at Susy (1:42:10), is accompanied by a sweeping glissando played on the strings inside the piano. The return to traditional harmonies at the end suggests that the danger has been resolved, but the appearance of a cheerful song during the closing credits is totally incongruous with the mood of the film as a whole.

Other Song Composers

Among the other successful composers of theme songs in the decade were Dimitri Tiomkin, John Barry, and Burt Bacharach. Tiomkin, who had fueled the theme-song fad with his ballad for *High Noon* (1952), continued to create outstanding tunes with the Oscar-nominated songs “The Green Leaves of Summer” from *The Alamo* (1960) and the teen-oriented “Town Without Pity” from *Town Without Pity* (1961). Other popular songs that successfully capture the spirit of their namesake films are John Barry’s “Born Free” (1966) and the patriotic “The Ballad of the Green Berets” in *The Green Berets* (1968).

By the end of the decade, Henry Mancini’s reputation as Hollywood’s finest songwriter would receive a challenge from Burt Bacharach, who composed a string of successful songs, including “What’s New, Pussycat?” (1965) and “Alfie” (1966), from movies with the same titles. He closed the decade with Academy Awards for the score to *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969) and for the song “Raindrops Keep Fallin’ on My Head” from the same film. There are only a few cues in the film, and the pervasive popular style does not engender thematic development. Even the appearance of the winning song disrupts the dramatic flow (26:50). Unlike “Do Not Forsake Me” from *High Noon*, “Raindrops Keep Fallin’ on My Head” is anachronistic (a ’60s song for a western). The tune accompanies an extended scene, more like a music video, that has no function in the plot; the mood and words of the song are unrelated to the film, and its intrusive quality is emphasized by the fact that the melody does not reappear in the rest of the film. The difference between this music and the score for *Ben-Hur*, which won the Academy Award one decade earlier, reflects the changing attitudes toward film music in this new era.



FIGURE 18.4 The dramatic action in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* pauses for a playful bicycle ride and Bacharach’s song “Raindrops Keep Fallin’ on My Head.”

BRINGING UP BABY BOOMERS

Another major factor in the declining traditions in Hollywood filmmaking was the changing audience. By the early 1960s, the baby boomers were teenagers. The ever-expanding middle class had produced an unprecedented number of young people with leisure time, money, and entertainment needs. Eager to capitalize on this phenomenon, Hollywood began to appeal directly to the younger market.

Rock music had an increasingly strong impact on films during the 1960s. Elvis Presley, who began his movie career in 1956, starred in an average of three films a year from 1960 to 1968. The Beatles also got into the act with three memorable films: *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), *Help!* (1965), and *Yellow Submarine* (1968). The zany antics of John, Paul, George, and Ringo during some of the musical performances served as a model for later MTV music videos. Numerous other rock singers and groups were featured in movies. Among the most popular were a series of films beginning with *Beach Party* (1963) featuring Frankie Avalon and former Mouseketeer Annette Funicello.

CLOSE-UP: DRIVE-IN THEATERS

Built for Families and Teens

A new facet of the movie experience of the 1950s and '60s was the drive-in theater. The first such theater was created in New Jersey in 1933, but it was after World War II that the idea proliferated throughout the country. For the parents of baby boomers, the drive-in was a convenient and inexpensive way to take kids to the movies. Playgrounds were built to encourage families to come early, and concession stands provided drinks, hot dogs, pizza, and lots of treats. By 1958, nearly five thousand drive-ins were active in the United States. Many were huge and featured other entertainments, such as pony rides and miniature golf. The Troy Theater in Michigan was built for three thousand cars. One of the more curious theaters opened in 1948—Ed Brown's Drive-In and Fly-in, capable of holding five hundred cars and twenty-five airplanes.

As baby boomers grew up, they discovered the intimacy of watching movies from the privacy of their cars. With *Psycho* as a prototype, many films catered to young audiences with scenes of teenage



FIGURE 18.5 The first drive-in theater

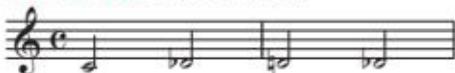
sexual encounters and frightening moments that would make a couple cling together. The popularity of drive-ins continued through the 1960s, but after the Vietnam War and the subsequent phenomenon of *Star Wars*, for which the stereo sound of an indoor theater is essential, drive-ins rapidly began to close.

James Bond

James Bond made his debut film appearance in *Dr. No* (1962). Based on the sixth novel of Ian Fleming's series that began in 1954, the film created an enormous sensation and inspired a total of twenty-four Bond movies (as of this printing), as well as several movies that were unofficially Bond. Music played a large role in the success of *Dr. No*. Monty Norman is credited as the composer, but there has been some controversy on this subject, since John Barry contributed to the music as well. In subsequent films, beginning with *From Russia with Love* (1963), John Barry, formerly an English rock musician, took over the franchise and became the most prominent composer of the series. Barry would soon branch out to other types of films and win an impressive five Oscars.

The score for *Dr. No* features a mixture of styles. Much of the film, including action sequences, has traditional symphonic scoring. Ethnic qualities can also be heard in the score and as source music. Most notable is the opening calypso version of "Three Blind Mice," sung as a trio of killers goes to their target disguised as blind men. The score also includes passages that reflect two diverse popular styles—jazz and rock. The sound of a big band is frequent, and an electric bass and a rock pulse are added periodically in order to appeal to younger audiences.

Example 18.3 James Bond a



Example 18.4 James Bond b



Example 18.5 James Bond c



EXAMPLES 18.3–18.5 show three ideas from what is considered to be the James Bond theme. First heard in *Dr. No*, each idea has a distinct timbre. The first (18.3), which repeats in an ostinato-like fashion, is generally heard with symphonic strings. The second (18.4), often played with the first, is given to the electric bass. The third (18.5) belongs to the screaming trumpets of a big band. Initiating another James Bond tradition, *From Russia with Love* features a popular song during the opening credits. Among the song highlights for later films are Barry's "Goldfinger" (1964), Paul and Linda McCartney's "Live and Let Die" (1973), and Marvin Hamlisch's "Nobody Does It Better" (1974).

MOVIES WITH MULTIPLE SONGS

Instead of a single hit song, *Easy Rider* (1969) and *The Graduate* (1967) contain an album's worth of songs. In Dennis Hopper's *Easy Rider*, a variety of rock artists,



FIGURE 18.6 A travel montage to the music of the Byrds in *Easy Rider*

including Steppenwolf and the Byrds, are the sources of the songs. The drug-oriented rock style coincides with the prominence of drugs in the plot, and the songs generally accompany montages showing travel and the passing of time, as the two society dropouts ride their Harley-Davidson choppers through the countryside. One promotion described the story as: "A man went looking for America and couldn't find it anywhere." Unfortunately, at the tragic ending they may have found the true America of the 1960s.

The Graduate

The Graduate was nominated for seven Academy Awards, winning a Best Director Oscar for Mike Nichols. Essential to the success and overall mood of this film are the songs of the folk duo Simon and Garfunkel. Capturing the spirit of the aimless, disillusioned youth of the '60s, these songs were a great sensation; the soundtrack album from this movie rose to number 1 on the *Billboard* chart. For the most part, the appearances of the tunes (**TABLE 18.1**) are limited to the opening and closing credits and to montages showing the passing of time and travel. The most popular works from the album are "Mrs. Robinson" and "The Sound of Silence."

TABLE 18.1 Simon and Garfunkel songs in *The Graduate*

SONG	PLACEMENT IN FILM
"The Sound of Silence"	Opening credits Summer montage (37:50) Closing credits
"April Come She Will"	Summer montage (40:50)
"The Big Bright Green Pleasure Machine"	Source music on radio (1:02:20)
"Scarborough Fair/Canticle"	Montage of Elaine leaving (1:10:10) Ben travels to Berkeley (1:13:10) Ben watches Elaine (1:17:00 and 1:20:15)
"Mrs. Robinson"	Whistled (1:30:00) Travel montage (1:33:45) Travel montage (1:36:10) Travel montage (1:38:00)

The AFI list of 100 Greatest Songs places "Mrs. Robinson" as number 6. This is the only new song created by Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel for the film. Originally, Nichols had just intended to adapt the duo's earlier songs, but once he heard that Simon was working on a new song that could be entitled "Mrs. Robinson," he wanted it. Since the film was nearly finished at this point, the song was added even though it was unfinished. Hence, during the film (see [VG 18.3](#)), you will hear the guitar accompaniment and the voices singing "Dee dee dee dee dee." The lyrics and finalized melody for "Mrs. Robinson" were recorded in 1968, one year after the release of the film.

The musical heart of this film is the recurring "The Sound of Silence." Composed by Simon in 1964, this is the song that brought the duo into prominence. Reflecting the traditions of folk music, it has a strophic form—all five verses are sung to the same melody. The lyrics address alienation from a muted, uncaring, and material world. During the film, this song is heard three times. The only complete version of the song occurs during a montage showing the passing of summer (37:50), in which we see Ben and Mrs. Robinson carry on a wordless love affair. As is shown subsequently, Ben's attempt to break their silence is fruitless.



FIGURE 18.7 The guitar indicates that Ben has run out of gas.

VIEWER GUIDE 18.3

The Graduate: Conclusion

Composer: Paul Simon



Timing

DVD: MGM 907852 (1:38:10–1:45:30)

Setting

Recently graduated Ben (Dustin Hoffman) has spent much of his summer involved with Mrs. Robinson, an older married woman (Anne Bancroft). When her daughter Elaine (Katharine Ross) comes home, Ben and Elaine begin dating and fall in love. But the revelation about Ben's relationship with her mother prompts Elaine to break it off, return to college, and renew a relationship with Carl. Ben follows her to Berkeley, and Elaine begins to respond to his advances. Everything changes when her father appears and takes Elaine away to marry Carl. Distraught,

Continued on next page

Ben has been trying to find out where Elaine has gone. Having been told that her wedding is in Santa Barbara, he hops into his car one more time.

Key Points

- “Mrs. Robinson” is sung during the travel montage
- The guitar becomes associated with the car’s engine
- Dissonant guitar chords reflect Ben’s frustrations
- “Sound of Silence” returns at the end of the film

PLOT	MUSIC
Ben drives from Berkeley to Santa Barbara.	“Mrs. Robinson” is sung with the syllables “Dee dee dee dee dee.”
Ben arrives and goes to a gas station. He calls to find the location of the wedding.	The singing stops, but the guitar continues, suggesting the sound of the idling engine. A guitar chord reflects his frustrations.
Ben drives to the church and runs out of gas.	The guitar music continues without voices. The tempo slows with the car troubles.
Ben runs to the church.	No music
Ben searches for an unlocked entrance.	Five guitar chords punctuate his efforts.
Ben enters upstairs just at the end of the ceremony. Ben calls to Elaine.	After a brief pause, Mendelssohn’s <i>Wedding March</i> is played on the organ.
The wedding party reacts. Elaine calls to him, and Ben fights to get her away. They run away and board a bus.	No music
Ben and Elaine sit at the back of the bus. Initially they laugh, and then reality sets in. Closing credits follow.	“The Sound of Silence” returns.

The other two renditions, slightly modified, frame the movie. At the beginning, Ben is seen on a vehicle of public transportation—an airplane. The only voice heard is that of the pilot, while the passengers sit passively. The song begins as Ben is in the airport on a people mover passing sterile white walls. At the end of the film, Ben is on another form of public transportation—a bus. Despite an outrageous, rebellious act that defied the rules of society, Ben is still facing the same uncertainties about life. As he sits next to Elaine, neither speaks a word, and the song returns one more time. Just as he was at the beginning of film and as he was with Mrs. Robinson, Ben is engulfed in silence and an uncertain future.

MUSICALS

As with most film genres, musicals were on the decline during the 1960s. But while their numbers cannot match those of earlier decades, the quality is excellent. Prior to the 1960s, only three musicals had won the Oscar for Best Picture: *The Broadway Melody* (1929), *An American in Paris* (1951), and *Gigi* (1958). During the 1960s, four Best Picture Awards went to musicals: *West Side Story* (1961), *My Fair Lady* (1964), *The Sound of Music* (1965), and *Oliver!* (1968). The first three of this group are also ranked among the AFI Top 100 American Films. Unlike the earlier musicals that won the Best Picture award, these four are not original works, but adaptations of Broadway shows. Original film musicals were less common during the decade.

West Side Story

West Side Story broke away from the traditions of Rodgers and Hammerstein with its athletic dancing, intense jazz, and a potent story of racial violence. Set in New York, it is essentially an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The movie received a remarkable ten Oscars. Director Robert Wise, choreographer Jerome Robbins, and composer Leonard Bernstein are the principal artistic talents behind the film. Stephen Sondheim wrote the lyrics; he later became the foremost American composer of musical theater and won an Oscar for his song "Sooner or Later" from *Dick Tracy* (1990).

Bernstein incorporates both American and Latin American popular music, helping to delineate the racial conflict between the American and Puerto Rican immigrant gangs. Elements of American jazz accompany the fighting scenes and the Jets' rendition of "Cool," while a Latin American mambo is heard in the gym (36:20). "Maria" is introduced as a cha-cha-chá (39:30), and "Tonight" is set as a beguine (58:20). Intermixed with these popular sounds is a modernistic harmonic treatment, highlighted by the "Cool" fugue, whose principal subject uses eleven of the possible twelve tones of the chromatic scale (1:57:00). All of this material is superbly unified by thematic transformation. The whistle heard at the outset of the film provides the germ motive for much of the musical material that follows.



FIGURE 18.8 The balcony scene from *West Side Story*.

TRAILER

Most of the examples of popular music in this chapter contribute to the escapist character of their films. Some, though, such as the songs in *Easy Rider* and *The Graduate*, begin to project a more serious tone. The country's troubles of the late 1960s would climax in the early 1970s, and the movies and their music, both modern and popular styles, would reflect a darker tone.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

Bacharach, Burt	Lawrence, T. E.	Robbins, Jerome
Barry, John	Mancini, Henry	Simon and Garfunkel
the Beatles	Nichols, Mike	Sondheim, Stephen
Hopper, Dennis	Norman, Monty	Wise, Robert
Jarre, Maurice	ondes martenot	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. A discussion of theme songs could begin with television. What are the most memorable songs from sitcoms? Do they capture the spirit of their show? Are the words appropriate? Instead of songs, some series have instrumental themes, for which most of the same questions can apply. Generally, themes for television shows are heard at the beginning of an episode. Do these themes reappear in the course of a show?
2. Continue the previous discussion with favorite movie themes, emphasizing the placement and recurrences of the themes. You may want to consider Bernstein's *The Magnificent Seven* and Mancini's *Pink Panther*.
3. Discuss the Middle Eastern and Western musical qualities in the music for *Lawrence of Arabia*.
4. Listen to Jarre's theme for *Doctor Zhivago*. How is this theme appropriate for the film?
5. Locate the various appearances of "Moon River" in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and note the progression of the tune through the drama.
6. After viewing the "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head" segment from *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, discuss the use of the song in terms of its time appropriateness, dramatic placement, mood, and lyrics.
7. If you enjoy James Bond movies, discuss your favorite themes, including time appropriateness and reappearances of the melodies.
8. Compare the types of music used in *Easy Rider* and *The Graduate*. How are these differences reflected in the movies?
9. Consider the legacy of the great film musicals from the 1960s, with an emphasis on what is new in *West Side Story*.

1971	<i>The French Connection</i> <i>Dirty Harry</i> <i>Shaft</i> <i>A Clockwork Orange</i>	1973	<i>The Sting</i> <i>The Exorcist</i> <i>American Graffiti</i> <i>Mean Streets</i>
1972	<i>The Godfather</i>	1974	<i>Chinatown</i> <i>The Godfather: Part II</i>

Emerging from the Crisis Years

19



Johnny Fontane sings at the wedding of the Godfather's daughter.

Several crises in American society came to a head in the early 1970s. In a series of cathartic events, the nation resolved many of the issues that had divided it during the '60s. The United States withdrew from Vietnam in 1973. Vice President Spiro Agnew resigned in 1973, and President Richard M. Nixon, under the weight of the Watergate scandal, resigned in 1974. The civil rights movement, which had made great strides with the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968, continued to make progress during the '70s. The healing



of racial wounds was symbolized by the success of the television miniseries *Roots* (1977), showing the proud heritage of African Americans. Women also saw progress in their quest for equal rights, headed by the controversial *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court ruling in 1973. Activism turned its attention toward the environment, as the nation celebrated its first Earth Day in 1970. Even world tensions were somewhat alleviated with Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972. Put to some of its greatest tests, the United States had survived the 1960s and early 1970s.

The tone of American movies in this era was mixed, as Hollywood attempted to reveal the darker aspects of American life in cynical stories of conspiracies and struggles against authority, and to heal national wounds through an increasing trend toward escapism. Regardless of the subject, the music for these movies shares a number of characteristics: the scoring remains sparse, adapted scores are more frequent, and the barriers between modern and popular musical styles continue to blur. Historians generally view modern and popular as being opposite poles in music composition. Yet modern music had made some strides to incorporate jazz characteristics (recall the scores to *On the Waterfront* and *Rebel Without a Cause*), and several prominent composers of popular music incorporated aspects of modern music, including Miles Davis (jazz) and Frank Zappa (rock). This mixture of musical styles, either in juxtaposition or within a single cue, became a significant new element of film music.

FIGHTING CRIME AND CORRUPTION

In 1971 three new detectives appeared in film, each supported by distinctive musical sounds from composers with backgrounds in popular music. Best Picture-winner *The French Connection* presents a violent, racist, and mean-spirited narcotics officer—Popeye Doyle (Gene Hackman). His relentless pursuit of a major drug dealer and his ultimate failure reflect the frustrations of the era. Don Ellis, who is known for his compositions and performances in the avant-garde jazz and fusion (mixing jazz and rock) movements, created the score for his own ensemble, called the Don Ellis Orchestra. Music is used sparingly in the film, but the few cues move effectively from dissonant, unsettling passages to jazz and rock. Characteristics of the avant-garde and jazz are often combined, as can be heard with the opening music.

San Francisco detective Harry Callahan (Clint Eastwood) in *Dirty Harry* is similar to Popeye Doyle. He is unscrupulous when fighting with criminals and with the system for which he works. The film portrays hippies and peaceniks as

a source of many of society's ills, a theme that was substantially toned down in the sequels. Lalo Schifrin, who created the music for *Dirty Harry*, excels at action pictures. Having trained at the Paris Conservatory, performed as a jazz pianist, and studied with the Argentinian master of tango Astor Piazzolla, Schifrin was able to call upon his diverse talents and experiences to mix musical styles in this film. Popular music tends to be heard in the action scenes or as source music, while dissonant passages represent the distorted mind of the antagonist Scorpio. But even the most dissonant sounds often retain a popular character with the addition of a rock beat (1:09:00). Schifrin continued to compose for film and television, and received five Academy nominations for Best Score. His most enduring melody is the theme for *Mission Impossible*.

Also making an impact in 1971 was *Shaft*, featuring an African-American detective (Richard Roundtree) who is proud, angry, unafraid of white society, and sexually aggressive. *Shaft* is the finest product of a cinematic movement called **blaxploitation**, in which stereotypes of ghetto images were exploited for Hollywood's financial gain in action stories, westerns, science fiction, and even horror films (see Close-Up: African Americans and Film, p. 444). Also exerting great influence was the music for *Shaft* by soul singer and keyboard player Isaac Hayes, one of the dominant African-American performers of the early 1970s. Hayes not only composed an Academy Award-winning song, but also created a landmark Oscar-nominated score. In keeping with the hero that was advertised as "hotter than Bond and cooler than Bullitt," a rock ensemble plays all of the scoring, and the influence of this approach can be heard to the present time.

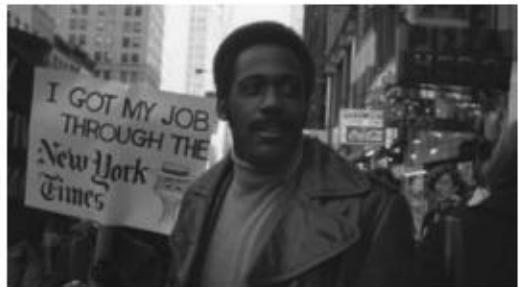


FIGURE 19.1 Shaft walks through the streets of New York to the Oscar-winning song of Isaac Hayes.

Chinatown

Three years after Doyle, Callahan, and Shaft came to the screen, detective Jake Gittes (Jack Nicholson) follows a twisted tale in *Chinatown* (1974), Roman Polanski's first Hollywood film after the brutal murder of his wife Sharon Tate by the Manson family. The dark, cynical, and bleak tone of the film is typical of conspiracy movies from this time. Set in Los Angeles in 1937, the story is loosely based on real events. One of the key figures, Hollis Mulwray, is modeled after the Los Angeles water engineer William Mulholland, the man who brought water to the San Fernando Valley. In capturing the mood of the 1930s, Polanski resurrected several film noir characteristics, and even cast John Huston, a former director of film noir, as the villainous Noah Cross. Typical for the

genre, the story of *Chinatown* is convoluted and features a hard-boiled private detective and a beautiful, seductive woman, Evelyn (Faye Dunaway). Unlike earlier noir films, *Chinatown* is in color and hence is considered to be an example of **neo-film noir**.

Jerry Goldsmith's main theme, a sultry trumpet solo heard during the opening credits, suggests the blues style commonly associated with popular music from the late 1930s. But Goldsmith avoids using only musical clichés of that era. Believing that the story was timeless, Goldsmith created a predominantly modern musical style, brilliantly mixing jazz and the avant-garde. The AFI rates this score as No. 9 on its list of Greatest Scores.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Jerry Goldsmith (1929–2004)

Jerry Goldsmith, one of film's most prominent composers, emerged during the 1960s. His career parallels that of Elmer Bernstein in terms of longevity, versatility, and quality. During the 1960s, he created several scores using various modern musical styles, including a modified American nationalist sound for *Lonely Are the Brave* (1962), an all-percussion score for *Seven Days in May* (1964), and an avant-garde style for *Seconds* (1966). He also was comfortable composing in popular styles and became one of the first composers to return to full symphonic composition in the 1970s. Typical of his generation, the Los Angeles-born composer also worked for television, for which he scored *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* and *The Waltons*.

Important Film Scores

<i>Lonely Are the Brave</i> 1962	<i>Poltergeist</i> 1982
<i>Freud</i> 1962	<i>First Blood</i> 1982
<i>Lilies of the Field</i> 1963	<i>Hoosiers</i> 1986
<i>Seven Days in May</i> 1964	<i>Basic Instinct</i> 1992
<i>The Sand Pebbles</i> 1966	<i>Star Trek: First Contact</i> 1996
<i>Planet of the Apes</i> 1968	<i>Air Force One</i> 1997
<i>Patton</i> 1970	<i>L.A. Confidential</i> 1997
<i>Chinatown</i> 1974	<i>Mulan</i> 1998
<i>The Wind and the Lion</i> 1975	<i>The Mummy</i> 1999
<i>Omen</i> 1976	<i>Star Trek: Nemesis</i> 2002
<i>Alien</i> 1979	

† = Best Music Oscar

▣ = Music Oscar Nomination

The score calls for an unusual combination of instruments—strings, four pianos, four harps, trumpet, and percussion—and unusual performance techniques. Some of the pianos are “prepared,” so that their timbre is altered, and at times the pianist is asked to reach inside the piano and strum the strings. These instrumental colors soon begin to develop associations with aspects of the story: the high register of the strings, often with harmonics (see TABLE 2.2, p. 25), and the wooden percussion instruments suggest the arid climate of the Valley; the piano, generally with quick flourishes, represents water; and the harp is associated with Evelyn. Cues featuring an avant-garde style appear when Jake observes Hollis talking to a young boy (8:20), when Jake enters an orange grove (1:09:00), and when Jake spies on Evelyn and Katherine (1:29:40).

The musical highlight of the film is the beautiful principal theme (see EXAM-
PLE 19.1). Though its basic nature is grounded in the music of the 1930s, which would seem incongruent with avant-garde music, the two divergent styles are combined effectively. The initial statement of the theme during the opening credits presents a subtle shift from avant-garde color to jazz harmonies just as the trumpet enters. Because the dissonant harmonies are built from intervals of the melody, the switch from modern to traditional jazz is seamless. In a way, the dissonances in the score represent the distorted world that is controlled by the wealthy. In Jake's life, love exists, but it cannot break out of the confining environment. The disturbed nature of the music clearly foreshadows the tragic conclusion, one of the darkest in all of film.



FIGURE 19.2 Jake is stunned at the conclusion of *Chinatown* just before the return of the sultry main theme.

VIEWER GUIDE 19.1

Chinatown: Revelation

Composer: Jerry Goldsmith



Timing

DVD: Paramount 15516 (1:45:50–1:54:50)

Setting

Private detective Jake Gittes (Jack Nicholson) is trying to solve the murder of Hollis Mulwray, the chief engineer of Los Angeles Water and Power Company. In the process, he has engaged in a love affair with the widow, Evelyn Mulwray (Faye Dunaway), even though she is a suspect. Thrown into the mix is a mysterious girl named Katherine, whom Evelyn protects. Jake is just about to solve a curious mystery surrounding Hollis's death: he was found drowned in a water reservoir (containing pure water), but salt water was in his lungs.

Continued on next page

Key Points

- Modern musical style
- Prominence of Love theme
- Lack of underscoring for dramatic confrontation

Principal Theme

Example 19.1 Love



PLOT	MUSIC
At the Mulwray home, Jake makes fun of the gardener's accent, until he realizes that the gardener is complaining about salt water in the backyard pond.	No music until Jake realizes the implications. Dissonant, colorful chords sound that have been associated with water throughout the film.
Jake sees a pair of glasses in the pond, which is retrieved by the gardener.	High string pitches, a piano chord, and percussion precede fragments of the Love theme in the low strings.
Believing that Evelyn is the murderer, Jake quickly drives to her house in order to have her arrested.	The tempo quickens, and the orchestra expands to include bells and other percussion. The trumpet plays phrases of the Love theme. A harp glissando closes the cue.
Jake phones Lt. Escobar and tells him where they are. He asks Evelyn to confirm that the glasses were her husband's and then asks her about the mysterious girl. Dramatically, Evelyn tells Jake that Katherine is both her sister and her daughter.	No music
Evelyn notes that the glasses are bifocals and could not belong to Hollis.	Against a sustained dissonant chord, the harp plays the Love theme.
Katherine descends the stairs.	A distant-sounding piano plays a lovely version of the Love theme.
Evelyn tells Jake the address of where she is going and drives off.	The orchestra enters and the music crescendos with mention of the address, signifying that it is important. The Love theme returns in the trumpet.
Jake calls his associate Walsh. When Jake tells him the address, Walsh responds: "Jesus, that's Chinatown."	No music

The portion of the film described in **VIEWER GUIDE 19.I** centers on a lengthy dramatic dialogue without music. The musical cues at the beginning and end of the segment exemplify the prominent role of the main theme, Goldsmith's variety of musical colors, and the fusion of modern and popular styles. The Love theme is heard four times, each with a different setting. At the onset, Jake learns that the pond contains salt water, a critical clue to Hollis's murder. Here, Goldsmith provides a colorful yet dissonant sound that includes sliding pitches in the violins, to which he adds the love theme in the low strings after eyeglasses are found. Jake immediately suspects Evelyn, and his anger is suggested with a crescendo to a second version of the theme. Now in the trumpet, the theme has a jazz character, with its rhythmic accompaniment and loud dynamics, although dissonances remain in the accompaniment. After the dialogue, Jake realizes that he misread the evidence, and fragments of the theme lead to a simple statement of the theme in the piano without dissonances, as the young and innocent Katherine descends the stairs in a white dress. At the close, mild dissonances return after Jake is told that Evelyn is taking Katherine to Chinatown, and the Love theme resumes in its most recognizable trumpet rendition.

ADAPTED SCORES

Following the lead of Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*, several films with adapted scores appeared during the early 1970s. Music for these films was borrowed from a wide range of sources. In addition to quoting nineteenth-century classics, filmmakers explored music from the recent past, including avant-garde compositions and classic rock.

A Clockwork Orange

Stanley Kubrick turned to black comedy in 1971 with *A Clockwork Orange*, based on the novel by Anthony Burgess. An adapted score is employed, but, unlike *2001*, the excerpts run counter to the mood on the screen. Classical favorites, such as Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and Rossini's overture to *La gazza ladra* (*The Thieving Magpie*), and a vocal rendition of "Singin' in the Rain" are chillingly used as background music to scenes of rape and other violence. This film score is also significant for its inclusion of original music created with a synthesizer, an early exploration of a sound that would become an important part of film scoring within a decade (see Chapter 22). The composer of the original music is Wendy Carlos, who had earlier recorded the album *Switched-On Bach* (1968) using a Moog synthesizer.

The Sting

With the decline of the traditional musical, the Academy Award category for scoring of a musical was expanded in 1971 to include any score that adapted previously composed music. *The Sting* (1973) is the first non-musical to win this accolade; it also received an Oscar for Best Picture. The music for this film is drawn from Scott Joplin's piano rags. Joplin, an African-American barroom pianist who rose to prominence in the 1890s, composed dances in a style called **ragtime**. The energetic syncopated rhythms of these rags gave American popular music its defining characteristic. Since the plot of the film begins in September 1936, music dating from the 1890s is historically out of place. But the energy and spirit of the tunes fit well with the story, and the film brought attention to this outstanding and, at the time, neglected American composer.

Marvin Hamlisch adapted Joplin's rags for the film. The music is played both by a solo piano, as it was originally written, and in orchestrations for small ensembles. He occasionally alters the tempo and style in order for the music to accompany scenes of romance, flight, and tragedy—for example, the death of Luther (23:15). In 1973, Hamlisch would win a record three musical Oscars. In addition to Best Original Song Score and/or Adaption for *The Sting*, he won awards for Best Original Song and Best Original Dramatic Score for *The Way We Were*. As he was thrust into the spotlight, his engaging personality turned him into a national celebrity.



FIGURE 19.3 Scott Joplin

The Exorcist

An adapted score is used for an entirely different effect in *The Exorcist* (1973). For this intense film about Regan MacNeil (Linda Blair), a young girl who is possessed by the devil, music was borrowed from some of the most radical works of the avant-garde movement, most notably from the celebrated Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki. Among the borrowed works are the following:

- George Crumb: *Black Angels* (1970)
- Hans Werner Henze: *Fantasia for Strings* (1966)
- Krzysztof Penderecki:
 - String Quartet No. 1 (1960)
 - Polymorphia* (1961)
 - Kanon* for Orchestra and Tape (1962)

Cello Concerto (1966-1972)
Devils of Loudun (1968)
Mike Oldfield: *Tubular Bells* (1973)
Anton Webern: Five Pieces for Orchestra, Opus 10
(1911-1913)

The pieces are not quoted in their entirety; rather, brief patches are borrowed to accompany movement and underline dialogue. The resultant disturbing mood matches the shocking visions on the screen. A typical use of music occurs during the opening, when we hear three fleeting sounds: music by Penderecki, as we see Regan's house in Georgetown and a statue of the Virgin Mary; Crumb for the credits; and indigenous music from Iraq as we prepare for the shift of location of the first scene. Shortly thereafter, a patch of sound from Penderecki is combined with the sounds of fighting dogs as we see Father Merrin (Max von Sydow) squaring off with the statue of the demon Pazuzu (10:00), foreshadowing the climax of the film.



FIGURE 19.4 Father Merrin squares off with Pazuzu to the sounds of wind, barking dogs, and Penderecki in *The Exorcist*.

Adapting Classic Rock

Also appearing in 1973 are two films with adapted classic rock music: *American Graffiti* and *Mean Streets*. *American Graffiti* has an almost continuous soundtrack of rock songs dating from 1954 to 1962, including "The Great Pretender," "Get a Job," and "Barbara Ann." The movie opens with "Rock Around the Clock," the same tune that appeared in *Blackboard Jungle* (1955). The difference in the American attitude toward rock music, as represented in these two films, is striking. In 1955 the tune represented the dark side of juvenile delinquency; in 1973 it recalls the innocence of the Kennedy era. Hearkening back to happy days, the songs reflect the nostalgia suggested by the movie's advertising motto "Where were you in '62?"

Martin Scorsese's breakthrough film *Mean Streets* is also packed with rock and roll hits, often heard as source music coming from jukeboxes and radios. But while the music for *American Graffiti* supports the movie's nostalgia, the moods of the rock songs in *Mean Streets* often run counter to the tough scenes of city life. The playing of "Please Mr. Postman" by the Marvelettes during a pool-room brawl (31:30), for example, creates a contradiction of moods and a strong sense of detachment. Scorsese, who



FIGURE 19.5 *American Graffiti* opens with "Rock Around the Clock."

chose his favorite songs from his childhood collection of rock, also mixed in Italian popular songs, opera, and patriotic music. With views of seedy New York streets, realistic character portrayals, and ambivalent moral issues, Scorsese established himself as a major auteur of the new generation.

THE GODFATHER

We conclude this chapter with one of the greatest achievements of American filmmaking, the trilogy of films based on Mario Puzo's novel *The Godfather*. This saga of organized crime in the United States, which begins in 1901, encompasses nearly one hundred years. The compelling story, superb acting, and beautiful visual effects helped catapult director Francis Ford Coppola into the forefront of contemporary filmmaking. In 2007, the AFI selected *The Godfather* as America's second greatest film. *The Godfather: Part II* is the only sequel to make the AFI Top 100 List (number 32), and it was the first sequel ever to win an Oscar for Best Picture, an honor that has been matched only by *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003). *The Godfather: Part III* (1990) won fewer accolades, but it too has merits.

CLOSE-UP: PRODUCERS AND DIRECTORS

New American Auteurs

The creative period of the 1960s and '70s produced several outstanding young directors, most of whom have continued working to the present time. They have shaped American filmmaking and have had a strong impact on the use of music in Hollywood movies.

Woody Allen (b. 1935) was born in Brooklyn with the name Allen Stewart Konigsberg. He attended the film school at NYU, but failed a course entitled Motion Picture Production. He quit school and began working as a writer for comedians and for several television series, including the classic *Your Show of Shows*. Despite receiving an Emmy nomination, he moved on to stand-up comedy and eventually films, in which he acted, wrote the screenplays, and directed. He performed all three roles in his first major success, *Take the Money*

and Run (1969). His rising reputation reached a new height with the bittersweet comedy *Annie Hall* (1977), which eclipsed *Star Wars* and won the Best Picture Oscar. Another masterpiece, *Manhattan* (1979), followed, and Allen began to diversify his subjects. Among his other highly rated features are *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy* (1982), *Hannah and Her Sisters* (1986), *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (1989), *Bullets over Broadway* (1994), and *Midnight in Paris* (2011).

Robert Altman (1925–2006) initially built his reputation as a director in television, where he worked on a number of popular series, including *The Millionaire* and *Bonanza*. His first major film was *MASH* (1970), which won the Palme d'Or in Cannes. Featuring an ensemble cast, black humor, and biting criticisms of war, the film became a classic and spawned a popular

television series. He followed up with other unique films, including the highly regarded *McCabe & Mrs. Miller* (1971) and *Nashville* (1975). He received a nomination for the Palme d'Or for *Images* (1972), with one of John Williams's finest scores. Directing opportunities were fewer after this point; some of his other significant films are *Popeye* (1980), *Kansas City* (1996), and *Gosford Park* (2001). As exemplified in *Nashville* (see Chapter 22), Altman excelled at directing large ensemble casts. He was unconventional in his portrayal of American life, as he mixed realism with highly stylized imagery. He often chose to rely on source music, which included country, jazz, and a dark-humored theme song for *MASH*—"Suicide Is Painless." The music for the latter was composed by Johnny Mandel based on the lyrics of the director's son, Mike Altman.

Francis Ford Coppola (b. 1939) was born in Detroit and raised in New York. He earned a master's degree from UCLA and wrote several screenplays, winning an Oscar for his contributions to *Patton*. His first major break was Paramount's offer to direct *The Godfather*. He followed that success with perhaps the greatest sequel ever, *The Godfather: Part II*, and the critically acclaimed *The Conversation* (1974). *Apocalypse Now* (1979) proved to be a turning point in his career. Although this film is generally seen as a masterpiece, the multiple delays in production and the spiraling budget hurt Coppola's reputation. Since that time, he has produced several successful films but also some box-office failures. Like Vito in *The Godfather*, Coppola views film as a family business: his father Carmine was a composer, his sister Talia Shire played Connie, and his daughter Sofia was the infant in the baptism scene. In recent years, Sofia has become a highly regarded director herself. He also helped the acting careers

of his granddaughter Gia Coppola and his nephew Nicholas Cage.

Mike Nichols (1931–2014), born in Berlin, came to the United States with his parents to avoid the Nazis. He eventually established himself in improvisational theater and turned to directing Broadway plays. His first three films created a great sensation: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1966), *The Graduate* (1967), and *Catch-22* (1970). Each featured a different musical approach. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* has a sparse, modern score featuring a harpsichord, *The Graduate* (see VG 18.3) centers on the songs of Simon and Garfunkel, and *Catch-22* has virtually no music at all. An extended break in his film career ended with *Silkwood* (1983), and he remained active in film, television, and theater until his death.

Martin Scorsese (b. 1942) was born in New York and attended the film school at NYU. After teaching at his alma mater for a short period, he moved to Hollywood. His first masterpiece is *Mean Streets* (1973), a tough vision of life on the streets based partly on his own experiences. The same gritty visions propelled *Taxi Driver* (1976) to international acclaim, winning the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. In 1980 he created a film that, according to the AFI Top 100 rankings, is the greatest film of that decade—*Raging Bull*, a biography of the boxer Jake LaMotta. Since then he has received Best Director nominations for such diverse films as *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), *Goodfellas* (1990), *The Age of Innocence* (1993), *Gangs of New York* (2002), *The Aviator* (2004), *Hugo* (2011), and *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013), and he won the award for *The Departed* (2006). He has used a variety of approaches to music. Many of the films have limited scores, some rely on popular music, and he has collaborated with several outstanding film composers, including Bernard Herrmann, Howard Shore, and John Williams.



In a time when conspiracy theories ran rampant, when the public felt helpless against the power of the rich, and when many turned to illegal activities to defy the establishment, *The Godfather* (1972) found a receptive audience. The central figure of the first two films is not Don Vito Corleone (Marlon Brando), the current Godfather, but his son and successor Michael (Al Pacino). Michael is young, looks like a college boy, has just returned from World War II as a hero, and wants no part of the family business. We are drawn to him, and, as he is pulled into the family business, we remain loyal to his character even as he brutally murders his enemies and lies to his wife. Michael is the classic antihero, someone we know is wrong but admire nonetheless.

The Italian composers Nino Rota and Carmine Coppola, the director's father, created the music for the trilogy: Rota composed the score for *The Godfather*, the two coauthored the score for *The Godfather: Part II*, and Coppola completed the music for *The Godfather: Part III* after Rota died in 1979. Rota's versatile musical style, evident in the earlier films he scored for Fellini (see Chapter 16), is well suited to the needs of *The Godfather*. Essential to the story are two related and chilling themes: killing is a business, and it is a family business.

In keeping with the second theme, family gatherings are often juxtaposed with business activities. The film opens at a wedding celebration for Vito's daughter, against which we see a number of business transactions. Both Italian and American popular music is heard in the background. The first attempt on the Don's life happens at Christmastime while carols are in the air (39:45). The aftermath of Michael's first murders is shown through a montage accompanied by an out-of-tune piano playing "Pennies from Heaven" at a family gathering (1:29:25). In the film's most gripping moment, we see the systematic assassination of Michael's foes accompanied by Bach organ music (2:36:25). While Michael is becoming godfather to a baby child, he is also becoming the Godfather to organized crime.

There are three principal musical themes in *The Godfather* (see EXAMPLES I9.2-I9.4). The Godfather theme has the character of an Italian folk melody. At the beginning of the film, it is played without accompaniment by a solo trumpet, a common instrument in Italian villages. The folk derivation of the tune is confirmed in *The Godfather: Part II*. After the young Vito begins his rise by killing Don Fanucci, he sits on his steps with his family—another juxtaposition of business and family—while an older Italian sings the tune and plays guitar (2:05:15 of *The Godfather: Part II*).



FIGURE I9.6 Crosscuts show Michael becoming a godfather in church and a Godfather in the streets, accompanied by a church organ.

The tune is versatile. In the first film, its triple meter allows it to be used as an elegant waltz (25:55), and, in a horrific moment, it is heard as a distorted carousel tune as we watch a Hollywood producer wake up to find the severed head of a horse in his bed (32:45). The melody represents the Godfather position, and does not belong just to Vito. The theme will be passed on to Michael, and, in *The Godfather: Part III*, to Vincent.

The other two themes also appear in all three films. Michael's theme is first heard when he goes to his family's compound after his father has been shot (52:25). It grows in intensity as Michael becomes more involved in the family business, building to a climax with his shooting of Sollozzo and Captain McCluskey (1:29:05). The theme also appears in scenes of revenge and death, such as the execution of the once-loyal Sal Tessio to avenge his betrayal (2:43:40). The third recurring theme is associated with Sicily (1:36:35). It is heard frequently during Michael's stay in the region and during his courtship of Apollonia. The same Love theme returns with scenes of Sicily in both sequels (Example 19.2). Since this theme had been used previously in a film entitled *Fortunella* (1958), Rota's Oscar nomination for *Godfather* was withdrawn. He would win the Oscar for Best Score with *The Godfather: Part II*.

Example 19.2 Love



VIEWER GUIDE 19.2

The Godfather: The Hospital

Composer: Nino Rota



Timing

DVD: Paramount 15647 (1:01:05–1:10:20)

Setting

Michael (Al Pacino), son of the Godfather Don Vito Corleone (Marlon Brando), is a hero just back from World War II. He has vowed not to take part in criminal activities, but he will be drawn back into his family's business. His first step begins after his father is shot. Vito, barely alive, has been taken to a hospital. Unarmed and inexperienced in family matters, Michael comes to the hospital to find that his father has no protection, and another assassination attempt appears imminent.

Continued on next page

Key Points

- Leitmotifs for Michael and the Godfather
- Transformation of Michael's theme into a funeral procession
- Tension built through musical underscoring

Principal Themes

Example 19.3 Godfather



Example 19.4 Michael



PLOT	MUSIC
Michael arrives at the hospital, which is decorated with Christmas lights. When he enters, he sees that everyone has left somewhat hastily.	The orchestra and piano play tension-building music. The lowest pitch is sustained without change.
Michael races upstairs and finds no one. He sees his father lying in a hospital room.	Michael's theme is played as a funeral dirge accompanied by a slow pulse.
After entering the room, Michael is joined by a nurse who informs him that everyone was ordered to leave. Michael calls his brother Sonny, and gets the nurse to help move Vito.	The funeral pulse continues in a four-measure ostinato, punctuated by an English horn phrase every fourth measure.
Michael and the nurse move Vito to another area just as footsteps are heard and a mysterious figure appears. It is the baker, who offers his services.	No music
Michael tells his father that he is with him. Vito smiles faintly, and Michael kisses his hand.	The Godfather theme is heard with distorted harmonies.
Michael joins the baker outside, and they pose as guards with weapons. A vehicle drives up, sees them, and leaves.	The tension music with orchestra and piano returns.
As the car goes, Michael helps the baker with a cigarette.	An oboe plays Michael's theme.
Police arrive, and an angry Captain McCluskey hits Michael. Tom Hagan, the family lawyer, arrives with private guards and takes Michael home.	No music until the orchestra punctuates McCluskey's frustration at the end.
Michael is driven into the Corleone compound.	A trumpet plays the Godfather theme with distorted harmony.

Michael's journey to the position of Godfather begins in the hospital (see **VG 19.2**). His father, recovering from gunshot wounds, has been left unattended. Sensing another attempt on his father's life, Michael acts quickly and coolly, showing his aptitude for the family business. There are three musical ideas in the underscoring, each of which occurs twice: tension music, Michael's theme, and the Godfather theme. The tension music is heard when Michael first arrives at the hospital and later when he is waiting outside with the baker. Rota creates a mood of foreboding with long sustained pitches, against which chords in the piano and orchestra change slowly, often creating dissonances.

Michael's theme is presented as an Italian funeral procession. Against a slow, repetitive drumbeat, the brass instruments solemnly intone the tune as it might be heard in a small Sicilian village. After the tune has finished, the drumbeat continues in an ostinato pattern, as Michael takes charge of the situation. The rhythms are grouped into four-measure units, punctuated by an English horn motive every fourth measure. Michael's theme reappears after he has successfully foiled the assassination attempt.

The Godfather theme is presented as Michael reassures his father that he is with him, and again as Michael is symbolically taken into the Godfather's compound. In both instances, the accompaniment suggests a folk character, but the harmonies are dissonant, reflecting the seriousness of the situation. Michael has begun a journey that will culminate with his anointment as Godfather with the ring and the musical theme.

TRAILER

During the crisis years, modern and popular musical styles dominated American film music; both would continue to exert a strong influence beyond the 1970s. Before the decade was done, the 1970s would see a widening spectrum of film music, primarily due to the versatility the synthesizer and the sensational resurgence of the classical film score highlighted by the blockbuster hit *Star Wars*.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

blaxploitation	Hamlisch, Marvin	ragtime
Carlos, Wendy	Hayes, Isaac	Rota, Nino
Coppola, Carmine	Joplin, Scott	Schifrin, Lalo
Coppola, Francis Ford	neo-film noir	Scorsese, Martin
Crumb, George	Penderecki, Krzysztof	
Ellis, Don	Polanski, Roman	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. After listening to the music of Don Ellis from the opening of *The French Connection*, discuss the mixture of modern and popular musical styles that you have heard.
2. Observe the opening of *Shaft* and discuss the mood and characterization that is created, including Hayes's music. Watch excerpts from *Super Fly* (1972), with music of Curtis Mayfield. How did the music of the blaxploitation movement influence mainstream film and television?
3. Listen to the music from *Chinatown* and discuss the mixture of modern and popular music styles. Why is this effective for this film?
4. Listen to some of Scott Joplin's rags. What was new about this music from the 1890s? Is it appropriate for *The Sting*?
5. View just about any clip from *American Graffiti* and discuss the role of the music. Is it source music? What mood does it set? How does it contribute to the drama?
6. Discuss the intermixture of American popular music, Italian popular music, and modern music in Rota's score to *The Godfather*. How does the music reinforce the sense of family in the film?

FOR FURTHER READING

Sciannameo, Franco. *Nino Rota's The Godfather Trilogy: A Film Score Guide*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2010.

SIGNIFICANT
FILMS

1959	<i>The 400 Blows</i>	1966	<i>The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly</i>
1960	<i>Breathless</i>	1968	<i>The Lion in Winter</i>
	<i>Shoot the Piano Player</i>		<i>Once Upon a Time in the West</i>
1963	<i>Tom Jones</i>	1972	<i>Aguirre, The Wrath of God</i>
1964	<i>The Umbrellas of Cherbourg</i>		

The New Wave and World Cinema

20



A Confederate prison band plays soothing music during torture sessions in *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*.

International filmmaking continued to thrive through the 1960s and expanded to new regional centers. This textbook cannot do justice to all of the important international film hubs, including India, Japan, and Mexico. Our focus, by necessity, will be on films and film music that had the most significant impact and received the most recognition internationally. During this time, Europe was at the forefront of the industry, with strong dramas and comedies from Great Britain, spaghetti westerns from Italy, an energized output from Germany, and, most importantly, the New Wave from France.

FRANCE

New Wave Cinema

In 1959 a new generation of filmmakers burst onto the scene in France, including François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, and Alain Resnais. Known as **New Wave Cinema**, French films of this movement had an enormous impact on filmmaking around the world, including the United States (see Chapter 17). At the heart of the New Wave is the concept of the auteur: the director-artist. Just as an author controls all aspects of a book, the auteur manipulates every detail of a film, including the script, cinematography, and music. This new generation of auteurs viewed the traditional narrative techniques established in the 1930s as no longer adequate. Innovative plots with unclear beginnings and endings, ambiguous moral implications, and unconventional characters became vehicles for exploring new visual effects, including slow motion, jump cutting (cutting that creates the sensation of jumping ahead in time, even if briefly), and freeze frames. As in the contemporaneous worlds of painting, music, theater, and dance, the work sparkled with creativity.

New Wave directors showed great concern for the psychological importance of the *mise-en-scène* and music. For the most part, music was used to help establish an overall mood. Absent are the Hollywood clichés, such as mirroring the action, underscoring individual emotions, and loud, uplifting endings. Applied sparingly, music—often diegetic—created atmospheric moods that remained detached from the details of an unfolding story.

Popular music plays a role in two landmark films: Truffaut's *Les quatre cents coups* (*The 400 Blows*; 1959) and Godard's *À bout de souffle* (*Breathless*; 1960). *The 400 Blows* (the title is part of a French colloquial expression freely translated as “to raise hell”) follows the life of a troubled youth. The music, predominantly popular in nature, establishes a lighthearted, breezy mood throughout. Truffaut forgoes the standard Hollywood big finish: the film ends abruptly with a freeze frame, as the last statement of the principal theme is heard on a single violin playing pizzicato. In

Breathless the dominance of American-sounding jazz contributes to the setting of a Paris enamored with American popular culture. Ironically, Patricia, an American in Paris, is constantly attracted to European music, such as Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, and to European art.

The leading composer of the early years of New Wave Cinema was Georges Delerue. He was one of a number of French film composers who would become active both in France and the United States, including Maurice Jarre, Michel Legrand, and Francis Lai. Delerue created



FIGURE 20.1 *The 400 Blows* ends abruptly with a freeze frame and the sound of a pizzicato violin.

film scores for two of François Truffaut's most celebrated films: *Tirez sur le pianiste* (*Shoot the Piano Player*; 1960) and *Jules et Jim* (*Jules and Jim*; 1962). Both contain atmospheric scores that set general moods. In *Shoot the Piano Player*, a few simple leitmotifs unify the score. The principal character, played by singer-songwriter-actor Charles Aznavour, is associated with a popular piano tune representing the superficial, detached world in which he begins and ends the film.



FIGURE 20.2 Charlie plays piano at a nightclub at the beginning and end of *Shoot the Piano Player*.

The Umbrellas of Cherbourg

The most innovative treatment of music in France during the 1960s took place outside of the realm of New Wave Cinema. Director Jacques Demy and composer Michel Legrand created an international sensation with the colorful *Les parapluies de Cherbourg* (*The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*; 1964). Lacking spoken dialogue, this film is essentially an opera written for film, complete with the equivalent of **recitatives** (dialogue melodies) and **arias** (songs). The innovative music incorporates a variety of jazz and popular styles. During the opening scene at a garage, for example, the dialogue is sung to the accompaniment of a jazz ensemble ostensibly coming from the radio. Humorously, one mechanic intones that he does not like opera because it has "too much singing." Throughout the film, the variety of musical styles matches the Matisse-like colors of the film, and, like the film's use of color, the music often has little to do with the dramatic situation.

VIEWER GUIDE 20.1

The Umbrellas of Cherbourg: Love and Promises

Composer: Michel Legrand



Timing

DVD: Koch Lorber 3014 (27:40–34:20)

Setting

Guy (Nino Castelnuovo) and Geneviève (Catherine Deneuve) are young lovers and want to get married. They have two obstacles: objections from Geneviève's mother and a draft notice requiring Guy to spend two years serving in the military. The lovers vow to remain faithful until they can be reunited.

Continued on next page

Key Points

- The dialogue is sung throughout
- A popular song dominates, functioning as an operatic duet
- The passage opens with a rhythmic and structured recitative that can be called *arioso*
- The dialogue with Guy's aunt is a more typical recitative

Principal Theme

Example 20.1 Love: "I Will Wait for You"



PLOT	MUSIC
Geneviève anxiously runs to Guy when he gets off work. They embrace, and she tells of her worries.	The orchestra initially plays a descending melodic line. The a portion of the recitative has two phrases.
Geneviève talks about her mother and her objections to their relationship	The b segment is set with a generally descending musical line.
Geneviève expresses a desire to marry secretly.	The a material returns, but the final portion is altered.
Guy informs Geneviève that he has been drafted and must spend two years in the military.	He repeats her a and b phrases in a different key.
The two are in a café.	She begins singing "I Will Wait for You." He repeats the melody, while she responds briefly. The melody is repeated as they trade phrases, and the orchestra fills in the tune when they are unable to sing. Guy introduces the middle portion of the song.
The two go to his place with his bicycle.	The middle portion of the song continues. She initiates the return of the main melody, and he responds.
They hug at the colorful entrance to his apartment and walk up the stairs.	The orchestra soars forth with the Love melody. They sing a countermelody. The music ends as they go up the stairs.
They enter his apartment, where Guy's aunt has been waiting. Guy asks about her health, and Geneviève goes into his room unobserved.	Recitative returns. The accompaniment is simpler and includes chords on a harp. A French horn provides a countermelody.
Guy joins Geneviève.	A brief recitative occurs over a melodic idea in the strings.
They embrace, kiss, and sit on the bed.	The orchestra plays the Love theme fully.
The entrance to the apartment is shown again, and then Geneviève is at home with her mother.	The melody continues and begins a transition to a new recitative.

The musical highlight is Legrand's "Je ne pourrai jamais vivre sans toi" ("I Will Wait for You"), which is first introduced during the scene described in **VIEWER GUIDE 20.1**. This portion of the film has four distinct parts. When the lovers first meet, they sing in a style that is somewhere between recitative and song (in opera, this would be called an *arioso*). As in recitative, the melody repeats pitches frequently, has a limited range, and is heard over shifting harmonies in the accompanying orchestra. As in a song, the orchestra contains some countermelodies, and the whole passage is set in an a-b-a' structure. The a portions have two phrases, and the b is a slowly descending line (a minor sixth). When Guy repeats the material, he sings only the a-b portion.

The next part centers on the song "I Will Wait for You," which is also in an overall a-b-a' form. Section a is initially heard four times, each with some variation. Guy introduces section b (another descending line) as they walk home. After the song has come to a cadence, the third part of the scene contains a musical dialogue between Guy and his aunt. This is a clearer recitative, as the pitches are more repetitious and the accompaniment is primarily harp chords (with a quiet horn melody in the background). For the final section, the lovers go to bed while the orchestra plays the Love theme in its entirety. The lovers will reprise the song a bit later in the film for his departure at the train station (39:20), where the melody builds to a full orchestral climax.

With the various twists and turns of life, Geneviève and Guy do not end up waiting for each other. At the conclusion of the film, both have married someone else and have children. An accidental meeting (1:26:20) brings forth the Love theme "I Will Wait for You" in the orchestra. In this instance, neither one of them sings along with the melody, but they do provide contrasting melodic material, much in a recitative style. The irony and poignancy of this moment brings out the fullest statement yet of the theme, including a chorus, as the film closes. With all of its fantastic colors and music, the film still touches on one of the realities of life—the fragility of youthful love.



FIGURE 20.3 "I Will Wait for You" plays when Guy and Geneviève accidentally meet later in life in *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Michel Legrand (b. 1932)

Born in Paris, Legrand was a child prodigy and entered the Paris Conservatory at the age of eleven. His background included classical training with Nadia Boulanger and directing big bands. He soon became noted for his songs, arrangements, and original compositions. *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* brought him international

Continued on next page

attention, and he then began to split his time between France and the United States. He won his first Oscar for "The Windmills of Your Mind" in *The Thomas Crown Affair* (1968). His gift for lyricism is also evident in his other two Oscars—Best Dramatic Score for *Summer of '42* (1971) and Best Original Song Score for *Yentl* (1983).

Important Film Scores

The Umbrellas of Cherbourg 1964 ☒ ☒ ☒

Band of Outsiders 1964

Les demoiselles de Rochefort 1967 ☒

The Thomas Crown Affair 1968 † ☒

Ice Station Zebra 1968

The Happy Ending 1969 ☒

Pieces of Dreams 1970 ☒

Summer of '42 1971 †

Best Friends 1982 ☒

Never Say Never Again 1983

Yentl 1983 † ☒ ☒

† = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination



THE OTHER BRITISH INVASION

The 1960s witnessed the “British Invasion” in rock music, headed by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. In the same decade, Great Britain exerted a strong influence on American films. Half of the Academy Award winners for Best Picture in the decade had ties to Britain, either in story or production: *Lawrence of Arabia*

(1962), *Tom Jones* (1963), *My Fair Lady* (1964), *A Man for All Seasons* (1966), and *Oliver!* (1968). In this climate, the British secret agent James Bond became an American sensation.

The selection of *Tom Jones* as Best Picture in 1963 may not have sparked the controversy that *Hamlet* had created in 1948, but it was a surprise, mostly because of its content, not its country of origin. The Oscar-winning musical score by John Addison that accompanies this sexual romp captures the lusty mood of the eighteenth-century novel, which also fits the lifestyles of the “swinging '60s.” Addison's score features colorful combinations of instruments, and he matched the energy on the screen with lively melodic materials. Most humorous is the use of a harpsichord, an



FIGURE 20.4 Tom Jones charms the ladies, often accompanied by a harpsichord.

instrument prominent in the time period of *Tom Jones*, to punctuate the dialogue as if it were recitative in an opera. The use of the harpsichord to play lively syncopated melodies in a pop style was fashionable in England for a brief time during the early 1960s.

Joining the impressive list of international composers that would have a significant impact on Hollywood is England's John Barry. A former rock musician, Barry established a reputation with the rock-big band-orchestral scores for James Bond films. The versatility of his compositional talents became apparent with his double Oscars for song and score for *Born Free* (1966) and his Oscar for Best Original Score for the epic *The Lion in Winter* (1968). The music for the latter, a story based on the lives of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine, is strongly indebted to Carl Orff's setting of medieval texts entitled *Carmina Burana* (1936). Orff's music had become a twentieth-century equivalent of medieval music, and Barry captured that sound in a haunting score complete with chorus and Latin texts.



FIGURE 20.5 A beautiful choral score by John Barry accompanies Eleanor as she comes to Henry in *The Lion in Winter*.

ITALY

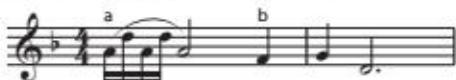
One of the international phenomena of the 1960s that continued into the 1970s was the **spaghetti western** from Italy. Set in the American West, these films enjoyed considerable commercial success. They often featured aging or emerging American stars along with Italian actors. Each spoke their native language during the filming, and the movies were dubbed in Italian for Italy and English for the United States. Sergio Leone directed the best-known films in this realm, including the "Dollars" trilogy starring Clint Eastwood and the classic *Once Upon a Time in the West*. Sergio Corbucci's *Django* (1966) also spawned numerous sequels, and the name of the character and the theme song were used in Quentin Tarantino's *Django Unchained* (2012). Two composers for spaghetti westerns achieved international attention—Ennio Morricone (b. 1928) and Luis Bacalov (b. 1933).

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Morricone created a sensation with his scores to Leone's trilogy—*Per un pugno di dollari* (*A Fistful of Dollars*; 1964), *Per qualche dollaro in più* (*For a Few Dollars More*; 1965), and *Il buono, il cattivo, il brutto* (*The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*; 1966). By mixing diverse elements such as musical instruments associated with the Wild

West (guitar, harmonica, Jew's harp, mariachi trumpet), the human voice (whistling, solo songs, choruses), natural sounds (howling coyote, crackling whip, gunshots), and an electric guitar, Morricone created a distinctive hybrid style that contained elements of westerns, Italian opera, the avant-garde, and popular music.

Example 20.2 *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*



The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly tells the story of three gunmen seeking the same buried cache of gold coins. Morricone underlined the similarity between the three men by giving them the same theme (see EXAMPLE 20.2). The brief two-measure idea has two distinct motives, marked a and b in the example. While a is usually followed by b, it can also stand on its own. At the onset of the movie, this motive is heard three times in succession, each with a different timbre that becomes associated with one of the three principal characters: the good (Blondie) is a soprano recorder (flutelike sound), the bad (Tuco) has two male voices treated electronically, and the ugly (Angel Eyes) is played with a bass ocarina (a folk wind instrument shaped like an egg). The b motive is often heard with a vocal "wa-wa-wa," and it has several variant forms.

In the climactic scene, all three face each other in a shootout inside the central ring of a cemetery (2:27:40). For this extended scene, Morricone pro-

vides a mariachi trumpet solo (the trumpet plays with a wavering tone quality, unlike the straight trumpet sounds of the military scenes). This musical timbre also recalls bullfighting, which likewise occurs in circular arenas. The tensions leading up to this moment are set against a backdrop highlighting the tragedy of the Civil War. Morricone reserves his most beautiful melodies for scenes of wartime cruelty and disregard for human life. Particularly moving is the singing of the lovely ballad "The Story of a Soldier" by Confederates during the torture of fellow prisoners (1:29:25), as seen in FIGURE 20.1.



FIGURE 20.6 Morricone's music helps to create a monumental heroic character in *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*.

Once Upon a Time in the West

C'era una volta il West (*Once Upon a Time in the West*; 1968) is generally regarded as one of Leone's best films. Although it no longer featured the superstar power

of Clint Eastwood, the film compensated with four other well-known actors: Henry Fonda, Charles Bronson, Jason Robards, and Claudia Cardinale. Unlike the trilogy, this film has a prominent role for a woman, and it deals with a frequent spaghetti western theme—revenge. Morricone gives each of the main characters their own distinct leitmotif (see EXAMPLES 20.3-20.6): Harmonica (Bronson) has a bending three-note idea played on the harmonica, used both as source music and scoring; Cheyenne (Robards) is accompanied with a simple banjo tune (not included in VG 20.2); Frank (Fonda) has an electric melody usually played on an electric guitar; and Jill (Cardinale) is supported with several melodic ideas, most notably one (Jill b) in a grand Italian operatic style.

VIEWER GUIDE 20.2

Once Upon a Time in the West: Revenge

Composer: Ennio Morricone



Timing

DVD: Paramount 06830 (2:22:25–2:35:50)

Setting

The widow Jill (Claudia Cardinale) is trying to convert her inherited farm into a railroad station. She now has three men in her life: Frank (Henry Fonda), who shot her husband; Cheyenne (Jason Robards), a friendly outlaw; and Harmonica (Charles Bronson), a mysterious stranger. Harmonica has been pursuing Frank for reasons that are about to be disclosed. The scene opens with the climactic gun duel between Harmonica and Frank.

Key Points

- Opening music combines a harmonica, electric guitar, and full symphony orchestra
- Harmonica's leitmotif is played on the harmonica
- Frank's theme is heard in the guitar and full orchestra
- Jill has two themes, one (Jill a) simple, the other (Jill b) operatic

Principal Themes

Example 20.3 Harmonica (many variants)

Continued on next page

Example 20.4 Frank



Example 20.5 Jill a



Example 20.6 Jill b



PLOT	MUSIC
Frank and Harmonica prepare for a duel.	The music includes a three-note accompaniment figure, the electric guitar theme associated with Frank, and the wailing of Harmonica's theme.
Frank removes his overcoat and walks into position.	The strings play Frank's theme with a wordless choir and strong dance-like rhythms.
Harmonica approaches.	With quieter dynamics, the repeated figure continues, and a French horn plays Frank's theme.
The two stand ready.	No music
A flashback reveals Harmonica's motivation.	Harmonica's theme plays as the young Frank pulls out a harmonica. The ostinato and Frank's theme are heard, first in the strings and then with the electric guitar. The full orchestra enters with a pulsating rhythm that accompanies the death of Harmonica's older brother. Bells chime and the harmonica plays at the end.
The duel ends with the death of Frank. Frank wants to understand why Harmonica wanted revenge.	No music
Harmonica puts his harmonica in Frank's mouth; Frank realizes who has shot him just before dying.	Harmonica's theme is presented with a jarring flutter-tongue sound.
Cheyenne gives advice to Jill.	No music
Harmonica enters and says that he is leaving.	Jill a theme, followed by Jill b, the more extended operatic theme sung by a solo soprano.
Harmonica leaves. Cheyenne follows.	Music associated with the workers plays briefly. Jill b theme returns, sung by a choir.

The film climaxes with Harmonica's revenge (see VG 20.2). During the scene, several flashbacks reveal his motivation and the reason why he carries the harmonica around his neck. The beginning contains a three-note accompaniment, the electric guitar leitmotif for Frank, and the wailing of Harmonica's theme primarily on two pitches. With its repetition, the strings enter with Frank's theme along with a wordless chorus and a strong rhythmic pulse. This music is heard twice. The first occurrence fades with the flashback, which primarily features the sound of the harmonica, and the second begins during the flashback and ends just before the drawing of guns. At the end of the scene, the two themes associated with Jill are heard, ending with the operatic sound sung wordlessly by a solo soprano. As in Italian grand opera, a heroic story has been told, revenge has been achieved, and one of the good guys, Cheyenne, goes off quietly to die of a gunshot wound.

GERMANY

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw the reemergence of Germany as a major center of filmmaking. Essentially dormant in the field since 1932, Germany—at least, West Germany—entered a productive phase termed **New German Cinema**. Led by three young directors—Werner Herzog, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, and Wim Wenders—West Germany produced an impressive number of high-quality films into the 1980s.

Aguirre, The Wrath of God

A landmark film from this movement is Herzog's *Aguirre: Der Zorn Gottes* (*Aguirre, The Wrath of God*; 1972). The film was shot on location in Peru and on tributaries of the Amazon River, and the difficulties in filming and the remarkable views of an isolated geographic area recall the making of *Lawrence of Arabia*. The story bears several resemblances to Joseph Conrad's novella *Heart of Darkness*: European conquerors travel down a powerful river, encounter natives, and succumb to greed, thirst for power, and madness. Aguirre is a historical figure who traveled on a raft down the Amazon River looking for the fabled gold of El Dorado. His madness is documented, but other details of the story are fictional or taken from accounts of another journey down the river seeking the same treasure. As in numerous films from the early 1970s, criticisms of society, politics, and religion abound.

Popol Vuh created the music for *Aguirre*. Founded by Florian Fricke, this ensemble is associated in general with **Krautrock**, a progressive rock movement in Germany that incorporates electronic music, and more

specifically with **ambient music**. For the film, Fricke primarily combines the sound of a Moog synthesizer (see Chapter 22) with that of a variant of the **Melotron** called the “choir organ.” This instrument is played like an organ but produces a sound that approximates a human choir. This hybrid electronic/human timbre creates a haunting tone quality that is used effectively in the film.

CLOSE-UP: KRAUTROCK

Rock music is generally considered to be an American phenomenon. Yet, significant centers of rock music have developed in numerous other countries. England, with groups such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, rivals the United States for worldwide impact. Less known to Americans are several other important centers in Europe, including West Germany, where the Beatles spent several years fine-tuning their sound.

Although “kraut” was originally an offensive American expression for “German” (derived from a German food—sauerkraut), it has been accepted in Germany and applied broadly to all rock music from the country. But the term also has a more specific application, as it more frequently refers to a movement in West Germany that began in the late 1960s. The mixing of jazz and modern musical styles has been described in Chapter 19, but Krautrock goes one step further and adds elements of rock. As in jazz, improvisation is a major component. From rock, the movement employs amplified guitars, drums, and a driving rhythmic pulse, but the most distinctive parts are related to modern musical style: the reliance on electronic instruments such

as the synthesizer (see Chapter 22) and the adaptation of minimalist procedures (see Chapter 26).

Krautrock was an important influence on several subsequent rock movements, including new age, ambient, and techno (see Chapter 28). Among the qualities of the first two are quiet dynamics, generally triadic harmonies, minimal harmonic changes, and the lack of tension. This style of both has been equated with Tibetan chant, minimalism, and the hum of an air conditioner. Ambient music is particularly soothing and has found a ready market with yoga instructors. A more somber version called dark ambient can be heard in *The Social Network* (see Chapter 31).

Krautrock bands include Kraftwerk, Can, Amon Düül II, Harmonia, and Faust. Popul Vuh collaborated with director Werner Herzog on a number of his best-known films, including *Aguirre, The Wrath of God*, *Fitzcarraldo*, and *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*. The excerpt in **VIEWER GUIDE 20.3** reflects qualities of ambient music. Other Krautrock groups, such as Tangerine Dream, have also created film scores, as well as music for television and for video games.

The stunning visuals of the opening scene (see **VG 20.3**) are enhanced with hypnotic music. Lacking are two basics of rock music: a strong dance pulse and tuneful melodies. Instead, extended passages of slowly moving harmonies, primarily triadic, create a floating quality. There is a rhythmic beat, but

the progression of the principal music is unrelated to the pulse and remains detached from any sense of meter. The various timbres produced by the synthesizer and Mellotron include a woman's choir, a full choir, an ethnic flute, and strings. At one point, pulsating string chords suggest the sounds of a Renaissance string instrument called the viola da gamba, and a quasi-dance tune emerges. Many of the sounds in this opening segment will recur later in the film, forming the perfect counterpoint to the oppressive heat, the slow movement of the raft, and the onset of madness.

VIEWER GUIDE 20.3

Aguirre, The Wrath of God: Opening

Composer: Popol Vuh



Timing

DVD: Paramount 06505 (0:00:00–6:45)

Setting

The film opens with a prologue and a vision of the expedition descending to the Amazon River.

Key Points

- Sustained music without a strong pulse or melody
- Use of a synthesizer and the Mellotron
- Music imitates sound of viola da gamba

PLOT

Written prologue

A long caravan is seen descending the steep mountainside of Peru toward the Amazon River. The Priest provides a brief narration.

As the camera moves downward, we begin to have closer views of the travelers.

The title appears. The downward journey continues.

We see a woman wearing a red dress.

A cannon falls into the river.

MUSIC

Music enters only at the end as a transition.

Primarily triadic harmonies are sustained, with a rhythmic pulse and electronic sounds mimicking female voices. Some dissonant pitches are added.

A male choir timbre is added, and the volume of the music increases. A descending melodic line evolves into a folklike melody with simple ornaments.

The music continues unaltered.

The strings play a descending line.

The music stops abruptly.

Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
Pizarro talks with Aguirre.	No music
We see the turbulent waters of the Amazon.	Pulsating chords enter imitating the sounds of viola da gamba. A light tune can be heard.
The journey through the jungle continues.	The earlier music returns.

POPULAR SENSATIONS

Mention should be made of a number of international films that introduced new popular melodies or brought attention to some old classics. Greece, a relatively small center for film, produced two movie themes that enjoyed widespread popularity in the United States: “Never on Sunday” from *Never on Sunday* (1960) by Manos Hadjidakis, and the dance from *Zorba the Greek* (1964) by Mikis Theodorakis. Another enormous success in the United States was Nino Rota’s “What Is Youth?” a song written in the style of an Elizabethan lute air for Franco Zeffirelli’s *Romeo and Juliet* (1968). *Death in Venice* (1971) gained considerable attention because of its story about Gustav Mahler that is loosely based on a Thomas Mann novella, and the hauntingly beautiful music of Mahler, particularly the Adagietto from Symphony No. 5. Likewise, the Swedish film *Elvira Madigan* (1967) features the second movement of Mozart’s Piano Concerto in C Major, K. 467. Because of the enormous popularity of the Mozart work through its use in this movie, it gained the nickname “The Elvira Madigan Concerto,” which is still used today.

TRAILER

National barriers in filmmaking were already breaking down by the early 1970s. Defining a single country of origin becomes more difficult from this point. Innovation and artistry continue. Both international film centers and Hollywood would soon face a new challenge from the phenomenal success of *Star Wars*.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

Addison, John	Herzog, Werner	New Wave Cinema
ambient music	Krautrock	Popol Vuh
aria	Lai, Francis	recitative
Bacalov, Luis	Legrand, Michel	Resnais, Alain
Delerue, Georges	Leone, Sergio	spaghetti western
Fassbinder, Rainer Werner	Mellotron	Theodorakis, Mikis
Godard, Jean-Luc	Morricone, Ennio	Truffaut, François
Hadjidakis, Manos	New German Cinema	Wenders, Wim

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Choose a major film of New Wave Cinema and discuss how it differs from traditional Hollywood films. Naturally, you should consider the role of music.
2. After viewing excerpts from *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, discuss its visual and musical qualities. How is it similar to opera? How does the film reflect influences of New Wave Cinema?
3. Explore the variety of British film scoring during this time by observing clips from *Tom Jones*, *A Man for All Seasons*, *Lion in Winter*, and *Yellow Submarine*.
4. Locate excerpts from spaghetti westerns and describe the mixtures of musical sounds heard in the score.
5. Listen to various examples of Krautrock and define its basic characteristics. Why is ambient music considered to be rock? What is its effect in film scores? What characteristics does it share with minimalism?

FOR FURTHER READING

Leinberger, Charles. *Ennio Morricone's The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: A Film Score Guide*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2004

6

SYNTHESIZING THE PAST
AND EXPLORING THE
NEW, 1975-1988



1975	<i>Jaws</i>	1980	<i>The Empire Strikes Back</i>
1977	<i>Star Wars</i>	1981	<i>Raiders of the Lost Ark</i>
	<i>Close Encounters of the Third Kind</i>	1982	<i>E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial</i>
1978	<i>Superman</i>	1983	<i>Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan</i>
1979	<i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i>		<i>Return of the Jedi</i>

The Return of the Classical Score

21



A synthesizer is used to communicate with aliens in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

In 1971 Hollywood hit an all-time economic low, and the traditional symphonic score seemed both too expensive and too old-fashioned for American cinema. Famed director William Wyler was quoted in 1972: "If a director allows a violin on today's soundtrack, he is considered something of a senile relic." But as the nation turned away from postwar realism, traditional symphonic underscoring began to reassert itself. The increased role of music can be detected in a number of films from mid-decade. *The Godfather: Part II* (1974) is more fully scored than *The Godfather* (1972). *The Exorcist* (1973) uses a pastiche score comprised of a handful of avant-garde compositions, while Goldsmith's Oscar-winning score for *The Omen* (1976) exploits the full power of orchestral music in horror films. Goldsmith continued to expand the role of music for *The Wind and the Lion*

(1975) and the *Planet of the Apes* sequels. Goldsmith is a significant figure in the reemergence of the symphonic score, but his role is often overlooked because of the sensational popularity of a talented newcomer to Hollywood film scoring.

JOHN WILLIAMS

John Williams established himself as Hollywood's premier composer for disaster films, beginning with *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972). Although this film contains only a limited number of musical cues, the escapist story, supported by symphonic music, appealed to the public and led to a series of films with similar plots. Williams also scored *The Towering Inferno* (1974), in which the role of music is substantially expanded. Underscoring the romance, humor, and terror shown on the screen, Williams began to resurrect the traditions of the classical film score with a series of films that also marked the return of the box-office **blockbuster** (see Close-Up: Box-Office Hits, p. 386).

Jaws

Williams's most celebrated score prior to 1977 is for Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* (1975). *Jaws* contains less music than *Star Wars*, but the audience's emotional response to the orchestral cues was a major factor in the movie's success. The film redefined the term "blockbuster," and it is a landmark in what is called the "summer blockbuster." At the heart of the score is a repeated two-note leitmotif for the shark. As with most of the music surrounding the predator, the theme is pitched in the orchestra's lowest register, suggesting both danger and the creature's home in the depths of the ocean.

At the onset of the film, two essential elements are established. During the initial credits, the Shark leitmotif is heard along with underwater sounds; the audience immediately associates the music with the shark. The music continues through the first image, an underwater view that we assume is from the perspective of the shark. These two elements—the music and images from the shark's perspective—are then combined in the riveting opening sequence, which exploits sex and violence.

Throughout the film, underwater views of dangling legs suggest danger, and music warns us that the shark is present. Because of this association, the audience clings to the small comfort that music always precedes an attack. Breaking this comfort zone, the shark suddenly appears without musical warning as Chief Brody is throwing chum in the water (1:21:10). Stunned, Brody can only say, "You're going to need a bigger boat." Thereafter, music no longer prepares

us for attacks. In particular, a sudden appearance of the shark out of nowhere prior to the climactic battle (1:38:00) is one of the most startling moments of the film.

During this last portion of the story, the shark combats three men: Chief Brody (Roy Scheider), ichthyologist Matt Hooper (Richard Dreyfuss), and Quint (Robert Shaw), a figure reminiscent of Captain Ahab from *Moby-Dick*. Williams assigned the men several musical ideas. Most notable is the British sea song "Spanish Ladies," first heard when the boat leaves the harbor (1:12:20) and later sung by Quint (1:33:25). As the men pursue the shark, exhilarating music is heard. For the final chase (1:39:00), an extended theme is presented in fugal texture. But as the tables are turned, and the hunters become the hunted, the score reverts to the Shark theme (1:45:45).



FIGURE 21.1 The shark suddenly appears without musical warning in *Jaws*.

CLOSE-UP: GEORGE LUCAS AND STEVEN SPIELBERG

A Force Awakens in Hollywood

The film school at the University of Southern California became the meeting place for a number of figures who were to reshape Hollywood film. The first love of George Lucas (b. 1944) was auto racing, which may have had an effect on several of his later films. Forced to abandon the sport after an accident, he came to USC and, with the financial help of Francis Ford Coppola, made his first film, the critically acclaimed *THX 1138* (1971), with music by Lalo Schifrin. On the basis of his success, Universal Pictures asked him to direct *American Graffiti* (1973), which created an enormous sensation. This film also helped launch the acting career of Harrison Ford. Ford later paid homage to his friend in Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979) by assuming the character name Colonel G. Lucas.

Lucas created his greatest sensation with *Star Wars* (1977). The spectacular special effects, use of

sound, and brilliant musical score by John Williams changed the direction of Hollywood filmmaking. Lucas stayed on as producer for the *Star Wars* sequels, but did not direct. He also collaborated with Spielberg and Williams on the Indiana Jones trilogy, starring Ford. Lucas created the special-effects team called Industrial Light and Magic and became the first to explore the use of computer graphics in film. He was also instrumental in advancements in sound technology, and his Skywalker Sound Company pioneered the sophisticated THX sound system.

Steven Spielberg (b. 1947) studied film at California State University, Long Beach, but his student years were interrupted when he became the youngest director ever to sign a full-time contract with a major Hollywood studio. Later, Spielberg went back to school, completed his coursework, and submitted *Schindler's List* as a senior project. He passed.

Continued on next page

Spielberg first worked in television, creating episodes for *Night Gallery*, *Columbo*, and *Marcus Welby, M.D.* He established a reputation with his made-for-TV film *Duel* (1971) with Dennis Weaver. But it was the spectacular success of *Jaws* (1975) that catapulted Spielberg into stardom. Spielberg, who had first teamed with John Williams for *The Sugarland Express* (1974), again hired the composer to create the sensational score for *Jaws*. Soon the two collaborated on another major financial and critical success, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977).

In the early 1980s, Spielberg and Williams redefined the action picture with the Lucas productions

of the Indiana Jones movies, and they created one of the great masterworks of recent films, *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982). Spielberg continued to have a hand in major films, producing *Poltergeist* (1982), *Back to the Future* (1985), and *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988), and directing *The Color Purple* (1985), *Schindler's List* (1993), and *Jurassic Park* (1993). John Williams provided the scores for the last two, and the pair has continued to work together up to the present. Spielberg founded the production company DreamWorks, which has had a major impact on films since the late 1990s.



THE STAR WARS TRILOGY

Star Wars

The music for George Lucas's *Star Wars* (1977) returns to the basic features of the classical film score: use of a symphony orchestra, wall-to-wall scoring, support

for the drama, and unity through leitmotifs and thematic transformation. John Williams avoided employing a theme song or any reference to popular music, other than the saloon music on Tatooine, where we learn that the origin of jazz was not the 1920s in New Orleans, but "a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away" (44:50). Williams writes for the traditional symphony orchestra in a standard yet colorful manner. Grounded in the traditions of Max Steiner and Erich Korngold, Williams also assimilates some of the qualities of twentieth-century concert music, particularly the American nationalism of Aaron Copland. Within his general musical style, Williams is able to quote and imitate works by a range of twentieth-century composers. For example, the stuttering rhythms that accompany the Imperial fleet and the dramatic chords at the destruction of the Death Star (1:57:00) are obvious references to Gustav Holst's symphonic poem "Mars" from *The Planets*.



FIGURE 21.2 In *Star Wars*, the music from Holst's "Mars" accompanies the destruction of the Death Star.

As in scores from the classic age, the music for *Star Wars* supports the many varied emotional states—love, concern, sadness, and triumph. Music for the fighting sequences incorporates characteristics of Korngold's adventure scores, including hard accents, syncopation, loud dynamics, and occasional thematic references (see Chapter 9). In these sequences, music is often coordinated with sound effects. In the climactic attack on the Death Star, music accompanies the early stages of the battle. Eventually, the music subsides, leaving just sound effects. Williams was thus able to pinpoint the imminence of the climactic moment by having the music reenter with a horn call just before the last, desperate run at the Death Star (1:53:20).

CLOSE-UP: DOLBY SOUND

Listening to Movies

Once the technology for sound was established in the late 1930s, there were relatively few new developments in this aspect of filmmaking. Movie theaters were reluctant to change their systems again, and World War II turned the nation's focus away from entertainment. But with the crisis of Hollywood in the 1950s, new technology was seen as a way to enhance the theater experience and distinguish it from television. Over the next decades, substantial improvements in the sound of film took place. There were three principal developments in sound enhancement.

The first step was a move toward stereo during the 1950s. Sound engineers began recording with five to six microphones and then played the sound back in the theaters through seven speakers—five were placed behind the screen and two were placed on the sides for a surround-sound effect. In order to enhance the sound further, superior magnetic tapes were sometimes used. These effects proved most beneficial in large theaters, where the enhanced sound was a major factor in films such as *Ben-Hur* (1959), *Spartacus* (1960), *West Side Story* (1961), *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), *The Sound of Music* (1965), and *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968).

But the innovations of magnetic tape and stereo were not universally adopted, since smaller theaters refused

to invest in the new technology. As the sound of home entertainment improved with FM radio and stereo by the early 1970s, many movie theaters lagged behind the quality of sound that could be achieved in the home.

The second major step was the development by the Dolby Laboratories of a noise-reduction system for tape recording and reproduction, which reduces the amount of random noise created during the recording process. The system was first used by the film industry in the recording of Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), and later for the complete sound recording of *The Quiet Revolution* (1974). But the breakthrough film was *Star Wars* (1977), which made Dolby Sound a household name. The impact was tremendous. In 1977 there were one hundred theaters in the United States with Dolby Sound, one year later there were four hundred fifty, and by 1981 over two thousand theaters were equipped for Dolby.

The third major development was computer-aided digital sound. Digital recording eliminates the extraneous noises that normally result from multiple recordings of sound necessary in creating a film; hence, the final sound has the clarity of the original recording. Among the pioneer films with digital sound were *Edward Scissorhands* and *Dick*

Continued on next page

Tracy, both from 1990. Dolby quickly adapted to the new technology and developed an optional playback system that could be used on most major systems, whether or not they were equipped for digital sound.

The first film using Dolby Stereo with digital sound was *Batman Returns* (1992), and shortly afterwards the system was successfully used for *Aladdin* (1992) and *Jurassic Park* (1993).



FIGURE 21.3 Princess Leia is accompanied by a gentle Princess theme.

Traditional film scores often feature one dominant leitmotif, like the Shark theme in *Jaws*. But for *Star Wars*, the first of a trilogy of films, Williams increased the number of themes, and he reused many of them in the subsequent films, just as Richard Wagner had done in his monumental *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Of the four principal themes from *Star Wars* shown in **VIEWER GUIDE 21.1** (see **EXAMPLES 21.1-21.4**), three represent individuals—Luke, Leia, and Obi-Wan. The fourth, the Rebel Fanfare, is applied more loosely, but generally denotes the forces of the rebellion. All of these leitmotifs recur in *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and *Return of the Jedi* (1983). The theme for Leia appears the least frequently in subsequent films. The gentle, feminine quality of Leia's theme provides an effective contrast to the other melodies and is certainly appropriate when Luke is first attracted to her. But the theme loses some of its effectiveness when she is blasting away at stormtroopers. In *The Empire Strikes Back*, Leia, for the most part, loses her solo theme but gains a love theme that she shares with Han Solo.

Luke Skywalker's theme is the best-known melody of the film and is often referred to as the *Star Wars* theme. It is heroically sounded at the beginning of all of the *Star Wars* movies, including the prequels and sequels. Luke's theme goes through many transformations, depending on what is happening to his character. After his uncle tells him that he needs to stay at home for another year, woodwinds play his theme, suggesting his sad and isolated state (25:15). In the climactic attack on the Death Star, his theme can be heard sadly, pensively, and triumphantly.

The other major theme belongs to Obi-Wan Kenobi. This theme is first heard when Leia sends a message to Obi-Wan through R2-D2 (4:50). The theme is clearly identified with Obi-Wan when he rescues Luke (30:15).

Because it is in the minor mode while the score is otherwise dominated by major, it creates an effective contrast in sound. When Luke looks up at the Tatooine sky with two suns, Obi-Wan's theme appears in a brief but lush setting (25:30). The meaning is unclear, but the emotional impact is effective. After Obi-Wan's death, the theme will signify either his spirit or Luke's use of the Force. Appropriately, Obi-Wan's theme is transformed into the closing triumphant march (1:58:30). As is made clear in *The Phantom Menace* (1999), Obi-Wan is the principal hero of *Star Wars*; Luke's most important heroics are yet to come.

The Empire Strikes Back

As happens with some sequels, *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) is a stronger film than the original. In addition to the improvements in special effects, the story has better dialogue, stronger characters, and a more developed plot. Rather than following a single plotline from beginning to end, as in *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back* crosscuts between three plotlines: Luke seeks Yoda, a master Jedi teacher; Han and Leia flee from the Imperial forces; and Darth Vader plots against the heroes. The three strands of the story eventually reunite and propel the film to a dramatic climax.

The music for *The Empire Strikes Back* was one of the most anticipated scores in film history, and it did not disappoint. In addition to most of the themes of *Star Wars*, three new leitmotifs appear (see EXAMPLES 21.5–21.7). Foremost among these is the sinister Darth Vader theme. In *Star Wars*, Vader lacks a distinctive theme; dark chords and a stuttering rhythm provide a generally unobtrusive background for this strong character. In the sequel, he becomes an even more dominant figure in the story and hence needs a stronger musical presence. Keeping the stuttering rhythms from *Star Wars* as an accompaniment, Williams adds a menacing new tune, often intoned in the low brass.

Two other major developments in the film are also reflected in the music. Princess Leia and Han Solo fall in love, and they are given an appropriate love theme. In addition, we are introduced to Yoda, another key figure in the *Star Wars* saga. His lyrical theme suggests wisdom and gentle strength. Each of the new themes represents one of the three strands of development in the plot, and each will recur in *Return of the Jedi*.



FIGURE 21.4 The motive for the Force plays as Luke looks at the two suns.

VIEWER GUIDE 21.I

The Empire Strikes Back: "This is no cave"

Composer: John Williams



Timing

DVD: Lucasfilms 20th Century Fox (50:45–1:00:55)

Setting

In one plot development, Han Solo (Harrison Ford) and Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher) are trying to escape Imperialist ships by taking refuge in a cave located on a large meteor in an asteroid field. This lull allows them to repair the ship and heat up relations. Overseeing the pursuit of both Han and Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) is Darth Vader, who is with the main Imperial fleet. Meanwhile, Luke has crash-landed on the planet Dagobah looking for the Jedi instructor, Yoda. Unknown to Luke, the small irritating creature is the famed master.

Key Points

- Three strands of plot are interwoven
- Leitmotifs for most of the principal characters
- Underscoring for a variety of emotions

Principal Themes

Example 21.1 Luke Skywalker

Example 21.2 Obi-Wan Kenobi/The Force

Example 21.3 Princess Leia

Example 21.4 Rebel Fanfare

Example 21.5 Darth Vader



Example 21.6 Love (Han Solo and Princess Leia)



Example 21.7 Yoda



PLOT	MUSIC
Princess Leia is struggling with some equipment on the ship. Han makes romantic advances, and she weakly resists. They kiss.	After a lyrical introduction, the Love theme enters in the French horn. The theme is given in a full a-b-a form, ending with a crescendo as they kiss.
C-3PO interrupts the romantic moment, and Leia slips away.	The mood changes. The low string pizzicato adds a bit of humor.
Darth Vader, insisting that Han and Leia are still alive, orders the search to continue. He leaves the asteroid field to communicate with the Emperor.	Darth Vader's theme is heard twice with its distinctive stuttering accompaniment: once under the dialogue and then more forcibly as the ship moves out of the asteroid field.
The Emperor expresses concern about Luke Skywalker. Vader promises that Luke will either turn to the Dark Side as an ally or die.	Dissonant chords and a colorful orchestration set an ominous mood for our encounter with the powerful Emperor.
On Dagobah, Yoda prepares food for an impatient Luke.	No music
Yoda expresses his reluctance to take Luke as a student, and the voice of Obi-Wan responds.	Obi-Wan Kenobi's theme is heard in the woodwinds.
Luke recognizes that the diminutive creature is Yoda, and pleads to be taught.	Luke Skywalker's theme and quiet chords are played. A rhythmic pulse accompanies Yoda as he walks.
Yoda says that he has been watching Luke and that he is not ready.	Yoda's theme is played in a low register.
Obi-Wan argues on Luke's behalf.	Obi-Wan's theme reappears.
Luke promises not to fail.	Luke's theme is played quietly.
Luke says that he will not be afraid, but Yoda disagrees.	Ominous music is played that will recur during a later training exercise.
Imperial ships continue to look for Han and Leia, while shooting meteors.	Action music can be heard underneath the sound effects.

Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
A creature outside of the ship startles Leia; Han goes out to protect the ship.	No music
Exploring outside, they encounter and shoot a couple of Mynocks (flying creatures).	Mysterious and ominous music is sustained. With each appearance of a Mynock, the music provides a loud jolt.
Han shoots at the cave, and when it reacts, he realizes that it is really a large wormlike animal.	A fast rhythmic pulse begins in the low strings.
While everything is shaking, Han hurries them inside and starts the ship.	Hard syncopated chords, a dominant brass section, and a fast pulse project a sense of danger.
The ship races out, escaping safely just before the teeth close.	A dark brass tune is heard while they speed down the throat. The music climaxes as they reach safety—for the moment.

The excerpt outlined in Viewer Guide 21.1 is taken from the crosscutting portion of the film. Four segments are included, featuring Han and Leia, Vader and the Emperor, Luke and Yoda, and Han and Leia again. Each segment features a different musical approach. The first two center on single themes. For the initial scene of Han and Leia, Williams supplies a love theme that extends into a full a-b-a form. Following a crescendo when they kiss, the mood abruptly changes as C-3PO interrupts—a moment that strikes a common chord with parents of young children. The cut to Darth Vader occasions a strong musical contrast. His theme is played twice, the second time more strongly. During Vader's conversation with the Emperor, Williams abandons any reference to leitmotifs and creates an ominous, mysterious mood largely through a colorful orchestration that underscores the darkness of the characters and the eeriness of a conversation with a hologram figure.

As we cut to the planet Dagobah, music disappears, allowing us to focus on the quiet sound of rainfall. After seeing poor R2-D2 pinging in the rain, we enter Yoda's humble hut. In this segment we are presented with multiple themes. As the discussion shifts between Yoda, Obi-Wan, and Luke, the themes for each character underscore their role in the conversation. The whole is unified by a quiet, subdued mood that is broken only when Yoda warns Luke that he will become afraid.

The last segment begins with musical silence. Having been kissed, Leia is pondering the situation and listening to the distant explosions created by the Imperial forces. Once music enters, it supports two moods. At first, a

mysterious and ominous atmosphere is created as Han begins to notice that the cave does not feel right. Once he realizes that it is not a cave but a large wormlike creature, the music abruptly swings into action with a fast pulse, hard syncopated accents, and a prominent brass section. The exhilarating music creates tension as the *Millennium Falcon* barely squeezes out between the closing teeth of the creature. While Williams's use of themes is a main topic in discussions of his music, these action sequences and other mood cues are also essential to the success of his scores for *Star Wars* and other action films.

Return of the Jedi

Return of the Jedi (1983) presents no new major themes. As in *The Empire Strikes Back*, a number of subsidiary themes are created. Of these, the theme for the Emperor—heard when the Emperor arrives at the new Death Star (38:25) and when the Emperor confronts Luke (1:31:30 and in subsequent cuts back to this scene)—will gain significance in the prequels (see EXAMPLE 29.1). The score for *Return of the Jedi* contains some of the finest orchestration in the trilogy. One of the musical highlights occurs at the death of Darth Vader (1:59:40). His weakened state is reflected in the music, as his once powerful theme is played quietly and slowly using solo woodwinds, string harmonics, and the harp, the instrument of angels, which is still an effective cliché for death.



FIGURE 21.5 The death of Darth Vader is accompanied by a transformation of his musical theme.

OTHER SCORES OF JOHN WILLIAMS IN THE LATE 1970s

Often overlooked because of the *Star Wars* sensation is another outstanding musical score by John Williams from 1977, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. A cross between a conspiracy film and a fantasy, this classic science-fiction film features a five-note musical theme that plays a critical role in communicating with the extraterrestrials (see EXAMPLE 21.8). The theme appears in the chanting from Northern India (37:20), in the child's instrument (48:30), and ultimately in an improvised duet between human and visitor (1:58:30). Along with the score to *Star Wars*, the more extensive use of music for *Close Encounters* marks a clear departure from recent trends in film music.

Example 21.8 Close Encounters of the Third Kind



In the following year, Williams created another popular sensation with the score for a film about a comic book hero, *Superman*. As in *Star Wars*, Williams composed a stirring heroic theme for the principal character, presented at the beginning of the film and during action sequences. Williams also composed a beautiful love theme, which gained popularity as “Can You Read My Mind?” The latter is heard most strikingly when Superman takes Lois on an evening fly-around (1:32:00).

THE EARLY 1980s

In the wake of John Williams's exhilarating scores to *Jaws*, *Star Wars*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, and *Superman*, the virtuoso studio orchestra returned to Hollywood, and action films became Hollywood's biggest moneymakers. Of the top ten box-office winners in the 1980s, seven were action films supported by full symphonic scores. As can be seen in TABLE 21.1, the trend remained strongest until 1984, after which the quality and popularity of these types of films diminished.

Also evident from this list is the dominance of John Williams. During the 1980s, Williams solidified his position as Hollywood's premier composer. In that time, he received eleven Academy nominations, and he scored a remarkable six of the decade's top ten box-office winners: the top three—*E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), *Return of the Jedi* (1982), and *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980)—and the trilogy of Indiana Jones films—*Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984), and *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989).

E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial

E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial, another collaborative effort of Spielberg and Williams, marks a high point for the revival of the classic film score. Combining elements of the adventure and children's genres, *E.T.* captured the nation's imagination and provided high-quality entertainment that appealed to the entire family. The childlike mood of the music is largely accomplished through orchestration. The *E.T.* theme is heard predominantly in the piccolo, harp, and celesta, all of which produce delicate sounds. Throughout the film, the colorful yet gentle sounds of woodwinds play a leading role. The full force of the orchestra is reserved for moments of exhilaration and awe, and the menacing sounds that accompany the federal agents and even the death scene are scored relatively lightly.

TABLE 21.1 Major action films, 1977–1989

YEAR	FANTASY/ADVENTURE	COMPOSER	OSCAR
1977	<i>Star Wars</i>	John Williams	!
1977	<i>Close Encounters of the Third Kind</i>	Williams	☒
1978	<i>Superman</i>	Williams	☒
1979	<i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i>	Jerry Goldsmith	☒
1980	<i>The Empire Strikes Back</i>	Williams	☒
1980	<i>Superman II</i>	Ken Thorne and Williams	
1981	<i>Raiders of the Lost Ark</i>	Williams	☒
1982	<i>E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial</i>	Williams	!
1982	<i>Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan</i>	James Horner	
1983	<i>Return of the Jedi</i>	Williams	☒
1983	<i>Superman III</i>	Giorgio Moroder, Thorne, and Williams	
1984	<i>Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom</i>	Williams	☒
1984	<i>Star Trek III: The Search for Spock</i>	Horner	
1986	<i>Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home</i>	Leonard Rosenman	☒
1987	<i>Superman IV: The Quest for Peace</i>	Alexander Courage and Williams	
1989	<i>Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade</i>	Williams	☒
1989	<i>Star Trek V: The Final Frontier</i>	Goldsmith	
1989	<i>Batman</i>	Danny Elfman	

! = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination

Example 21.9 E.T. theme



In addition to the consistency of sound and mood, Williams unifies the score thematically. Rather than presenting multiple themes, as in *Star Wars*, Williams focuses primarily on two main themes—one for the protagonist (E.T.), and one



FIGURE 21.6 Elliot and E.T. say farewell, to the full sound of the orchestra.

for the antagonist (Keys). The E.T. theme is heard in several variations (the principal of which is [EXAMPLE 21.9](#)), but it is always given in a simple setting with a gentle character. The Keys theme is first played in the opening scene as we hear keys jangling; appropriately, it is in a lower register. Shortly thereafter, it is played with loud dynamics as E.T. is startled, but the melody never takes on the menacing sound given to Darth Vader in *Star Wars*. Once Keys reaches out (literally bends down) to Elliott, this theme disappears.

The final section of the film contains one of the finest examples of Hollywood film scoring. In an extended cue that lasts nearly twenty minutes (1:32:10), Williams takes us from Elliott's tragic sense of loss to jubilation at E.T.'s resurrection; humor and action as they escape; exhilaration when they fly; and sadness, joy, and awe at E.T.'s departure. Much of this music has been adapted by John Williams into a concert piece entitled *Adventures on Earth*. The full symphonic a-b-a version of the E.T. theme is heard while the boys are flying, and the final buildup of repeating variations of the E.T. theme leads to a powerful climax at the end of the film. Throughout the final passage, the music makes a strong emotional impact with its colorful orchestration, range of emotions, and the reappearances of the principal musical theme.

COMPOSER PROFILE

John Williams (b. 1932)

Born in New York, John Williams moved to California as a teenager. After serving in the Air Force, he studied at Juilliard and then returned to the West Coast. He worked as a pianist in both film and television studios. In the 1950s he began scoring for the television series *Kraft Theatre*. His early film scores were largely for comedies, such as *Gidget Goes to Rome* (1963), *A Guide for the Married Man* (1967), and *The Paper Chase* (1973). He won his first Oscar for adapting and orchestrating the score of the Broadway musical *Fiddler on the Roof* (1971). Following his work on *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972), he earned a reputation as a specialist in disaster films. This led to his scores for *The Towering Inferno* (1974) and *Jaws* (1975). Steven Spielberg recommended Williams to George Lucas for *Star Wars* (1977), and the association of these three creative artists produced some of the major films in recent decades.

Throughout his career, Williams has employed a wide variety of musical styles ranging from the avant-garde (*Images*, 1972) to jazz (*Catch Me If You Can*, 2002). Williams also served as the principal conductor of the Boston Pops for a number of years and is still active as both a composer and conductor. In all, Williams has received nearly forty Academy Award nominations, and he has won five Oscars.

Important Film Scores

- Valley of the Dolls* 1967 ☒
Fiddler on the Roof 1971 ♀!
The Poseidon Adventure 1972 ☒
Images 1972 ☒
The Towering Inferno 1974 ☒
Jaws 1975 !
Close Encounters of the Third Kind 1977 ☒
Star Wars 1977 !
Superman: The Movie 1978 ☒
The Empire Strikes Back 1980 ☒
Raiders of the Lost Ark 1981 ☒
E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial 1982 !
Return of the Jedi 1983 ☒
Empire of the Sun 1987 ☒
Home Alone 1990 ☒
JFK 1991 ☒
Hook 1991 ☒
Schindler's List 1993 ♀! Jurassic Park 1993
Saving Private Ryan 1998 ☒
Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace 1999
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone 2001 ☒
A.I.: Artificial Intelligence 2001 ☒
Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones 2002
Catch Me If You Can 2002 ☒
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban 2004 ☒
Memoirs of a Geisha 2005 ☒
Munich 2005 ☒
The Adventures of Tintin 2011 ☒
War Horse 2011 ☒
Lincoln 2012 ☒
The Book Thief 2013 ☒
Star Wars: Episode VII—The Force Awakens 2015 ☒

♀ = Best Picture Oscar

† = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination

Raiders of the Lost Ark

For the trilogy of films featuring Indiana Jones, Williams once again combined a strong heroic theme, a beautiful love theme, and an abundance of action music. The “Raiders March” has become one of the most popular musical excerpts from the 1980s, and it is frequently performed in today’s concert halls. The march is first heard in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), but not at the beginning of the film. Rather than appearing full-blown at the opening, as in *Star Wars* and *Superman*, the theme picks up momentum gradually, coming to its fullest statement as the “Raiders March” during the end credits. With the expansion of the closing credits in the mid-1970s to include just about anyone associated with the film, composers now have an opportunity to create extended musical numbers unfettered by dramatic demands. Williams makes the most of these opportunities. For the middle (or trio) section of the “Raiders March,” Williams uses the love theme associated with Marion (see EXAMPLE 21.12), first heard when her name is mentioned (21:30).

VIEWER GUIDE 21.2

Raiders of the Lost Ark: Chase

Composer: John Williams



Timing

DVD: Paramount 01376 (1:22:05-1:29:15)

Setting

Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford) has been engaged to find the Ark of the Covenant, a religious artifact that contains the tablets of the Ten Commandments. He is competing with his archrival Belloq, who is working for the Nazis. Indiana finds the Ark, but Belloq steals it. Surviving many dangers, Indiana emerges from the underground and begins to pursue singlehandedly on horse the caravan with Belloq, Nazi soldiers, and the Ark.

Key Points

- Symphonic score with action music
- Motives from the Raiders March

Principal Themes

Example 21.10 Raiders March a

Raiders March: a' same as above, but with two trumpets in harmony

Example 21.11 Raiders March b

Example 21.12 Marion (middle section of the Raiders March)

PLOT

Indiana talks to Sallah and Marion.

Indiana takes a white horse and rides after the caravan.

MUSIC

Trumpet plays a variation of March a.

Syncopated rhythms as in a western. The trumpet plays an extended March a.

PLOT	MUSIC
A box holding the Ark is shown on a vehicle with German soldiers.	Dramatic music, primarily in the strings.
Indiana is riding on the hillside.	The trumpet plays March a without alteration. After a syncopated interlude, a' enters.
Indiana races down the hill. He catches up to the truck.	March a is developed in the trumpets and then in the trombones.
Indiana fights with the occupants of the driver seats.	Accompaniment rhythm, silences, and variants of March a intermix.
The truck veers towards trouble.	The orchestra has repeated chords.
Indiana wins control of the truck.	A full March b with its cadence signals Indiana's temporary victory.
Indiana goes after the lead car. A trailing vehicle shoots at Indiana.	Action music; variations of March a are in the brass.
Indiana knocks the other vehicle off the road.	The trumpet plays March a.
Indiana deals with a motorcycle and another vehicle. Germans attack the truck. Indiana is knocked out of the truck and is about to be crushed.	Action music with repeated chords. Unpredictable accents and fragments of March a are heard. A disjointed trumpet line joins the accompaniment to the March.
Indiana goes underneath the vehicle and climbs back to the cabin of the truck. He overpowers the driver and drives off with the ark.	The accompaniment rhythm and action music suggest danger. A darker version of March b is heard when he climbs back on the truck. The March accompaniment and then phrase a return in a fuller statement with his victory.

The sequence in **VIEWER GUIDE 21.2** is only the second action sequence described in this text. The Williams excerpt is similar to Korngold's *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (see **VG 9.2**) in its loud dynamics, fast tempo, unpredictable accents, and motivic references to the hero. The principal difference is in the length of the hero's motive; for Korngold, it is four notes, and for Williams it encompasses several portions of the "Raiders March" and can extend over four measures. In this scene, four portions of the march theme are used: the opening (denoted as March a), a contrasting idea (March b), the return of the opening material with two trumpets in harmony (March a'), and the stuttering accompaniment. The action portion of the cue sustains tension and suggests danger, but references to the "Raiders March," particularly the stirring opening of the theme, coincide with Indiana's triumphs. The cue ends in a somewhat subdued tone; Indiana's victory is only temporary.

THE STAR TREK ENTERPRISE

The other major action series that began in the late 1970s is *Star Trek*, based on an immensely popular television series from the '60s. The two principal composers who worked on the initial films of the series are veteran Jerry Goldsmith and newcomer James Horner. Both composers, each with his own individual approach and style, incorporated the principal musical theme of the television series, created by Alexander Courage, into their scores.

Jerry Goldsmith has become the composer most closely associated with *Star Trek*. He composed music for the inaugural film and for four additional films, extending from *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* (1989) to *Star Trek: Nemesis* (2002). The score for *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (1979) established some new thematic ideas that would become part of the *Star Trek* tradition. The theme for the opening credits was later adapted as the main theme for the television series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and the music for the initial battle with the Klingons (4:55), complete with electronic sounds, has been recycled in later films and television episodes. As a whole, the film is notoriously slow-moving, but the music is memorable. The futuristic story allowed Goldsmith to employ a variety of adventurous colors, the extended montages gave him time to create substantial musical units, the brief action sequences contain strong action music, and the beautiful Lieutenant Ilia prompted Goldsmith to create one of his most lyrical love themes.

James Horner scored the next two films of the series: *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* (1982) and *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock* (1984). The opening of *The Wrath of Khan* quotes the theme from the television show directly, thereby gaining immediate approval from the multitude of devoted Trekkies. The television theme recurs in several stirring moments, the most dramatic of which is the death of Spock (1:39:00). The music for the opening credits contains three additional themes that are loosely associated with the starship Enterprise. Containing more underscoring and more melodic material, Horner's score is closer to the spirit of John Williams than to that of Jerry Goldsmith. Particularly effective is the music for the battle in the nebula (1:22:00), which contrasts action music with sustained orchestral colors that match the striking visual images. Much in the manner of the *Star Wars* trilogy, a number of the musical themes from this film would reappear in *The Search for Spock*.

TRAILER

With *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* and *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*, James Horner established himself as a major Hollywood composer. His breakthrough coincided with the return of the classical symphony score, and he would continue to excel with such scores into the twenty-first century. In the succeeding decades, new musical sounds and approaches would emerge in Hollywood, but the traditional symphonic score remained a viable choice for numerous filmmakers.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

blockbuster	Horner, James	Williams, John
Courage, Alexander	Lucas, George	
Holst, Gustav	Spielberg, Steven	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Observe clips from *The Wind and the Lion*, *The Omen*, and *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* and discuss Jerry Goldsmith's role in the return of the classical film score.
2. What impact does the music have on the audience's perception of *Jaws*? Is this film a Moby-Dick parable or simply a horror film?
3. For the original *Star Wars* trilogy, how does John Williams balance a reliance on memorable themes with the avoidance of monotony?
4. Watch *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and discuss the role of music in the story.
5. *Superman*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* all have blockbuster scores. How does Williams treat each differently?
6. Listen to music from the *Star Trek* television series and movies. How did they influence each other?

1975	<i>Nashville</i>	1979	<i>A Little Romance</i>
1976	<i>Rocky</i>	1980	<i>The Shining</i>
	<i>Taxi Driver</i>	1981	<i>Chariots of Fire</i>
1977	<i>Saturday Night Fever</i>	1982	<i>Blade Runner</i>
1978	<i>Midnight Express</i>	1984	<i>Amadeus</i>
	<i>Halloween</i>		

Alternatives to the Symphonic Score

22



Mozart conducts one of his own works in *Amadeus*.

Despite the overwhelming success of John Williams's music for action movies, many filmmakers of the 1970s and '80s did not feel the need to use symphonic underscoring in order to create a high-quality film. Indeed, between the Oscars given to John Williams for *Star Wars* (1977) and *E.T.* (1982), all four winners of the award for music were pointedly non-symphonic: *Midnight Express* (1978), *A Little*



Romance (1979), *Fame* (1980), and *Chariots of Fire* (1981). In general terms, we can speak of three non-symphonic kinds of music in Hollywood films during the peak years of action films; two have a significant history—popular music and adapted scores—and one is new to the 1970s: synthesized scores.

SYNTHESIZED SCORES

The **synthesizer** has had a major impact on film music. In addition to its usefulness in the creative process and in the practical production of scores and parts (see Close-Up: The Synthesizer), the synthesizer offers film composers a wider variety of musical colors than a symphony orchestra. There are three principal styles of synthesizer music heard in film music.

- Modern: In keeping with its original association with electronic music, the synthesizer can be used to create an electronic score with new colors.
- Traditional: Using its ability to imitate acoustic instruments, the synthesizer can replace the sound of an orchestra, create the sounds of individual instruments within an orchestra (piano, harp, drums, etc.), or augment the sounds of an instrument family in a recording, such as the violins. In these roles, the musical style imitates the traditional sounds of Romanticism.
- Popular: Largely through its association with rock musicians, the synthesizer has become an important element of the popular-music film score.

CLOSE-UP: THE SYNTHESIZER

Is It Real, or Is It Synthesized?

The synthesizer is an electronic instrument typically incorporating a keyboard. It is capable of imitating the sound of traditional acoustic musical instruments and of creating new sounds. Robert Moog developed a synthesizer in 1964 that was intended for the composition of electronic music and took the place of a large electronic studio. In 1970 Moog developed a portable model, and rock musicians soon began using the instrument in live performances.

A number of significant developments have expanded the instrument's capabilities. In the 1970s, a digital synthesizer was developed that produced a better sound quality and allowed performers to program

their own colors (called "voices" or "patches") into the machine. Through the 1980s, companies created software with additional colors or programming capabilities. In 1983 the Yamaha DX 7 introduced MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface), which allows the synthesizer to be connected to other synthesizers, drum machines, and computers. The early 1980s also saw the development of synthesizers that had the capability to record external sounds (called "samples") and re-create them through a digital process. In this way, one can record a musical instrument, such as a viola, or an external sound, such as a barking dog, and replay it through the synthesizer. The net result of

these developments was a tremendous expansion of the variety and quality of electronic sounds.

The synthesizer has had a huge impact on film-music composition. On the practical level, it allows the composer to explore a variety of orchestrations with relative ease and to create orchestral parts with the aid of a computer. Film directors have discovered that they can hear the basic qualities of the score without hiring an orchestra, and directors who have a background in music can create their own music, as John Carpenter did for *Halloween*.

The sounds of the synthesizer were first heard in film scores in the 1970s. Stanley Kubrick employed a synthesizer in *A Clockwork Orange* (1970). In 1978

Giorgio Moroder became the first composer to win an Oscar for a synthesized score, with *Midnight Express*. In addition to the well-known film scores of Vangelis, important synthesizer scores of the '80s include *Tangerine Dream's Thief* (1981), Howard Shore's *Scanners* (1981), Thomas Newman's *Reckless* (1984), and Maurice Jarre's *Witness* (1985). Rock musicians have tended to be knowledgeable about synthesizers, and a significant number of film composers from the late '80s and '90s were drawn from the world of popular music. The synthesizer still plays a major role in the creation and sound of film scores, but the newness of the sound has been diluted by its overuse in television.

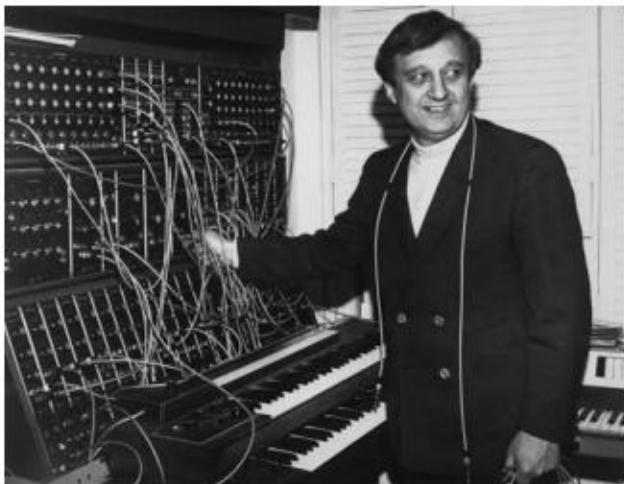


FIGURE 22.1 Composer-conductor Gershon Kingsley demonstrates the new Moog Synthesizer in 1969.



FIGURE 22.2 A later-model Moog Synthesizer



Midnight Express

In 1978, two completely synthesized scores demonstrated the versatility of the synthesizer: *Midnight Express* and *Halloween*. Italian-born Giorgio Moroder, one of the principal figures in the creation of disco, showcased a variety of synthesizer sounds and styles in the nightmarish film *Midnight Express*. Based on a true story, this film shows the grim experiences of an American youth imprisoned in Turkey. In the score, Moroder incorporated both modernistic

dissonances, for tension and the expression of anguish, and popular melodic material. In the process, he mimicked the sound of musical instruments, such as the piano, violin, and electric guitar, while also exploring new timbres.

The final cue is one of the most intriguing. As Brad makes his final break from a Turkish prison (1:55:15), a ballad is played quietly. When he opens the prison door, the tune assumes a Turkish character, reflecting the world outside the prison, but soon a Western popular style returns with a synthesized orchestration as he joyfully makes his escape. For this effort, Moroder became one of the few composers to receive an Oscar for his first score.

Halloween

While *Midnight Express* won critical praise, *Halloween* became a popular sensation, particularly with teenage audiences. Made on a limited budget, the film eventually grossed over \$18 million, a record at that time for an independent film. Director John Carpenter, who has a musical background, composed a number of synthesized cues that are used repeatedly throughout the film. Three of these synthesized segments can be heard in the scene described in **VIEWER GUIDE 22.1**. Each has been given a label (Michael, Halloween, and Tension), but these are not leitmotifs, as all of them relate to Michael, deal with Halloween, and are used to create tension.

VIEWER GUIDE 22.1

Halloween: Discovery, Attack, and Flight

Composer: John Carpenter



Timing

DVD: Anchor Bay DV11959 (1:19:45–1:29:35)

Setting

Michael has escaped from a hospital for the criminally insane and goes to his former home. Dr. Loomis (Donald Pleasence) is following him, hoping to bring him back to the hospital before he kills anyone. Laurie (Jamie Lee Curtis) is babysitting Tommy and Lindsay across the street from the house where her best friend Lynda has been making love with her boyfriend. Unable to contact Lynda by phone, Laurie crosses the street to see what has happened.

Key Points

- Music created with a synthesizer
- Michael's theme plays when Dr. Loomis realizes he is near
- Repetitive musical material creates tension

Principal Themes

Example 22.1 Michael



Example 22.2 Halloween



PLOT	MUSIC
Dr. Loomis is waiting outside for a glimpse of Michael. He notices the vehicle that Michael stole. Meanwhile, Laurie is concerned that Lynda does not answer the phone.	Michael's theme
After checking up on Tommy and Lindsay (both asleep), Laurie decides to see what has happened.	No music
Laurie stares at the other house and slowly walks toward it. She knocks on the door but gets no response. She tries yelling in the back without success. She enters the house.	The Halloween theme begins. The theme repeats at various pitch levels, and the four-note motive shifts to a lower register as Laurie approaches the house.
Inside the house, she continues to call for her friends. She hears a sound.	A sustained low pitch is added to the Halloween theme.
Thinking that this is a prank, she scolds her friends and looks for them downstairs.	No music
Laurie goes upstairs tentatively and approaches one of the bedroom doors.	A variation of the previous theme occurs at different pitch levels. This is replaced by a high-pitch clanging sounds.
Laurie opens the door and walks in.	The clanging sounds fade; the music stops.
Laurie sees Annie's dead body. Behind her is the grave marker for Michael's sister and a jack-o'-lantern.	A sharply accented high chord, sustained
Laurie backs up and causes Bob's body to swing back and forth.	An accented low chord
As she moves to another side of the room, a closet door opens, revealing the dead body of Lynda.	Another variation of the Halloween theme in a piano timbre with sustained high pitches
Terrified, Laurie leans against the wall. Slowly, we begin to see that Michael is next to her.	The piano sounds descend, and the high pitches return.

Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
Michael tries to stab her, and Laurie falls over the rail to the ground floor.	No music
Michael comes down the stairs. Laurie cannot get out the front door.	The Tension theme begins.
Laurie goes in the back room but cannot get out of the house. Michael begins breaking through the door, but Laurie finally gets outside. Yelling for help, Laurie goes to a neighbor, who responds by shutting off her light. She runs back to Tommy's house, but has lost her key. Michael continues to come toward her. She wakes Tommy, who opens the door.	A quick rhythmic pulse is added at a higher pitch level, followed by a trill-like sound as Michael tries the door. These three sounds continue together.
She tells Tommy to go upstairs.	No music

The Michael theme (see [EXAMPLE 22.1](#)), which opens the film, contains a repetitive ten-beat pattern (1-2-3, 1-2-3, 1-2, 1-2). The uneven pulse conjures up the image of Michael's lumbering gait as he pursues a victim. The repetitive rhythmic idea is presented in a piano timbre usually coinciding with a clicking sound. In most instances, a three-note ascending idea is added in a lower register. It is repeated at various pitch levels and presented in a timbre not associated with any acoustic instrument. The combination of a repetitive, lopsided rhythm, a low register, and an unworldly timbre unnervingly suggests Michael's cold, unrelenting, murderous nature.



FIGURE 22.3 The music provides a jolt when Laurie finds one of her friends murdered in *Halloween*.

The other two recurring motives are created out of similar material. The Halloween theme is first heard when the word “Halloween” is shown on the screen (16:55). Like Michael’s theme, it is stated in a piano timbre and begins with a repetitive idea, a rocking alternation between pitches. A four-note synthesizer motive is added in the upper register along with a raspy descending idea in the lower register; these ideas also wander through a variety of pitch levels (see [EXAMPLE 22.2](#)). The Tension theme is the simplest idea in the score. It begins by alternating a single accented note on beat one with two quick accented notes on beat three. Over time, a pulsating ding sound and a trill-like sound are added.

The tension in all three of these ideas is largely derived from repetition. Musically, we are waiting for something to happen, and emotionally, this keeps us anxiously anticipating a startling event for extended periods of time. Carpenter employed other musical devices to add tension to this film: there is often a high-pitched dissonance just prior to or in conjunction with a horrifying scene; he also used silence as an effective dramatic device; and he was not above adding a stinger during any sudden action or shocking moment. These elements and all three recurring themes can be heard in the scene of the attack on Laurie (see VG 22.1). At the end of the film, when Michael's body mysteriously disappears after being stabbed three times and shot six times and falling off a balcony, we are left with only Michael's haunting ten-beat theme. This melody reappears in all the sequels.

Vangelis

The Greek composer Vangelis achieved both critical and popular success with his synthesized scores to *Chariots of Fire* (1981) and *Blade Runner* (1982). *Chariots of Fire*, winner of Best Picture for 1981, also earned Vangelis an Oscar, largely on the strength of its main theme. Heard during the opening credits while we view Olympic athletes running on a beach, the theme features pulsating rhythms and a simple anthem, suggesting the joy of amateur athletics. For most of the film, the synthesizer re-creates the sounds of acoustic instruments, such as the piano, violin, horn, and wind chimes, but the sound lacks the vibrancy and emotional energy of acoustic instruments. The contrast in timbre between the synthesized cues and the source music further exposes the novelty of the synthesized sound.

Vangelis's most successful score is for *Blade Runner*. The film is set in the future (Los Angeles, 2019), and the synthesizer is essential to its vision of a mechanized, futuristic world. *Blade Runner* has a more sophisticated and varied score than earlier Vangelis films, including modern, symphonic, popular, and ethnic (Japanese) sounds. Although many remain critical of all synthesized soundtracks, the score to *Blade Runner*, "composed, arranged, performed, and produced" by Vangelis, stands as a virtuoso achievement in film scoring that served as a model for the future use of the synthesizer in action movies.

POPULAR MUSIC

By the mid-1970s, the role of popular music in all phases of film scoring had been well established. We can observe a couple of trends through the late 1970s and the 1980s. Rock music continued to gain acceptance in a wider variety of film genres. Among these are sports movies, as we will see with *Rocky*. In addition,

the splintering of popular music into distinct styles and sub-styles gave filmmakers numerous new choices while looking for fresh sounds. We only need to look at such diverse films as *The Blues Brothers* (1980) and *This Is Spinal Tap* (1984) to see differing musical styles at work. In this chapter, we will take a look at two films that integrated popular music into their scores, *Rocky* and *Taxi Driver*, and two films that featured distinct popular styles as source music, *Nashville* and *Saturday Night Fever*.

Rocky



FIGURE 22.4 Conti's energetic music accompanies a training montage in *Rocky*.

One of the surprise successes of the mid-1970s was Best Picture-winner *Rocky* (1976). Starring newcomer Sylvester Stallone, *Rocky* became the first great sports film since *The Hustler* (1962). Establishing a trend for the genre, a rock beat is heard during montages showing training sessions and competitions. As is typical of this time, music in the film is sparse, but Bill Conti's score, energized by rock influences, was a significant reminder of music's ability to elicit strong emotional reactions.

Conti mixed a brass fanfare, the principal love song, and rock music to create the most memorable cue of the film, a passage that captures the rawness of boxing and of the film's principal character. During the early portions of the film, the Rocky theme is heard only in fragments. But as the Italian Stallion gains strength and confidence, the theme begins to take its full form. Compare the two training sequences that end at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In the first (1:13:00), the piano and orchestra play in a moderate tempo and with subdued dynamics as Rocky struggles up the stairs. In the second (1:30:30), the orchestra, brass, and rock instruments create one of Hollywood's most energetic musical moments, a passage that is still used to inspire athletes.

Taxi Driver

Martin Scorsese turned to the city of New York for a story of urban decadence as seen through the eyes of a taxi driver (Robert De Niro). For *Taxi Driver* (1976), Scorsese employs a number of film noir conventions, including frequent night scenes, wet streets, a sexually active woman (Jodie Foster portrays a twelve-year-old prostitute), and interior monologues. Fittingly, Scorsese called upon the services of a composer who had helped to create the film noir musical style, Bernard Herrmann. This would be Herrmann's last score. He died on Christmas Eve, one day after finishing work on this film.

Herrmann incorporated a number of qualities of film noir scores, including predominantly low ranges, dark but colorful combinations of instruments, and frequent dissonances. Indeed, there are a significant number of similarities to the *Citizen Kane* score (see VG II.i), but with the distinctive addition of a jazz idiom. For the most part, the older musical elements fit well with the sound of American films of the 1970s. The music sets a dark mood, and the repetitiveness of the cues and the lack of contrasting materials underscore the monotonous world of the insomniac Travis, the ex-Marine taxi driver.

The music for the opening credits establishes the two principal ideas of the score. At the onset, the music centers on two low, dissonant chords featuring a descent of a major second. Subsequently, a saxophone enters with a sultry blues solo. While this melody provides a strong contrast to the dark chords of the opening, the two ideas are related, both melodically and harmonically. Note that the saxophone melody begins with the descent of a major second heard in the first chordal idea.

The two principal themes recur frequently during the course of the film. The first is heard primarily at night during scenes of decadence. The saxophone solo pervades the entire film. It is heard during night montages, and it accompanies the two women that Travis meets, a woman of the night and a woman of the day. The latter is first described as an angel, and a harp solo appropriately introduces the saxophone solo (10:20). The most significant transformation occurs after the climactic bloodbath, when the tune is loudly played by French horns, reminiscent of Prokofiev's climax in the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* (1935), expressing the frustrations of our protagonist and of the post-Vietnam War era (1:44:00).



FIGURE 22.5 The orchestra responds to the bloody climax of *Taxi Driver* with a strong lament.

Nashville

Robert Altman's *Nashville* (1975) has enjoyed considerable critical success. Among five Oscar nominations, it won for Best Music: Original Song (Keith Carradine's "I'm Easy"). Typical of the director's works, the film has an ensemble cast—in this instance, twenty-four main characters. Their various stories are presented in vignettes that are initially juxtaposed but eventually become intertwined. The sound of Nashville music, both country and gospel, creates continuity in the movie. During the numerous concert events, barroom performances, and recording sessions, the focus on the performers gives way to bits of dialogue or action that move the drama forward while also being musically entertaining.

VIEWER GUIDE 22.2

Nashville: Conclusion



Timing

DVD: Criterion Collection 683 (2:34:25-2:35:45)

Setting

The climactic scene, which occurs at a political fund-raising concert, brings together most of the characters in the film. Barbara Jean (Ronee Blakley) and Haven Hamilton (Henry Gibson) are scheduled to sing first. Linnea Reese (Lily Tomlin), a gospel singer, is waiting to perform with her choir. Observing from the wings of the stage are Sueleen Gay (Gwen Welles), an untalented singer who is scheduled to perform, and Winifred (Barbara Harris), a frustrated singer waiting for a chance to perform. Among the many familiar faces in the audience are Kenny Frasier, who always carries a violin case, and Glenn Kelly, a war veteran that has come to Nashville to see Barbara Jean perform.

Key Points

- The concert features three songs
- During the singing, various figures from the story are shown
- The simple song “It Don’t Worry Me” closes the film with an upbeat yet ambiguous mood

Songs

- “One, I Love You,” Richard Baskin
- “My Idaho Home,” Ronee Blakley
- “It Don’t Worry Me,” Keith Carradine

PLOT	MUSIC
Barbara Jean and Haven Hamilton are introduced.	The band plays an introduction.
The camera takes us from the flag to the stage.	They begin with the first verse to “One, I Love You.”
We see the audience, and various characters in the film filter in.	The chorus begins.
We continue to see members of the audience, including Glenn Kelly in uniform and Kenny Frasier, who argues with his father briefly. Kenny then moves closer to the stage.	The second verse and the chorus are sung.
Among others on stage, we see Winifred lying down, Sueleen standing with a pink dress, and members of the gospel choir.	After the music changes key, the chorus is repeated until the song ends.

PLOT	MUSIC
Barbara Jean thanks the audience, and Haven leaves center stage.	The band plays an introduction.
The camera's main focus is on Barbara Jean, but we see some others on stage as well.	Barbara Jean sings the opening verse to "My Idaho Home."
Barbara Jean is still prominent. A cut shows Kenny getting closer to the stage; he unlocks his violin case.	The chorus/refrain
The camera cuts between people onstage, Barbara Jean, Kenny, and the American flag.	Barbara Jean sings the extended second verse and the concluding chorus/refrain.
Barbara Jean acknowledges the applause, and Haven brings her a bouquet of flowers. Kenny shoots Barbara Jean and wounds Haven. Glenn wrestles Kenny to the ground. Haven asks for calm and urges everyone to sing. As he is led offstage for his wounds, he hands the microphone to Winifred.	No music
Winifred begins to sing tentatively.	She begins with the first verse to "It Don't Worry Me."
Winifred sings more strongly. We see Linnea and her gospel group.	She sings the repetitive chorus.
As Winifred continues, the band joins. Linnea leaves.	Second verse
The gospel choir and audience join Winifred.	The chorus is repeated multiple times with a number of key changes.

This effect can be observed in the final scene of the movie (see [VG 22.2](#)). For the most part, the visual focus is on the singers, but frequent cuts show individuals who have had a part in the movie both in the audience and onstage. The cutting also reveals an ominous new development. After two warm songs about friendship and family, it appears that Barbara Jean (Ronee Blakley) might be putting her life back together. Kenny (David Hayward), who had always carried his violin case with him like an aspiring country fiddler, pulls a gun out of the case and shoots Barbara Jean and wounds Haven Hamilton (Henry Gibson), bringing the fund-raising concert to a temporary halt.

In the chaos that follows, Haven asks Nashville to respond by singing, and the untested and aspiring singer Winifred (Barbara Harris) is handed the microphone. She initiates a song, and soon members of the band, gospel choir, and the audience join in as the film closes. Reflecting real life more than life as shown in Hollywood movies, this ending leaves a lot of unanswered questions about earlier story threads and adds several new ones, such as why Kenny shot

Barbara Jean, and whether Barbara Jean was killed. All we can walk away with is that Winifred has likely launched a career, and that the music entertainment business continues relentlessly, no matter what happens.

The three songs in this scene show the variety of treatment that can be given to the verse-chorus structure. All three have two verses, each of which is followed by a chorus. “One, I Love You” is the most standard of the three—each chorus uses the same lyrics, the melody is memorable, and the last chorus is repeated and altered to bring the song to a conclusion. The chorus for “My Idaho Home” is more complicated, as the verse has a clear structure and a strong melodic character, and phrases from the verse reappear in the chorus. This is a stark contrast to “It Don’t Worry Me,” which has a simple, repetitive chorus that encourages audience participation.

Within the simple formula of the verse-chorus structure, much variety can be achieved.



FIGURE 22.6 Disco became a craze largely due to *Saturday Night Fever*.

Saturday Night Fever

Saturday Night Fever, appearing the same year as *Star Wars*, created a great sensation with its disco dancing by John Travolta and songs by the Bee Gees, including the hit “Stayin’ Alive.” In a way, *Saturday Night Fever* is a throwback to the old Fred Astaire movies. The principal character is a dancer, and the plot is designed to provide multiple opportunities for dancing and the playing of popular music.

Disco had just begun to make an impact on the rock scene in 1975, and this film brought the style into the mainstream. The soundtrack by the Bee Gees sold over thirty million albums, demolishing all sales records for film music. Among the best films influenced by *Saturday Night Fever* are the popular musical *Grease* (1978); *Fame* (1980), which won Oscars for Best Score and Best Song; and *Flashdance* (1983), winner of an Oscar for Best Song.

ADAPTED SCORES

Going for Baroque

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, music from the Baroque era achieved a level of popularity. Film composers adapted numerous excerpts from eighteenth-century works, as the style of the Baroque era served as a distinctively fresh sound in a medium that had been dominated by Romantic, modern, and popular styles.

Among the many films that feature Baroque music are Best Picture-winners *Kramer vs. Kramer* (1979), which uses music of Antonio Vivaldi and Henry Purcell, and *Ordinary People* (1980), which contributed to the immense popularity of Johann Pachelbel's Canon. The most successful adaptation of Baroque music can be heard in *A Little Romance* (1979). Vivaldi's Guitar Concerto serves as a leitmotif for the young lovers, and excerpts from Vivaldi's Mandolin Concerto and one of his violin concertos make sense when we discover that the children's destination is Venice, the home of Vivaldi. Additional music is supplied by veteran French film composer Georges Delerue, who creates a lighthearted score with a mixture of Baroque and popular styles. Although there is a significant amount of adapted music, Delerue won the Oscar for Best Original Score.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Georges Delerue (1925–1992)

A student of the famed French composer Darius Milhaud, Delerue won the prestigious Prix de Rome in 1949. He began composing for films in the 1950s and became the leading composer for the New Wave. He achieved recognition in the United States for the scores for two Best Picture winners, and he received five Academy nominations, winning for the enchanting *A Little Romance*.

Important Film Scores

Hiroshima mon amour 1959

A Little Romance 1979 †

Shoot the Piano Player 1960

Agnes of God 1985 ☒

Jules and Jim 1962

Silkwood 1984

A Man for All Seasons 1966 ♀

Platoon 1986 ♀

Julia 1977 ☒

♀ = Best Picture Oscar

† = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination

The Shining

Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980) is a horror film featuring one of Jack Nicholson's most memorable performances. As in *A Clockwork Orange*, the score mixes borrowed excerpts with original synthesized music created by Wendy Carlos. All of the borrowed compositions are from the twentieth century: Béla



FIGURE 22.7 Danny encounters the twins to the music of Penderecki in *The Shining*.

Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta* (1936), György Ligeti's *Lontano* (1967), and six works by the Polish avant-garde composer Krzysztof Penderecki. The musical styles of Ligeti and Penderecki are similar; both employ sweeping gestures and sliding pitches. The excerpt from Bartók is one of his most colorful movements. All of these selections fit together appropriately and provide cohesiveness for the film.

Unlike the borrowed material in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, these works are consistently altered by cuts, deletions, and extensions. Kubrick also edited the film to match certain passages in the music. As a result, the music not only establishes a horrific atmosphere, but also punctuates dialogue, reflects physical movement, and reveals emotional reactions.

For example, when Danny (Danny Lloyd), the psychic son of the writer (Nicholson), rides his tricycle, encounters the twins, and envisions their mutilated bodies (49:15), the entire scene is tailored to work within the context of Penderecki's *De Natura Sonoris No. 1*.

The synthesizer also plays a significant role, especially in the early portions of the film. Ominous cues, similar to the simple musical ideas in *Halloween*, tell us of Danny's special abilities and warn us about the dangers lurking in the Overlook Hotel. Especially effective is the music for the opening credits, which presents a synthesized fantasy on *Dies Irae* (see **EXAMPLE 8.9**), the Gregorian chant for funeral services.

Amadeus

One of the most highly regarded films of the decade is the 1984 Best Picture-winner *Amadeus*. Based on a play of the same name by Peter Shaffer, the film depicts aspects of the life of Mozart as seen through the eyes of a jealous contemporary, Antonio Salieri. Filmed in Prague by Czech director Milos Forman, the lavish production gives great attention to authenticity in clothes, sets, decorations, food, and music. From the candle-lit theater to the narrow winding streets, the atmosphere of the late eighteenth century is realistically captured. There is also a great deal of authenticity in detailing Mozart's life: he was a brilliant child prodigy; he was able to memorize music

at first hearing; and he did compose drafts of great masterpieces with few corrections or alterations. Even some of the dialogue, such as Emperor Joseph's famous "too many notes," is taken from contemporary anecdotal accounts. But the film also takes license with some details. The vision of a conductor waving his arms, as seen in the image at the beginning of the chapter, makes good theater, but is inaccurate for the time. The art of conducting would develop in the nineteenth century.

The film explores two aspects of Mozart's life that are oddities. One is his lack of support in Vienna. Although he was recognized as Europe's greatest musical genius, he did not have the financial backing of a strong patron. The film suggests that this may be due to his erratic character. While his use of foul language can be documented, the ill-mannered behavior and hyena laugh we see in the film are strictly a dramatic interpretation.

More troubling are issues surrounding Mozart's death at the age of thirty-five. The presence of a mysterious stranger commissioning a Requiem Mass (the funeral service of the Catholic Church) is part of Mozart's legend, although the figure has since been identified as the Count Walsegg-Stupach, not Salieri. Mozart's death is attributed to rheumatic-inflammatory fever, but arguments that his symptoms are also consistent with poisoning have persisted. Although there is no credible evidence that Mozart was murdered, and certainly none to link his death to Salieri, the burial of Europe's greatest composer in an unmarked pauper's grave still raises questions.

The plot is revealed in a series of flashbacks. Former court composer Antonio Salieri, who attempts suicide in the opening scene, now resides in an asylum, left with just the memories of his fame. An ineffectual priest trying to bring him comfort serves as the catalyst for his recollections. The story begins to unfold as Salieri becomes increasingly aware of his mediocrity in comparison to Mozart. Angry with God for giving him the ability to recognize genius while being mediocre, Salieri decides to seek his revenge by attacking God's chosen one—Mozart.

The title *Amadeus*, taken from one of Mozart's middle names, suggests this central theme. Literally meaning "God's love," *Amadeus* presents a war between Salieri and God, with Mozart as the battleground. The film serves as a powerful allegory of the struggle between genius and mediocrity, both in society as a whole and within us as individuals. In the end, Salieri, the self-proclaimed patron saint of mediocrity, triumphs and absolves all those around him, including the priest, the inmates, and us.



FIGURE 22.8 Mozart's Requiem Mass sounds as his body is placed into a pauper's grave in *Amadeus*.

The film contains no newly composed music; nearly all the music in the film is by Mozart. His music is interwoven with the plot in a brilliant manner. At times, such as the opening section when we hear the Symphony in G Minor and the burial scene with the Requiem Mass (2:28:50), extended passages of his music are used as underscoring, requiring the film to be cut to match the flow of the music. In other moments, only brief excerpts are quoted. The film begins with the dark opening chords of *Don Giovanni*, and these four chords become the leitmotif for Mozart's father, Leopold.

Mozart's music is also heard frequently as source music. The most intriguing use occurs when music represents the thoughts of either Salieri or Mozart. When Salieri first reads a Mozart score (22:25), the music is diegetic—we are hearing what Salieri is reading. The music stops abruptly when Mozart snatches the score from Salieri's hands. At the turning point of the plot (54:40), Salieri decides to take his revenge on Mozart by seducing his wife, who seems receptive to the idea. But his attitude changes after he begins to read Mozart's music. Desperately looking at page after page of sublime music, Salieri hears each piece in his mind, and we, in turn, hear every change of composition. Confronted with first versions of absolute masterpieces without corrections, Salieri is stunned. He leaves the room and, in a powerful moment, burns his cross, vowing to hurt God by destroying Mozart.

VIEWER GUIDE 22.3

Amadeus: Dictation

Composer: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart



Timing

DVD: WB 36218 (2:16:35–2:24:35)

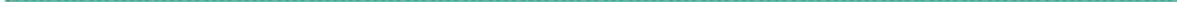
Setting

Salieri (F. Murray Abraham) has plotted to take the life of Mozart (Tom Hulce), steal his final composition (the Requiem Mass), and present it as his own memorial tribute for the funeral. In a weakened condition, Mozart dictates the Mass to Salieri, which means that the Mass will appear to be from Salieri's hands. Meanwhile, Constanza (Elizabeth Berridge), who had temporarily left her husband, is racing back to rejoin him.

Key Points

- Music is taken from Mozart's Requiem Mass
- The dictation allows us to hear the music created line by line
- The Mass serves as source music and suggests emotional qualities
- The film is edited to match the music

PLOT	MUSIC
A weary Mozart is struggling to focus. He asks Salieri if he believes in eternal damnation, and then dictates.	No music
Mozart sings the bass line and then asks to see the music.	As Mozart looks at the music, we hear the bass line.
Mozart dictates the tenor line.	The tenor line is heard as he dictates.
As Mozart describes the instrumental parts, Salieri has difficulties understanding.	The trombone and bassoon parts are heard.
Salieri still does not understand, so Mozart sings the harmony.	The trumpet chords and timpani sound as Mozart gestures with his hand.
Mozart dictates the fiery string part.	The unison strings play an energetic line.
Mozart dictates the contrasting "Voca me" section.	The soprano and alto lines are heard, followed by the orchestral accompaniment.
Mozart wants to see the music from the beginning. Crosscutting shows Constanza coming home in a carriage and Mozart reading the music.	The opening of the "Confutatis" begins with the cut to Constanza, suggesting her urgency. After we return to Mozart, the gentler "Voca me" section enters.
We cut back to the carriage, and then to Constanza holding their child.	The urgent "Confutatis" repeats with the initial cut, and the image of Constanza and child coincides with the gentle "Voca me" reprise.
Exhausted, Mozart continues to read the remainder of the movement and then wants to take a break.	The closing portion of the movement is performed. As it grows softer, the music suggests Mozart's physical condition.
Mozart asks Salieri to remain with him while he rests, and Salieri agrees. Mozart apologizes.	No music



In the dictation scene (see [VG 22.3](#)), Mozart is too weak to write the music and relates his ideas to Salieri, who copies them down. Line by line, we hear the "Confutatis" from the Requiem Mass being constructed, sometimes as Mozart reads the music off the page and sometimes as he dictates the parts. Once the

“Confutatis” and “Voca me” sections are completed, he asks to hear the music from the beginning, and the complete version is heard for the first time. The music here serves a double purpose: it reveals the finished work as heard in Mozart’s mind, and it underscores Constanza’s urgent race home. At this point, the film is edited to coincide with the music. Note how the cuts generally occur with changes of mood in the music. At the end, the “Confutatis” section moves to its quiet conclusion, suggesting Mozart’s exhausted state.

TRAILER

Amadeus takes us back to a distant time and place. In this film, Mozart’s music helps to establish a sense of reality for our vision of eighteenth-century Vienna. No other musical style—post-Romantic, modern, popular—could have succeeded quite so well. Other epic films created around this time take us to distant lands and ages, and the music in these films fills a similar role, as can be seen in Chapter 23.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

Altman, Robert	disco	synthesizer
Bee Gees	Forman, Milos	Vangelis
Carpenter, John	Moroder, Giorgio	Vivaldi, Antonio
Conti, Bill	Salieri, Antonio	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Research and discuss the history of the synthesizer. Listen to some excerpts such as Wendy Carlos’s *Switched-on Bach* and the main theme of *Chariots of Fire*. What are the major differences between synthesized and live sound?
2. Observe scenes or soundtracks from *Midnight Express*, *Blade Runner*, and *Halloween* to hear some of the variety of sounds from synthesized scores.
3. Compare the music for the two training montages in *Rocky*.
4. Using excerpts from *Taxi Driver*, revisit the topic of juxtaposing and combining popular and modern musical styles.
5. How does Robert Altman use music in *Nashville*? How does he move the drama forward through music?

6. Listen to the songs of the Bee Gees, such as "Stayin' Alive." What are the distinctive characteristics of disco? Multiple scenes from *Saturday Night Fever* have been posted online.
7. For *The Shining*, describe the music for the opening credits, Danny's encounter with the twins, and the winter maze.
8. Discuss the story of *Amadeus* in relation to the real life of Mozart. What is accurate and what freedoms did Shaffer and Forman take? Does the music in the movie enhance our appreciation of Mozart as a composer? The final burial scene is an excellent example of the use of Mozart's music for a powerful effect.

1984	<i>Beverly Hills Cop</i>	1986	<i>Top Gun</i>
	<i>Ghostbusters</i>		<i>'Round Midnight</i>
1985	<i>Back to the Future</i>	1987	<i>The Milagro Beanfield War</i>
	<i>Out of Africa</i>		<i>Empire of the Sun</i>
		1988	<i>Rain Man</i>

Box Office vs. Critics

23



'Round Midnight features numerous performances of jazz.

The *Star Wars* phenomenon exerted an enormous influence on Hollywood filmmaking. Though its impact is still being felt today, the frenzy for fantasy films began to wane in 1984. One of the outgrowths of the genre's immense appeal in 1977–1984 was a widening schism between critical and public tastes. The films that critics applauded were no longer the same films that the public preferred. Prior to the 1970s, the public and the critics were generally in agreement. As late as 1972 and 1973, the winners of the Best Picture award, *The Godfather* and *The Sting*, were also among the top ten box-office successes of the decade. But for the remainder of the 1970s, all of the 1980s, and most of the 1990s, no winner of the Best Picture award finished in the top ten financial successes of their respective decade. The only exceptions, both from the 1990s, are



Forrest Gump (1994) and *Titanic* (1997). The disparity is largely due to the dependence of blockbuster films upon repeated viewing by young teens, whose tastes generally run counter to those of adult critics.

Music highlighted these divisions; box-office hits after 1983 featured rock music, and the critic's choices generally used symphonic scores. By the mid-1980s, filmmakers had more variety of popular styles and combinations of styles at their disposal. Rock music continued to generate hits both at the box office and in record sales. Rock instrumentals and popular songs performed by unseen singers appeared increasingly within the body of a film. In general, the use of diegetic rock music was similar to that of earlier decades, but now there seemed to be less consideration for the relationship between the music and the drama. Many of the tunes were chosen for their ability to sell soundtracks rather than for the appropriateness of their lyrics or style for the drama.

NEW BOX-OFFICE KINGS, 1984–1988

In 1984 *Beverly Hills Cop* and *Ghostbusters* were bigger hits than *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* and *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*, thereby signaling the end of the reign of fantasy/adventure films. In the following two years, *Back to the Future* (1985) and *Top Gun* (1986) were the top box-office winners. All of these hits brought a new spirit to Hollywood movies with music that created a clear break from the John Williams symphonic sound.

CLOSE-UP: BOX-OFFICE HITS

Hollywood has always carefully calculated revenue, or box-office receipts, in order to evaluate their products from the business point of view. During the silent film era, *The Big Parade* (1925) was the top box-office hit. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) dwarfed earlier films and reigned as the all-time champion, but only briefly. *Gone with the Wind* was released in 1939, and it remains one of greatest financial successes in Hollywood history. Among the box-office successes of the next two decades were religious epics, such as *Ben-Hur* (1959), other Disney animations, including

Fantasia (1940), and musicals, led by *The Sound of Music* (1965).

The term "blockbuster" is borrowed from the military. In World War II, a blockbuster was a bomb that was capable of destroying an entire city block. Such a dramatic impact became a fitting name for films that had a similar effect on audiences. A new era in blockbuster movies began with *Jaws* (1975), which established the model for the "summer blockbuster," a major movie released around July 4. *Star Wars* again shattered attendance records, and

income from subsequent blockbusters continued to rise, as ticket prices escalated, the international market expanded, and the number of repeat viewers increased dramatically. As of this writing, these are the top-grossing films of all time, adjusted for inflation:^{*}

1. *Gone with the Wind* (1939)
2. *Avatar* (2009)
3. *Star Wars* (1977)
4. *Titanic* (1997)
5. *The Sound of Music* (1965)
6. *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982)
7. *The Ten Commandments* (1956)

8. *Doctor Zhivago* (1965)
9. *Jaws* (1975)
10. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937)

The relatively recent trend toward sequels has created a special box-office category for a film series. The most successful of these financially are predominantly action films, as evident in the top five movie franchises: Marvel Universe (*Avengers* and others), Harry Potter, James Bond, *The Lord of the Rings/The Hobbit*, and *Star Wars*. Not surprisingly, most of the blockbusters since *Star Wars* have received few critical accolades, a trend that will likely continue in the summers ahead.



Common to *Beverly Hills Cop*, *Ghostbusters*, and *Back to the Future* is the casting of comedians from television as heroes of action and adventure films. In these new box-office successes, there is more emphasis on comedy, the characters are realistic and easy to relate to, the films are relatively short, and the scores feature popular music, either exclusively or in combination with orchestral music.

Beverly Hills Cop

Eddie Murphy brought the ad-libbed humor and colorful language of *Saturday Night Live* to the detective genre in *Beverly Hills Cop*. The soundtrack, created by Harold Faltermeyer, contains only rock music, which reinforces the image of a tough Detroit cop bringing his street smarts and hip music to laid-back Beverly Hills. Throughout the film, music has four roles: to accompany the credits, to underscore montages of action or travel, to underscore the hero's character, and to serve as source music.

The first four uses of music in the film, while Axel (Eddie Murphy) is still in Detroit, illustrate these roles. The song "The Heat Is On" is heard during the opening



FIGURE 23.1 Axel hangs on for life as the audience enjoys "Neutron Dance" in *Beverly Hills Cop*.

*Recent inflation rates have not yet been determined. *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* will challenge for leadership of this list.

credits. The images of Detroit and the words of the song, performed by Detroit native Glenn Frey, establish the urban background that is essential to defining our protagonist. An action montage begins within minutes (4:45), and the long, destructive truck chase allows time for a second song to be performed in its entirety ("Neutron Dance"). The third cue (10:55) is a four-measure ostinato that becomes Axel's theme. Its funky character, amusing variations, and looping quality—it always leads back to the beginning—provide excellent support for Axel's character. A little bit later (13:15), diegetic rock music is heard in the poolroom as Axel and Zach become reacquainted. Although limited in its roles, the music sustains the film's high energy, appeals immediately to younger audiences, and contributes to both the setting and characterization of the drama. Of course, the music made money as a popular album as well.

Ghostbusters

Elmer Bernstein, a versatile musician who had created outstanding scores for science fiction, adventure, and comedy films, combined the sounds of all three in the music for *Ghostbusters*. Mixed in with his traditional symphonic style are a number of high-energy popular tunes. The free movement from one style to the other can be seen as a typical of the 1980s.

The opening brings these diverse musical elements together. Combining the timbres of an orchestra, a synthesizer, and an ondes martenot, dissonant sounds suggest the supernatural while we observe a librarian at work. The full orchestra takes over as cards begin to fly from the catalog—a librarian's nightmare—and action music accompanies her subsequent flight. Just at the dramatic moment when she screams, a drum roll ushers in a rendition of Ray Parker Jr.'s Oscar-nominated song "Ghostbusters." This mixture of musical styles, which would become commonplace during the decade, is evident throughout the film. A romantic melody played by a solo cello accompanies the cellist Dana (17:00); dark brass chords suggest the powerful dark world of Gozer, the ancient Sumerian deity (48:45); and energetic music rocks New York as it looks to be saved by the Ghostbusters (1:18:55).



FIGURE 23.2 Just as the librarian screams, the music breaks into "Ghostbusters."

Back to the Future

Back to the Future (1985) launched the film career of Michael J. Fox, who was already an established television star for his role in *Family Ties*. Because of his youthful looks, the twenty-four-year-old Fox successfully plays a seventeen-year-old who travels back in time and meets

his parents as teenagers. The film mixes considerable fun and humor with serious action and life-threatening situations. Supporting these divergent moods are multiple rock songs and Alan Silvestri's symphonic score.

In addition to filling the roles just described, rock music serves an additional purpose. The film can be divided into three time periods: 1985, 1955, and back to 1985. In each, rock music helps to establish the time period. Near the opening of the film, the contemporary song "The Power of Love" underscores a travel montage as Marty (Fox) skates to school (5:50) and later when he returns. Other '80s rock sounds can be heard at Marty's band audition (8:15) and from his clock radio (17:30).

When Marty walks downtown in the past, he hears two hits from 1955, "Mr. Sandman" (35:15) and "The Ballad of Davy Crockett" (37:20). Later, he joins Marvin Berry's band and performs another hit from 1955, "Earth Angel" (1:24:30). In a playful musical gag, Marty then leads the band in a rendition of "Johnny B. Goode" (1:27:15), which prompts Marvin to call his cousin Chuck to have him listen to the new sound. Chuck Berry would record this hit song in 1958. A final bit of musical humor occurs when Marty returns to 1985. As he wakes, his clock radio features the contemporary rock sound of a song entitled "Back in Time" (1:46:35).

Silvestri's symphonic score also contributes to the success of this film. Standard orchestral clichés underscore the seriousness of the action scenes and lend credence to the bond between Marty and Doc (Christopher Lloyd), the eccentric scientist. Silvestri also creates a theme reminiscent of *Superman* that is heard in triumphant moments, like the antagonist Biff's encounter with manure (1:06:45). The theme, which is subject to a variety of transformations, is heard in a romantic setting when Marty's parents kiss for the first time (1:23:30).

Top Gun

In the summer of 1981, **MTV** began broadcasting on cable television. Rock videos, such as Michael Jackson's "Thriller" (1982), created an enormous sensation. Films, which already had MTV-like moments ("Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head" from *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, 1969), now embraced the concept of cutting montage scenes to match the length of a rock tune. Another major influence from television was Jan Hammer's rock-oriented music for *Miami Vice* (1984-1989), in which the main characters were often referred to as the "MTV cops." As a result, popular music in movies can be heard accompanying divergent montage scenes showing travel, the passing of time, fighting, and lovemaking.

The most successful film using the MTV approach is *Top Gun* (1986), with music created by Giorgio Moroder and Harold Faltermeyer. Rock music



FIGURE 23.3 After victory, Maverick celebrates to the “Top Gun Anthem.”

accompanies dizzying flying sequences that, along with Tom Cruise, made a great impression on young audiences. Moroder, who had received an Academy Award for his innovative synthesizer score for *Midnight Express* (1978), won his second Oscar with the song “Take My Breath Away,” written for *Top Gun*. Faltermeyer also created several of the musical numbers, including the “Top Gun Anthem,” which serves as an effective theme song played on electric guitar. In the climactic scene, an energized rock beat accompanies all the action after Maverick (Cruise) takes off (1:31:45) until the music erupts into the “Top Gun Anthem” eight minutes later, following victory.

POPULAR MUSIC IN DRAMATIC FILMS

Increasingly, dramatic films were featuring popular music. The scores that won Oscars in 1986 and 1987 for Best Score are based on a popular music idiom. Both deal with serious issues, and neither uses rock music. *'Round Midnight* is one of the finest films to come out of the 1980s. Inspired by the lives of a number of jazz musicians, the film depicts a burned-out jazz musician in Paris and his friendship with an adoring fan. The realism of the views of two great cities—Paris and New York (Martin Scorsese has a cameo, in which he extols the virtues of his beloved city)—extends to the principal actor, Dexter Gordon. Gordon was a jazz musician with no acting experience, yet his realistic portrayal earned him an Oscar nomination. There is little underscoring in the film, but there are abundant jazz performances, projecting moods of both warmth and sadness. Herbie Hancock, one of the leading jazz figures of the time, prepared the music and also played the role of the pianist Eddie.

Dave Grusin won an Oscar for his enjoyable score for *The Milagro Beanfield War*. Grusin's experiences as a jazz musician and a composer of popular music in films since the 1960s were brought together in this unpretentious film. Mixing American and Mexican popular and folk sounds, Grusin created a warm atmosphere that pervades this basically serious look at Hispanic life in New Mexico. The film is an example of magic realism, a literary movement primarily associated with Latin America, in which fantasy and realism are mixed, creating a sense of instant mythology. The music sustains a magical quality throughout. The film avoids announcing a stern moral, which makes it vastly different from the populist films in the 1940s and the films with liberal themes in the 1970s.

Rain Man

Box-office success, critical recognition, a serious theme, and rock music came together in the 1988 Best Picture winner, *Rain Man*. The film follows the transformation of Charlie (Tom Cruise) after meeting his brother Raymond (Dustin Hoffman), who has a condition often referred to as savant syndrome. At the beginning of the film, Charlie is a slick-talking, self-serving, emotionally detached businessman. After his father dies, he learns that the three-million-dollar inheritance has been left in a trust to his brother, who he did not know existed. Charlie kidnaps Raymond and begins a journey from Cincinnati to California. In the process, Charlie learns much about his brother, savant syndrome, and his own past. Dustin Hoffman won an Oscar for his brilliant portrayal of a real-life figure.

The music for this film by newcomer Hans Zimmer created a sensation for its understated use of rock music idioms. The score features a number of vocal soloists in a wide variety of popular styles, ranging from calypso to Gershwin. Extended instrumentals created by the synthesizer are also employed. As in other popular music scores we have looked at, the cues establish single moods, whether joyful, sad, or nostalgic. There are no contrasts within a given cue. A simple, gentle theme featuring a flute serves as the principal theme, which recurs periodically during the journey and at the end of the film. Music is heard mostly during travel montages, but it also underscores serious moments in the dialogue. In most of these cues, the music is subdued in mood, tempo, and volume.



FIGURE 23.4 Charlie and Raymond's drive is accompanied by a quiet rock drumbeat in *Rain Man*.

VIEWER GUIDE 23.1

Rain Man: Las Vegas

Composer: Hans Zimmer



Timing

DVD: MGM 0-641 (1:23:10–1:32:20)

Setting

Charlie (Tom Cruise) needs money to save his business. Desperate, he kidnaps his savant brother Raymond (Dustin Hoffman), who has inherited

Continued on next page

three million dollars from their father. While traveling, Charlie has learned many of Raymond's idiosyncrasies and suddenly realizes that his amazing ability to memorize can earn money at the blackjack tables in Las Vegas.

Key Points

- Use of source music
- Rhythmic pulse for driving montage
- Added vocals for Las Vegas
- Lack of contrast in mood

PLOT	MUSIC
In a restaurant, Charlie is irritated by Raymond until he realizes that Raymond has memorized the jukebox selections.	From the jukebox we hear "Lonely Women Make Good Lovers" (Freddy Weller and Spooner Oldham, 1973; sung by Bob Luman).
At their car, Charlie tests Raymond's memory with cards.	No music
While driving to Las Vegas, Charlie explains the rules for the game and their betting signals.	A strong rhythmic pulse begins and underscores the dialogue.
They arrive in Las Vegas, and Charlie pawns his watch for cash.	Vocals enter, both a soloist and an ensemble. As we see the image of the angel Gabriel, the singer mimics a siren.
They enter the hotel. Raymond gets new clothes and a haircut.	Quieter, but the vocals reenter as the two dapper men descend the escalator.
Entering the casino, they are bombarded by the sights and sounds of gambling. They approach the card table, ready to begin.	The music gets quieter again, allowing the sound effects from the casino to be more prominent. Vocals announce their arrival at the card table.
Early on, Raymond makes a mistake, but he helps Charlie win a double down.	The music is reduced to the rhythm section, but crescendos with the victory.
A montage shows them winning over \$80,000 as casino officials try to figure out how they are cheating. Finally, a gambling wheel distracts Charlie.	The music continues without pause, but fades in and out to allow for dialogue.

At the opening of the card-counting episode (see [VG 23.1](#)), we hear a country song as source music. Charlie, at his most desperate moment, is initially irritated with Raymond's behavior, but his mood quickly brightens when he realizes that Raymond's ability to memorize would serve him well in Las Vegas. During the montage of the trip to Vegas, the instrumental underscoring, created by a

synthesizer, projects renewed energy, reflecting both Charlie's spirits and their intended destination. Once they arrive, voices are added, and the energy remains high throughout the card game. Without changing the mood, Zimmer allows room for dialogue and humor by bringing the vocals and melody in and out of the texture. Overall, the high volume of the music and sound effects, often coupled with dizzying visual images, contributes to a sense of overstimulation, providing us with a glimpse into Raymond's world.

SYMPHONIC SCORES

While popular music dominated box-office hits and supported a greater variety of dramatic films, traditional scoring maintained a high profile in films dealing with historical people in various non-Western settings. Some of the best of these films are from international centers (see Chapter 24), and the plots tend to be based on events in the twentieth century. Two outstanding American films represent this trend well: *Out of Africa* (1985) and *Empire of the Sun* (1987).

Out of Africa

Drawn from the life and writings of Danish author Karen Blixen (aka Isak Dinesen), *Out of Africa* received seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Director (Sydney Pollack), and Best Music: Original Score (John Barry). Karen, portrayed by Meryl Streep, narrates this autobiographical tale of moving to Africa, marrying a baron, and falling in love with a hunter named Denys (Robert Redford). Dramatic events within the story include the coming of World War I, Karen's contracting syphilis from her philandering husband, and ultimately the tragic death of Denys just prior to her return to Denmark.

The film shows the interaction between African and European cultures. Source music incorporates both: Africans are accompanied with drums and call-and-response songs, while Westerners have a marching band, dance music, bagpipes, and recordings of Mozart. In this film, which appeared one year after *Amadeus*, Mozart's music is highlighted as the favorite composer of Denys, who has given Karen a phonograph player. At the heart of the film, though, are beautiful visions of Africa, generally accompanied by John Barry's lush score. The lack of African qualities in these cues reinforces the basics of the



FIGURE 23.5 Karen and Denys fly over the African landscape to John Barry's beautiful music in *Out of Africa*.

plot—we are seeing this African drama through the eyes of a European woman, and the Europeans, though fewer in number, are the politically dominant culture in the region.

The most successful elements of the music for this film can be heard in the excerpt described in **VIEWER GUIDE 23.2**. Initially, we hear the second movement of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto. For the most part, the music of Mozart has come from the phonograph, clearly source music. Here, though, there is no obvious source for the music, so the music has become non-diegetic. The original concerto movement is in three major sections, what is referred to as an A-B-A form. The A section has two parts, each of which is repeated: a a' b b'. The melody for the initial portion of each of these subsections is played on the clarinet, while the repetitions are for the orchestra. The full version of the A section of the concerto is heard at the beginning of the film. In the quotation of the concerto for this scene, the music starts at b, which has a descending melody followed by repetitions at successively higher pitch levels (a procedure called a sequence). For the first time in the film, the music continues into the B section, which has a livelier character.

VIEWER GUIDE 23.2

Out of Africa: Africa and Denys

Composer: John Barry



Timing

DVD: Universal 20250 (1:50:40-1:58:35)

Setting

In Denmark, Karen Dinesen (Meryl Streep) marries the Baron Bror Blixen (Klaus Maria Brandauer) out of convenience. They go to Africa to live on a farm, but the Baron pays little attention to the farm or Karen, and he engages in extramarital affairs. Karen falls in love with a game hunter named Denys (Robert Redford), and the two begin a close relationship.

Key Points

- Mozart's Clarinet Concerto reflects Western dominance and the love relationship
- The beauty of Africa seen from an airplane has a lush symphonic theme

Principal Theme

Example 23.1 Africa



PLOT	MUSIC
After a funeral, Karen explains Denys's absence, and the film immediately cuts to Denys standing in the plains with the sun setting. Karen then narrates as we see a montage of their relationship.	The second movement of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto, beginning with the second half of the first theme.
Karen is on the farm without Denys. A plane flies overhead, and she mounts a horse to follow.	The middle and livelier portion of the Mozart movement begins, then fades out.
Denys lands the plane and asks Karen to fly with him.	No music
The plane flies over African terrain.	Introductory melodic material with voices
They pass over birds in flight.	The Africa theme in the violins
Denys flies above the clouds. They hold hands.	The theme is repeated in a higher register. At the end, the music ceases, leaving just the sound of the wind.
Karen and Denys have an intimate moment in bed.	Gentle music
Karen's husband arrives and asks for some money.	No music
Karen and Denys ride off for a picnic. Denys says that he is leaving.	The strings play a portion of the Africa theme. A low-register flute enters.
We see Denys's plane taking off.	No music



The underscoring begins just after the plane leaves the ground. During breathtaking views of the African landscape and wildlife, the serene music unfolds in two distinct parts. The first, which has an introductory quality, alternates twice between a horn melody doubled by men's voices and a violin melody doubled by women's voices. The last violin-women's chorus statement is extended and leads to the principal melody. This tune (see EXAMPLE 23.1), played primarily by the strings, has two balanced phrases. When Denys takes the plane above the clouds, the melody is repeated at a higher pitch level. At the end of the flight montage, the music stops so that we hear just the sound of wind at this high altitude. The remaining two cues in this excerpt maintain the mood and some of the thematic ideas of the flight. Most notable is the use of a solo low-register flute as they sit on the African plains. Karen asks to be buried on

the hill overlooking their picnic spot, which is, ironically, where she will bury Denys. The serene beauty of the music of both Mozart and Barry reflects the beauty of Africa and the depth of Karen's love for Denys.

COMPOSER PROFILE

John Barry (1933–2011)

English composer John Barry was born into a cinematic environment, since his father owned several movie theaters. Barry began his musical career in a military band and later formed a rock band. After arranging music for *Dr. No*, he scored a number of other Bond films. His versatility became apparent with *Born Free*, a winner of Academy Awards for both song and score. In all, he received five Oscars, and he worked on three films that won the Best Picture award. He is perhaps best noted for his ability to create lyrical melodies.

Important Film Scores

<i>Dr. No</i> 1962	<i>Midnight Cowboy</i> 1969
<i>Zulu</i> 1964	<i>Somewhere in Time</i> 1980
<i>Goldfinger</i> 1964	<i>Out of Africa</i> 1985
<i>Born Free</i> 1966	<i>Dances with Wolves</i> 1990
<i>The Lion in Winter</i> 1968	<i>Chaplin</i> 1992

■ = Best Picture Oscar

! = Best Music Oscar

□ = Music Oscar Nomination

Empire of the Sun

The eighth collaboration of Steven Spielberg and John Williams, *Empire of the Sun* (1987) combines plot elements of *E.T.* (1982) and *Schindler's List* (1993). Set in Shanghai during World War II, the film portrays a Japanese internment camp for British prisoners as seen through the eyes of a young boy named Jim (Christian Bale, a future Batman). Like *Out of Africa*, the story deals with British culture in a non-Western region from the perspective of the British. At the outset, we hear an English boys' choir singing the Welsh lullaby "Suo Gan," followed by the sounds of Jim's mother playing Chopin on the piano; the music is as much a part of Western culture as the English manor where they live and the Western architecture in the banking district of Shanghai.

The diverse musical styles are soon combined. In Jim's journey to a masquerade party (10:10), Williams mixes the Chopin piece with a newly composed melody. For their surreal visions of the city, Williams adds dissonant harmonies, a wordless

boys' choir, and a children's tune in a fascinating musical collage. Such musical diversity is also reflected in the contrast between the next two cues. As Jim plays in a downed airplane, beautiful ethereal music is heard (15:30). In contrast, when Jim sees Japanese soldiers, avant-garde Western music features the timpani, additional Western percussion, and a shakuhachi (Japanese flute) (17:55). Throughout the film, Williams paints a vivid musical portrayal of the mixture of the three distinct cultures: Chinese, Japanese, and Western.

TRAILER

By the end of the 1980s, film music had expanded its palette to include traditional symphonic scores, numerous types of popular music, both disturbing and accessible modern sounds, and a range of non-Western musical styles. Musical diversity continued to expand through the next decade, as filmmakers and film composers built on the accomplishments of the past and created innovative scores that would carry us into the twenty-first century.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

Barry, John	Hancock, Herbie	Spielberg, Steven
Faltermeyer, Harold	MTV	Zimmer, Hans
Grusin, Dave	Silvestri, Alan	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Discuss the issue of the box office vs. the critics. In recent memory, how many films were successful at the box office and received general critical approval?
2. Observe clips and listen to portions of the soundtracks for *Beverly Hills Cop*, *Ghostbusters*, *Back to the Future*, and *Top Gun*. What do they share in common? How are they different?
3. Research and listen to the music of Lester Young and Bud Powell as preparation for watching *'Round Midnight*. Discuss Dexter Gordon's portrayal and listen to his recordings as well.
4. Play multiple scenes from *Rain Man*. What was new in Zimmer's score?
5. Compare the European and African music in *Out of Africa*. Were the musical choices by John Barry appropriate?
6. Observe scenes from *Empire of the Sun*. How does Williams's treatment of non-Western music differ from that in *Out of Africa*?

SIGNIFICANT
FILMS

1982 *Gandhi*
1984 *Paris, Texas*
1986 *The Mission*

1987 *The Last Emperor*
Babette's Feast
Wings of Desire
1988 *Cinema Paradiso*

Global Views of the Past and Present, 1975–1988

24



Gabriel befriends the natives with an oboe in *The Mission*.

Borderlines between national centers of filmmaking began to blur in the 1970s and '80s. Many films that became major international successes were produced through the cooperative efforts of two or more countries. During the '80s, the Academy of Motion Pictures awarded Best Picture Oscars to three movies with multiple countries of origin—*Chariots of Fire* (1981), *Gandhi* (1982), and *The Last Emperor*

(1987). All three are historical dramas based on twentieth-century events. Because of the landmark use of synthesized music, *Chariots of Fire* was discussed in Chapter 22. *Gandhi* and *The Last Emperor*, like Best Picture-winner *Out of Africa* (see Chapter 23), are epic stories set in non-Western locations.

HISTORICAL FILMS

Gandhi

Gandhi (1982), a product of England and India, is one of the finest film biographies, commonly known as **biopics**. It depicts the life of the great political and spiritual leader of twentieth-century India, beginning with his activities in South Africa. The score includes a substantial amount of Indian music, largely created by Ravi Shankar. Shankar, who became famous in the West during the 1960s and '70s as the teacher of Beatles guitarist George Harrison and for his collaborations with other Western artists, supplied a number of passages for sitar and Indian drums. Indian music is heard during the intermission, the closing credits, and in several montages, such as Gandhi's journey on a train (48:30). Functioning much like John Barry's melodic cue for the airplane ride in *Out of Africa* (see Chapter 23), the music here

is an entirely different style. For the African film, the story focused on Westerners, and hence the cue was in a Western style. In *Gandhi*, the main character has just arrived in India, and Indian music is more appropriate.

George Fenton contributed Western music cues to the film; they generally underscore dramatic moments. The two styles are sometimes combined. In the opening scene, Indian music initiates the underscoring. Soon, Western string instruments enter unobtrusively, playing dissonant material that foreshadows the assassination of Gandhi. When the opening scene concludes, mournful Indian music accompanies Gandhi's funeral procession. In a similar but more extended passage, the music for the march to the Indian Ocean begins quietly as a song (2:09:10). Indian instruments are soon heard, and the music climaxes with the addition of a Western orchestra.

The Last Emperor

Appearing in the same year as *Empire of the Sun*, *The Last Emperor* (1987) was nominated for nine Oscars and won all nine, including Best Picture and Best Original Score. The

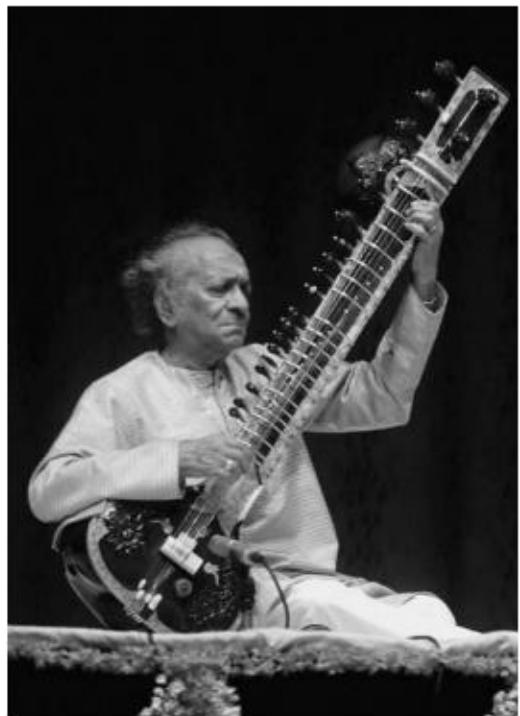


FIGURE 24.1 Ravi Shankar playing a sitar

production of this movie involved filmmakers from China, Italy, England, and France. Extending from 1908 to 1967, the film tells the story of Puyi, the last Chinese emperor, whose power was usurped by revolution. Filled with fascinating visions of Chinese culture, this was the first Western film the Chinese government allowed to be filmed in the Forbidden City. The plot constantly cuts between the present, where the former emperor Puyi is held in a Communist reform prison, and the past, which shows the major events leading up to the Communist takeover.

Befitting such a story and setting, the music, created by the combined efforts of David Byrne (lead singer of the Talking Heads), Ryuichi Sakamoto, and Cong Su, thoroughly incorporates the traditional sounds of Chinese music. For the opening credits, a haunting melody is played on an erhu (see FIGURE 24.5), a Chinese two-stringed bowed instrument similar in sound to a violin. The melody, accompanied by Chinese percussion and a xylophone, is later played by a pipa (see FIGURE 24.3), a Chinese plucked-string instrument. Ethnic Chinese music is particularly prominent during the portions of the film showing the emperor's early years. As Western culture exerts more influence on China and even within the walls of the Forbidden City, Western musical styles, including Romantic, modern, and popular, are more pronounced.



FIGURE 24.2 The funeral procession following the assassination of Gandhi

VIEWER GUIDE 24.1

The Last Emperor: Puyi Becomes Emperor

Composers: David Byrne, Ryuichi Sakamoto, and Cong Su



Timing

DVD: Artisan 60496 (6:30-15:45)

Setting

Puyi is presently a political prisoner. After having unsuccessfully attempted suicide, he recalls becoming emperor at the age of two.

Continued on next page

Key Points

- Use of traditional Chinese source music
- Western music suggests emotions in the story
- The erhu is combined with Western instruments

Prominent Melody

Example 24.1 Erhu melody



PLOT	MUSIC
An entourage of diplomats, soldiers, and eunuchs arrives to take the two-year-old Puyi from his home.	A string ensemble projects Puyi's painful memories of his separation from his mother.
The entourage halts and a declaration is read. Puyi is prepared for the journey.	A sustained chord with percussion suggests the sound of Chinese music briefly. The strings enter with a strong rhythmic idea.
The declaration mentions their destination—the Forbidden City. Puyi is brought out.	The erhu melody begins, accompanied by the strings supplying Western harmony. The strings return.
The entourage leaves with Puyi.	The erhu plays a mournful melody as the procession leaves.
A transition takes us to the Forbidden City.	No music
Buddhist monks chant as Puyi passes.	Source music: chanting, with drones played on dung-chen. Other instruments enter near the end.
Puyi is taken into the palace. The dying Empress talks to Puyi.	The Buddhist source music continues faintly in the background.
The Empress is moved to the center of the room, where she declares that Puyi will be the new Emperor.	Slow, quiet music from ethnic instruments
The Empress dies. A black pearl is placed in her mouth.	No music
Buddhist monks burst into the room playing music.	Source music from Chinese percussion and wind instruments
Puyi asks his father if they are going home. The father bows to him. We next see him on his throne.	No music

Some of these diverse elements can be heard in the scene in which the two-year-old Puyi is declared the new emperor of China (see **VG 24.1**). The two passages of source music in this segment reflect Buddhist traditions. As Puyi arrives in the Forbidden City, Buddhist monks are seen and heard chanting. Their sound is augmented with sustained drones from two dung-chen (see **FIGURE 24.6**), trumpetlike instruments approximately eight feet long that are frequently used during Buddhist prayers and ceremonies. This music continues in the distance as the drama inside the palace unfolds. Once the Empress has died, a ceremonial ensemble of Buddhist monks dances through the palace playing drums and several nasal-sounding wind instruments.

Most of the underscoring for this scene involves Western string instruments. Initially, they present a lament with several harsh dissonances as Puyi recalls being taken from his mother and home. After an energetic string passage, an erhu is added to the ensemble. The melody (see **EXAMPLE 24.1**), which recurs later in the film (49:40), is a simple tune that centers on a five-note (pentatonic) scale with a passing tone, a pitch that is outside of the scale. During the erhu solo, the strings continue to accompany with Western harmonies.

CLOSE-UP: EVOKING ETHNIC MUSICAL STYLES

Central to exotic settings in film are beautiful landscape panoramas accompanied by lush orchestral underscoring. The extent to which characteristics of ethnic music is used in these scores varies greatly. The following are among the options facing the composer and director:

- Ignore the indigenous culture and use a Western style only, whether Romantic, modern, or popular
- Include diegetic music reflecting the music of the non-Western culture
- Add ethnic instruments to the studio orchestra
- Incorporate stylistic characteristics of the other culture in the underscoring
- Create a score using the musical style of the region exclusively

During Hollywood's classic age, composers generally turned to well-recognized clichés when evoking the sound of another culture: guitars were heard in

scenes from Mexico; pentatonic melodies moving in simple, dance-like block chords on the flute and harp signified China; and melodies with an augmented second and percussion represented the Middle East. These are what audiences associated with those locations. Victor Young's colorful score for *Around the World in 80 Days* (1956) provides an abundant number of musical cues that only hint at authenticity.

Changes in this approach were brought about by directors wanting more authenticity in their films and by composers wanting new colors in their music. We have already observed the use of a zither in *The Third Man* (1949), and Maurice Jarre's inclusion of Arabian instruments in *Lawrence of Arabia* (1963) and a balalaika in *Doctor Zhivago* (1965). Composers in other countries often provided models of how to blend diverse musical styles, such as Fumio Hayasaka and his score for *Seven Samurai* from 1954 (see **VG 16.2**).

Continued on next page

Another major figure from Japan in this respect was Toru Takemitsu (1930–1996). Best known for his internationally acclaimed concert works, Takemitsu also composed over one hundred film scores.

By the 1980s, Westerners knew much more about world music, and respect for other cultures was growing. Ethnic instruments were frequently combined with Western instruments and harmony. This is a good time to review Table 2.3, which lists a variety of world instruments. John Williams uses a shakuhachi from Japan (see **FIGURE 24.4**) in *Empire of the Sun* (see Chapter 23), and we encounter within this chapter a sitar from India (see **FIGURE 24.1**), an erhu (see Figure 24.5), pipa (see **FIGURE 24.3**), and dung-chen (see Figure 24.6) from China, and an Andean flute from South America. As we move into the 1990s and beyond, we will hear continued blending of Western and non-Western musical traditions. Particularly notable at the turn of the twenty-first century is the growing adaptation of American rock by other musical cultures.

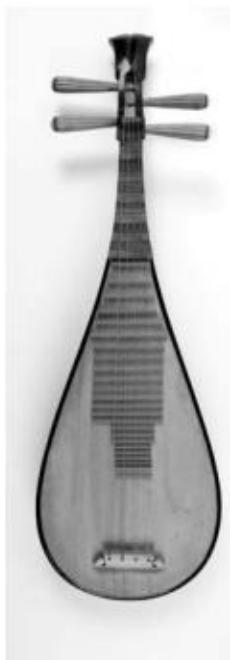


FIGURE 24.3 A pipa from China.



FIGURE 24.4 A shakuhachi from Japan



FIGURE 24.5 An erhu, a two-stringed Chinese instrument



FIGURE 24.6 Buddhist nuns play the dung-chen.

The Mission

One of the most forceful epics of the decade is *The Mission* (1986), the winner of the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. An English production directed by Roland Joffé, this film deals with a historical event set in a beautiful, exotic location. But unlike the historical epics mentioned earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 23, *The Mission* is set prior to the twentieth century and includes realistic visions of violence. Both of these qualities become important trends in films through the 1990s.

The plot is based on actual events surrounding the 1750 Treaty of Madrid, which gave part of the Spanish territory in South America to Portugal, making the newly baptized Guarani people subject to slavery. Although the Catholic Church officially approved of this turn of events, several Jesuit priests decided to remain at the mission and protect the natives. Framed by a scene showing Bishop Altamirano dictating a letter, this tragic story embraces both a personal drama and a historical struggle. This controversial film is a masterful artwork, combining brilliant cinematography, a powerful story, and an outstanding film score.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Ennio Morricone (b. 1928)

The Italian composer Ennio Morricone studied music in Rome and began his career scoring Italian films. His work for the famed director Sergio Leone, including the spaghetti western classic *A Fistful of Dollars*, brought him international attention. Active in Europe and Hollywood, Morricone is one of the most prolific of all film composers—he has worked on over four hundred movies. His ability to write in diverse musical idioms has made it difficult to ascribe a distinctive style to him. He has received six Academy nominations, winning Best Music for *The Hateful Eight*. He was also awarded an Oscar for Lifetime Achievement in 2007.

Important Film Scores

A Fistful of Dollars 1964

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly 1966

Once Upon a Time in the West 1968

Days of Heaven 1978 ☒

Once Upon a Time in America 1984

The Mission 1986 ☒

The Untouchables 1987 ☒

Cinema Paradiso 1989

Bugsy 1991 ☒

Malèna 2000 ☒

The Hateful Eight 2015 !

! = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination

Composer Ennio Morricone freely mixed historical, South American folk, avant-garde, and traditional Western symphonic and choral styles in a well-crafted score (No. 23 on the AFI List). This combination is an essential element of the powerful climactic scene (see [VG 24.2](#)). Filled with contradictions, the climax shows priests defending the Guarani with weapons and prayer. Both fail, as the mercenary slave traders massacre the Guarani and priests alike. In the underscoring, Morricone employed two peaceful ideas that run counter to the violence; one is heard as source music, and the other is part of the underscore. Morricone composed a motet on a Latin text beginning with the words “Ave Maria” (Hail Mary). Sung by the Guarani as they process to their death, the music is performed **a cappella**—that is, without instruments, a common sound associated with the Renaissance. In the final moments, the Gabriel theme is played joyfully in the underscore as the missionary meets his death with serene resignation. Surrounding this material is a distorted avant-garde sound that includes drums and a South American instrument, the **Andean flute**.

VIEWER GUIDE 24.2

The Mission: Climax

Composer: Ennio Morricone



Timing

DVD: WB 23497 (1:48:00–1:57:40)

Setting

Defying Church orders, several priests remain with the Guarani at the Mission. Gabriel (Jeremy Irons) leads a group in peaceful prayer, while Mendoza (Robert De Niro) and Fielding (Liam Neeson) help others to defend the area. A mercenary army has successfully scaled the cliffs and is attacking on land and water (a river that leads to the magnificent falls). At this point, the battle has turned against the natives.

Key Points

- Use of a folk instrument
- Avant-garde style
- Layered music
- Choir sings a Latin motet, *Ave Maria*
- Music runs counter to the mood

Principal Theme

Example 24.2 **Gabriel**



PLOT	MUSIC
A group of mercenaries arrive at the mission. Reluctantly, they launch fire arrows, and the church begins to burn.	The Guarani choir sings <i>Ave Maria</i> , a motet on a Latin text. Several drumbeats suggest the ominous situation.
At the river, mercenaries pursue Fielding's boat. Fielding is shot and killed. The Guarani continue to paddle, and they and the mercenaries plunge over the falls.	No music
Another round of fire arrows are shot at the church. The Guarani process out while being shot at.	An Andean flute plays a syncopated idea. The drumbeats sound again, and a dissonant high pitch is added.
While one group of Guarani attacks the mercenaries, Gabriel peacefully leads others. In the battle, the Guarani attack is repulsed.	A steady drumbeat suggests the military, and high-pitched dissonances continue to create a nightmare-like mood. Low-pitched sounds accompany visions of the dead.
Mendoza kills four mercenary snipers.	Voces begin that will lead to the <i>Ave Maria</i> .
Mendoza runs to the next line of defense, an explosive device under a bridge, which he prepares to detonate.	The <i>Ave Maria</i> and avant-garde timbres are combined. A strong rhythmic pulse builds tension.
Mendoza sees a wounded child and runs to save him. He is shot, and his line to the explosives is cut. Mendoza is shot repeatedly.	A variety of avant-garde sounds are heard, including a high pitch that adds intensity when Mendoza understands that all is lost.
The dying Mendoza watches Gabriel lead the peaceful Guarani in a procession.	In a layered effect, the <i>Ave Maria</i> returns as source music with a dissonant mixture of sounds in the background.
The Guarani are systematically shot and killed, a fate that soon takes Gabriel.	Gabriel's theme, suggesting his serene nature, is joyfully played on the oboe, accompanied by a prominent drumbeat.
A Guarani native picks up Gabriel's monstrance and walks to a certain death. The camera shows the village as it burns down.	Gabriel's theme comes to a religious "Amen" cadence. After the music fades, silence is broken only by the slow pulse of the drum.

The diverse musical styles are held together by a handful of musical themes. The motives for the priests and for the natives are similar, as both are set within the limited range of an interval of a fourth. The Priests theme, heard during the opening credits, has a sense of warmth and dignity that we can associate with Jesuit priests. In contrast, the Guarani theme is sprightly and suggests the joyful nature of these people. The oboe theme of Gabriel (see [EXAMPLE 24.2](#)), first heard when he attempts to convert the natives, as seen in the opening chapter image (11:00), provides a fresh contrast to the other material.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the score is the layered effect that Morricone created when he combined several musical ideas. In these passages, the

musical strands do not blend together as in a contrapuntal work but instead retain their own distinctive sound, so that we hear them as independent units played simultaneously. One such moment occurs when Mendoza, a slave trader, in the midst of a village festival, learns that his lover is having an affair with his brother. At first, we hear the diegetic festival music (22:40). Later, we see the festive celebrations, but hear only the underscoring depicting Mendoza's inner rage (24:20). Shortly thereafter, the two combine, creating an ominous effect that foreshadows Mendoza's murder of his brother.

Gabriel's theme is combined with the Guarani motive (usually accompanied by drums) on several occasions, reflecting the unity of Gabriel and the village. In addition, the climactic scene features layered effects combining the *Ave Maria* and dissonant underscoring. The most impressive layered effect is saved for last, during the closing credits. Here Morricone presented three layers—the traditional motet chorus *Ave Maria*, Gabriel's oboe theme, and the Guarani melody with drums.



FIGURE 24.7 Source music and underscoring are heard simultaneously in *The Mission*.

DRAMAS

The epic historic films just described gained international attention through their stories, craftsmanship, and music. During this same time, a number of films from international centers were created that emphasized more-intimate human dramas with simpler musical support. For many of these films, music is primarily diegetic, and the underscoring is either limited or absent. We will discuss four films that illustrate some of these points and show the variety and vitality of international filmmaking during the 1980s.

Cinema Paradiso

The Italian-French film *Cinema Paradiso* (1988), directed by Giuseppe Tornatore, tells of an old man, a beautiful woman, and a young boy's love for the movies. The plot unfolds through flashbacks, as a renowned filmmaker recalls his youth in a small Italian village. For the most part, his memories are warm and humorous.

The music, created by Ennio Morricone, with a love theme composed by his son Andrea Morricone, enhances the nostalgia of these recollections. Several light melodies recur throughout the film, usually performed on a piano or with a small ensemble dominated by strings. Since the mood supports the whimsical memories, the music often stays aloof from the story line. One striking example is the sound of the simple *Paradiso* theme played lightly in the background when the boy's mother is devastated as she hears that her husband was killed during the war (45:50). The music here belongs to the man's memories, not to the mother's anguish.



FIGURE 24.8 Morricone's theme captures the nostalgia surrounding the old movie house in *Cinema Paradiso*.

Babette's Feast

Like *Cinema Paradiso*, the Danish-French film *Babette's Feast*, directed by Gabriel Axel (1987), presents a simple human drama. A short story by Isak Dinesen (Karen Blixen), who was the central figure in *Out of Africa* (see Chapter 23), is the basis for the plot. In a small Danish village in the late nineteenth century, two elderly sisters with a strong puritanical upbringing take care of others in the village and host spiritual meetings at their home. In flashbacks we see their domineering father, who founded his own Christian sect, and the sisters as beautiful young women. In their youthful years, both sisters attracted attention from potential male suitors. The young Swedish cavalry officer Lorens Löwenhielm (Jarl Kulle) became enamored with Martine (Birgitte Federspiel), but he ultimately decided that his career was more important than love. A world-famous opera singer fell in love with Filippa (Bodil Kjer) and her beautiful voice. But after taking voice lessons, she rejected him in order to stay with her father.

In the present time, the sisters take in a stranger named Babette (Stéphane Audran) to cook and help around the house. Babette wins a large sum of

money in a Parisian lottery, and she uses the money to buy food and drinks for a sumptuous dinner gathering that includes the sisters, the members of their small congregation, and Lorens Löwenhielm and his aunt. Babette, as it turns out, is a former master chef from France, and the dinner not only provides the gathering with a once-in-a-lifetime meal, but also allows Babette to practice her art one more time.

The music for the film is somewhat limited. Per Nørgård's scoring is minimal and generally modern in concept. The sparseness of the instrumentation and the general dissonant quality contribute to the atmosphere of believers that live in a harsh environment and have rejected many of life's pleasures. The opening music for piano and a later cue for a piano and string ensemble (9:30) are particularly striking for their modernity. The musical heart of this film is its source music. In one flashback, opera tunes abound, including Mozart's seduction duet from the opera *Don Giovanni*, as the opera singer attempts to woo Filippa. Hymn singing is also heard throughout the film. As specified in Dinesen's story, "The Heavenly Jerusalem" is sung with piano accompaniment multiple times as the residents of the village cling to their faith.

VIEWER GUIDE 24.3

Babette's Feast: After Dinner

Composer: Per Nørgård



Timing

DVD: Criterion Collection 665 (1:32:00–1:36:05)

Setting

A former master chef in Paris, Babette (Stéphane Audran) has come into the simple service of two pious women who live in a small village near the Denmark coast. She wins a large sum of money in a Parisian lottery and uses the funds to create a sumptuous meal for the sisters, members of their religious sect, and a special guest, a man who chose a military career over marrying one of the sisters. After the meal, everyone has been spiritually uplifted by the food and drink. Animosities and differences have been forgotten.

Key Points

- A simple hymn bonds everyone together after the meal
- Strings play another hymnlike tune for Lorens's declaration of love and his departure

Prominent Melody

Example 24.3 Hymn: "If You Will Only Let God Guide You"



PLOT	MUSIC
The gatherers are enjoying after-dinner drinks as Philippa plays the piano. Former adversaries express their love for each other.	The entire Hymn is played without singing.
All listen and are moved by the music.	Philippa sings the first verse of the Hymn with piano accompaniment.
The dinner, wine, and music continue to work their magic. An elderly couple kiss, reviving their lost love.	Philippa sings the second verse of the Hymn.
The young servant helps himself to some wine.	The piano concludes the Hymn.
Lorens Löwenhielm and his aunt must leave.	No music
Löwenhielm says farewell and confesses his love for Martine.	A small string ensemble plays a hymnlike melody and accompaniment.

The most moving musical moment appears after the dinner (see [VG 24.3](#)), in which Philippa plays the piano and sings the hymn "If You Will Only Let God Guide You" as the members in the gathering, many of whom have had resentments toward each other, express their love rekindled by food, drink, and music. Afterward, Löwenhielm prepares to leave and tells Martine of his love for her. Quietly in the background, we hear a small string ensemble play another simple tune in a hymn style. This is a must-see movie for those who, like Denys from *Out of Africa*, enjoy a good story—and for those who love fine food.

West German Dramas

For our last two films, we turn to West Germany and the work of director Wim Wenders. *Wings of Desire* (1987), a product of West Germany and France, is a fantasy about angels and their roles on earth. Visible only to children and other angels, these spiritual entities intermingle with humans, hearing all of their thoughts and, at times, providing a touch of comfort. For American audiences,



FIGURE 24.9 Damiel watches the lives of people as we hear a solo cello and harp in *Wings of Desire*.

one of the highlights of the film is the appearance of Peter Falk playing himself.

Jürgen Knieper, who has both classical training and experience as a jazz performer, provided the music for the film. He wrote for a small ensemble of instruments—violin, viola, cello, harp, and two synthesizers—and a chamber chorus. The use of a harp was an intended reference to angels, and it is frequently heard when the angels are active. When Damiel and Cassiel (the two principal angels of the story) converse or simply observe, the cello tends to be prominent. The synthesizers often sustain harmonies for extended passages,

recalling the sound of ambient music (see Chapter 20). In an early scene at a library (16:20), layers of voices, reading aloud, are initially heard as Damiel (Bruno Ganz) and Cassiel (Otto Sander) enter. This sound is soon combined with sustained synthesizer chords and the chamber choir singing texts taken from newspapers. The choir frequently moves in and out of dissonant chords. The intensity of sound eventually subsides, as the focus turns to an old storyteller named Homer.

A far different musical effect can be heard in Wim Wenders's *Paris, Texas* (1984), the winner of the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. Production credits include West Germany, France, England, and the United States. For the score, Wenders turned to Ry Cooder, considered to be among the greatest guitarists in rock history. Cooder plays **slide guitar**. With the slide, Cooder can smoothly connect notes and create vibrato for sustained pitches—performance techniques that cannot be accomplished by fingers alone. His melodies provide a haunting background to this family drama that remains popular with critics and lovers of good movies.

TRAILER

The trend of creating films set in exotic locations continued through the 1990s and into the twenty-first century. The epic nature of these visions allowed film composers to write more-substantial scores with wider musical resources. The settings in other locales encouraged the incorporation of ethnic musical styles and instruments. As we will observe in the next unit, indigenous national styles would become an important tool in creating fresh sounds in the ever-changing world of film music.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

a cappella	Fenton, George	slide guitar
Andean flute	Knieper, Jürgen	Su, Cong
biopic	Nørgård, Per	Wenders, Wim
Byrne, David	Sakamoto, Ryuichi	
Cooder, Ry	Shankar, Ravi	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using non-Western musical instruments in a musical score. Cite examples from the text and personal experience.
2. Compare the use of non-Western styles and instruments in *Gandhi* and *The Last Emperor*.
3. You already know from his scores to spaghetti westerns that Morricone has often used multiple musical styles in a film score. What types of music did he employ for *The Mission*? Cite some examples of his layered technique.
4. *Cinema Paradiso*, *Babette's Feast*, and *Wings of Desire* are more-intimate films. Describe the musical ensemble used in each of the films. How are these ensembles similar? How do they differ?
5. Listen to the music of Ry Cooder and then view some of *Paris, Texas*. Why is the music appropriate for this film?

7

FIN DE SIÈCLE, 1989-2000

1989	<i>Glory</i>	1995	<i>Braveheart</i>
1990	<i>Dances with Wolves</i>	1997	<i>Titanic</i>
1992	<i>The Last of the Mohicans</i>		<i>Kundun</i>
1993	<i>Schindler's List</i>	2000	<i>Gladiator</i>

Historical Films

25



A string quartet plays while the *Titanic* is sinking.

The 1990s was one of the most remarkable periods in American history. The Cold War that had dominated international politics since the 1950s came to an abrupt end with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the unification of the two Germanys in 1990, and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The “Evil Empire,” as President Ronald Reagan called it, simply vanished, and the ever-present threat of nuclear holocaust subsided greatly. Because of these developments, the United States finally entered an era that President John Kennedy had once envisioned—“Pax Americana.” It would last twelve years.

As with the change in filmmaking from the 1950s to the 1960s, it is difficult to specify a single year as a demarcation point marking a new film age. For our



purposes, we have chosen 1989, the year the Berlin Wall came down. In that year a number of key films appeared that point to important trends of the 1990s, most notably the first in a series of animated films with high-quality music from the Disney Studios (see Chapter 27).

The period between the late 1980s and the present is characterized by diffusion. The blending of diverse musical types has created an atmosphere in which older and newer methodologies can be mixed, thereby blurring the line between formerly distinct styles. In film music, symphonic scores have often assimilated qualities of both modern and popular music. In the scores of John Williams, for example, Romanticism, jazz, American nationalism, expressionism, and the avant-garde coexist. Hence, we will complete our survey of film music with a focus on film genres rather than on individual musical styles or historical sub-periods.

Following trends established in the 1980s, a significant number of plots for major movies between 1989 and 2000 are based on history. Interest in twentieth-century people and events remained popular during these years, but, as in *The Mission*, films also showed us the more distant past. In the quest for a greater sense of reality, scenes of graphic violence are frequent. *Dances with Wolves* (1990) depicts with horrifying accuracy the frequency of amputations during the Civil War; *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) creates a realistic sense of the terror of D-Day; and *Schindler's List* (1993) illuminates the horrors of the Holocaust. Common to almost all of these historical dramas is a traditional score that includes a symphonic orchestra, a wide range of emotions, and leitmotifs. In this brief overview, we will also observe the appearance of a new musical style prevalent in contemporary concert music—minimalism.

THE DISTANT AMERICAN PAST

Glory

Within a short time span, three excellent films appeared that focused on historical events in America: *Glory* (1989), *Dances with Wolves* (1990), and *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992). Based on the true story of the first all-black regiment to fight in the Civil War, *Glory* paints a grim picture of this horrendous conflict. Images of rigidly formalized warfare, bloodshed, and makeshift hospitals show us the past with vivid realism. The efforts to re-create scenes with authenticity even extend to the source music cues, which are played on instruments from the Civil War era.

James Horner composed a gripping score for the film. As in many of his works, Horner employed distinct musical sounds that represent some aspect of the story. At the onset, we hear a solo trumpet and snare drums, standard sounds for military stories. These are immediately followed by the ethereal sounds of the Harlem Boys Choir, and it is this timbre that hauntingly lingers over the entire film. The vocal timbre suggests youthful innocence and, in this film, serves as a constant reminder of how modern society is built on the sacrifices of others.

The most powerful musical moments appear at the end of the film. As the regiment parades by the white Union soldiers, a former adversary yells "Give 'em hell, 54," leading to a stirring presentation of the principal theme (1:37:50). During the battle, music is withheld until Shaw, the white commander (Matthew Broderick), is killed (1:49:35). At this point, the music, which too closely resembles the opening of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* (see Chapter 20), creates an intriguing mood. Rather than reflecting the tragedy of the ensuing slaughter, it suggests the triumph of the African Americans, who have finally earned the right to fight and die for their country. In the closing moments, we see Shaw tossed into a mass grave with his company (1:54:00). Next to him is thrown the most rebellious of the black soldiers, played by Denzel Washington. As the Harlem Boys Choir sings the *Glory* hymn, we are reminded of the equality in death for blacks and whites, officers and soldiers.

Dances with Wolves

Dances with Wolves, directed by Kevin Costner, won seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Original Score. After a grimly realistic opening scene set in the Civil War, the film follows John Dunbar (Kevin Costner) going west. Reversing the traditional roles of westerns, Dunbar finds the Indians civilized and the whites savage. In creating this epic, Costner painstakingly researched and re-created Native American rituals; he even used Lakota dialogue with subtitles, lending a strong air of authenticity to the story.

A large part of the success of the film is due to the music by John Barry. Calling upon his gifts for lyricism and orchestration, Barry brings the lush, serene sound of *Out of Africa* to the beauty of the West and to the dignity of Native Americans. The film's numerous visions of landscapes, settlers, and Indians allowed Barry the freedom to write extended melodic cues with warm orchestrations. Particularly striking are the Wolf theme, a slow waltz first heard at 35:05; the vision of the Native American encampment (1:15:20); and the discovery and subsequent hunt of buffalo (1:45:00).



FIGURE 25.1 Dunbar's suicide ride leads to a Union victory and Barry's lyric theme in *Dances with Wolves*.

The Last of the Mohicans

Set during the French and Indian War, *The Last of the Mohicans* is based on James Fenimore Cooper's classic novel, which centers on a real incident—the massacre of more than two hundred people after they had surrendered to the French. Trevor Jones composed much of the score, and there are some additional cues provided by Randy Edelman.

The darkly beautiful title theme pervades the film (see [EXAMPLE 25.3](#)). It has no single association, but rather underscores a variety of moments. Most effective is the combination of the theme with beautiful panoramas showing America's natural beauty. The short-long rhythm in the third measure of the theme and in the subsequent measures suggests Scottish music—the figure is often referred to as a "Scottish snap"—and serves as a subtle connection to the Munro family, who come from Scotland. A prominent dance tune also signifies the presence of European immigrants (see [EXAMPLE 25.2](#)). First heard as source music (56:05), the dance tune is soon combined with a variation of the title theme played on a solo violin, as we watch Hawkeye (Daniel Day-Lewis) and Cora (Madeleine Stowe) in a moment of passion.

Both melodies return in the climactic scene of the film when Hawkeye and his Mohican family pursue the band of Hurons that has taken Cora's sister (see [VG 25.1](#)). Supporting this breathtaking chase sequence is the dance tune placed over an ostinato, a repeating eight-measure bass line that strongly suggests the Baroque era (see [EXAMPLE 25.1](#)). Adding to the characteristics of that period is the sound of a harpsichord, reproduced by a synthesizer. The repetitive nature of this cue creates a sense of inevitability, and the music remains detached from the stunning dramatic developments.

VIEWER GUIDE 25.1

The Last of the Mohicans: Climax

Composer: Trevor Jones



Timing

DVD: 20th Century Fox 2001088 (1:38:05-1:48:05)

Setting

European-born Hawkeye (Daniel Day-Lewis) was raised as the son of Chingachgook and as the brother of Uncas, who are the last of the proud tribe of Mohicans. The three hunters have witnessed the massacre of the remnants of

a British fort brigade, including the commander Colonel Edmund Munro, by a Huron war party. The Huron leader Magua, who planned the ambush, has captured the two daughters of Munro, Cora (Madeleine Stowe) and Alice, as well as a British officer Major Duncan Heyward. Just prior to the climactic scene, Magua has presented the prisoners to the tribal chief, expecting that the three would be burned. Hawkeye daringly enters the encampment and argues for their lives.

Key Points

- Repeating bass line
- Mixture of Baroque, Scottish, and Native American elements
- Contrast of nature's beauty to man's cruelty
- Mood of music runs counter to the action

Principal Themes

Example 25.1 Repeating Bass



Example 25.2 Dance Tune



Example 25.3 Title theme: America



PLOT	MUSIC
The Huron chief disagrees with Magua's violent ways. He compromises by giving Alice to him as a prize and deciding to burn Cora.	No music
Hawkeye and Heyward, both in love with Cora, offer to take her place at the stake. Magua leaves angrily. Since Hawkeye must speak through Heyward's translations, he is surprised when the chief accepts the British officer as a substitute.	A steady drum pulse begins.
Hawkeye hurries Cora away from the camp. Uncas leaves in order to save Alice. Taking his rifle, Hawkeye shoots Heyward, who is burning at the stake.	The Repeating Bass line begins with the Dance Tune melody.

Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
Hawkeye, Chingachgook, and Cora race up the mountain in order to catch up with Magua's party and Alice.	The music continues to repeat, with added orchestral instruments.
A panoramic vision of the American mountains and a waterfall intrudes upon the chase scene.	The lush Title theme overwhelms the chase theme.
The chase continues. Uncas is the first to engage the war party, but he is killed by Magua and thrown off the cliff, to the anguish of his father.	The chase music reemerges. At the end of the fight, the Dance Tune disappears.
Alice walks to the edge of the cliff and falls to her death. Cora sees this tragic moment.	The chase music is suspended while Alice lingers at the edge of the cliff.
The pursuit continues, and Chingachgook engages Magua in a fight and kills the Huron. He now stands as the last of the Mohicans.	The chase music resumes and comes to a final cadence with the death of Magua.



The unrelenting motion of the Dance Tune is broken twice. Early in the chase, the title theme momentarily overwhelms the chase music, as we are shown another view of America's natural beauty. In that moment we are reminded of the absolute beauty of nature, while watching the brutality of man. Later, the Dance is suspended to reflect two tragic moments. Magua (Wes Studi) slays Uncas (Eric Schweig), leaving his father to be the "last of the Mohicans," and Alice quietly steps off the edge of the cliff as her sister watches from a distance. The Dance resumes as Chingachgook (Russell Means) takes his revenge against Magua.

THE DISTANT EUROPEAN PAST

Braveheart

Braveheart (1995) is based on the life of the Scottish hero William Wallace. It is difficult to separate fact from fiction in the tales of this legendary figure. It is known that Wallace was a strong leader in the Scottish rebellion that led to the region's independence, and that he was captured and drawn and quartered (four parts of the severed body placed at the entrances to London) by the English. While the film does little to settle the historical questions, it does depict the free spirit expressed by the Scots of the time, and it creates a passionate story of heroism, betrayal, and triumph.

COMPOSER PROFILE

James Horner (1953–2015)

James Horner was born in Los Angeles. His parents moved him to London, where he eventually attended the Royal Conservatory of Music. Returning to California, he studied music as an undergraduate at the University of Southern California and received a Ph.D. in composition and theory at University of California, Los Angeles. He began scoring small-budget films in the late 1970s, and in 1982 he had a major breakthrough with the score to *Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan*. He was one of Hollywood's most respected and successful composers of symphonic scores prior to his untimely death in a plane accident.

Important Film Scores

<i>Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan</i> 1982	<i>Braveheart</i> 1995
<i>48 Hrs.</i> 1982	<i>Titanic</i> 1997
<i>Aliens</i> 1986	<i>A Beautiful Mind</i> 2001
<i>The Name of the Rose</i> 1986	<i>House of Sand and Fog</i> 2003
<i>Glory</i> 1989	<i>Avatar</i> 2009
<i>Field of Dreams</i> 1989	<i>The Amazing Spider-Man</i> 2012
<i>Apollo 13</i> 1995	

■ = Best Picture Oscar

! = Best Music Oscar

✉ = Music Oscar Nomination



During the opening scenes of Scottish mountains, James Horner used the sound of a **bagpipe** to help establish the setting and the sense of freedom associated with the instrument outlawed by the English. Sounds of Scotland are further exploited with the use of a folk harp (both as accompaniment and as a solo instrument at Murron's burial; 54:15), as well as the kena (a wooden flute) and the pennywhistle (a high-pitched flute). The melodic material also suggests folk music, with frequent Scottish snaps, quick turns, and ornaments. Also striking is the music heard when the Scottish army prepares for battle (1:23:15). The combination of sustained modern dissonance with the traditional bagpipe, field drums, and blaring brass instruments creates a tremendous buildup to the action.

Throughout the film, Horner skillfully supported the action and mood with his orchestration and musical materials. At the beginning, a wordless choir suggests the importance of the story, dark brass chords foreshadow the betrayal that awaits William Wallace, and the poignant dissonances of the string passages establish the somber mood of both Scotland and Wallace's fate. Elsewhere, passages of action music, such as the sustained dissonances combined with the

bagpipe and sharp attacks of the kena during Wallace's revenge scene (46:00), do not fall into conventional scoring. For the bigger battle scenes, Horner omitted music, allowing the rhythmic pulse of the sound effects to dominate.

Example 25.4 Outlaw



Example 25.5 Love



Example 25.6 Braveheart



Three principal themes unify the score. The Outlaw theme (see [EXAMPLE 25.4](#)), so named by William's uncle, is played by a bagpipe at the opening of the film and is clearly associated with Wallace and his army. The Love theme (see [EXAMPLE 25.5](#)) is first heard when Murron gives William a flower when they are children (12:00). The theme dominates the early section of the story after they meet as adults. It later recurs when William speaks to Isabelle about Murron (1:50:00), and the theme is given to Isabelle as their relationship becomes intimate (2:22:20).

The Braveheart theme (see [EXAMPLE 25.6](#)) does not make an appearance until Wallace's "Sons of Scotland" speech (1:16:55). The theme, which here sounds fresh and dramatic, will become the principal melody for the remainder of the film. After his first victory, a solo horn, traditionally associated with heroes, intones

the Braveheart theme (1:31:50). At the end, the theme is linked with Robert the Bruce, who will take up Wallace's mantle and win freedom for Scotland. Horner's compositional skills shine in his contrapuntal passages. He combines the Irishman Stephen's sprightly jig with the Outlaw theme (1:11:50), later blends two versions of the Outlaw theme simultaneously, and finally presents both the Outlaw and the Braveheart themes together in a grand climax (2:49:30).



FIGURE 25.2 Wallace's "Sons of Scotland" speech brings out the *Braveheart* theme.

Gladiator

Hans Zimmer created a strong symphonic score for *Gladiator* (2000), an epic that bears a number of similarities to *Braveheart*. Like *Braveheart*, *Gladiator*

won the award for Best Picture, is set in the distant past, has extended battle scenes with graphic violence, and tells of a man who is killed at the end after seeking revenge against a powerful enemy for the death of his wife. One of the principal differences between the two films is the overall tone. While *Braveheart* is set against the beauty of Scotland, *Gladiator* projects the dark, brutal reality of the Roman era.

In keeping with this tone, Zimmer's abundant melodic ideas are predominantly in lower registers and frequently in minor keys. The opening of the film establishes its distinctive musical timbre. The initial sound of a plucked instrument symbolizes the telling of a story, the dissonances suggest that it is a painful story, and the beautiful wordless solo voice establishes a mournful tone. The principal theme for Maximus, the hero, is soon heard (2:40). Set in minor, it has a strong character and represents his heroic role in the film. Later, it is transformed into a gentle warm melody as he thinks of his family (30:45). The score contains a great variety of colors, including non-Western instruments, vocals, guitar, and a drum set.

THE RECENT PAST

Schindler's List

Graphically realistic re-creations of historical events reach an artistic peak in Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993), generally acknowledged to be the finest film of the 1990s. Based on a true story from World War II Poland, the personal transformation of the German businessman Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson) is seen against a backdrop of the various stages of the Holocaust. In a daring move, Spielberg shot the film primarily in black and white, lending a greater sense of authenticity. To maintain a strong sense of realism, horrific scenes are shown with great attention to detail and accuracy.

For this powerful story, John Williams created a score unlike anything else he has composed. For his efforts, he won his last Oscar to date. Absent are his usual trademarks—fanfares, lush melodies, and intricate interweaving of multiple leitmotifs. Instead, Williams provided a hauntingly beautiful and introspective score, in which rhythms, harmonies, melodies, and orchestration often suggest Jewish traditions. The music features a prominent solo violin, which links this film score to the proud tradition of Jewish concert violinists that includes names such as Jascha Heifetz and Itzhak Perlman. The interplay of the violin (recorded by Perlman) and the orchestra suggests the relationship between synagogue cantor and congregation. The orchestra, consisting of strings, harp, and selected winds (notably flute, clarinet, and English horn), adds to the dark, somber coloring. The orchestral violins and even the soloist often dwell in their

lower registers, the darkest and richest for the instrument. If there had been any doubts that Williams could create effective concert hall music, they were certainly laid to rest with the score for *Schindler's List*, which has become a staple in the repertoire of a new generation of violinists.

VIEWER GUIDE 25.2

Schindler's List: Farewell

Composer: John Williams



Timing

DVD: Universal 23866 (2:56:10–3:01:55)

Setting

Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson) is a German businessman with numerous successes and failures in his background. Wanting to build a factory in Prague, he employs the Jewish Itzhak Stern (Ben Kingsley) to take charge because of his knowledge and connections, and he hires Jewish workers from the ghetto because they are cheaper. Once he realizes the fate that awaits the ghetto Jews, Schindler frantically begins to increase the number of workers on his list. This identifies them as "essential" to Germany, and so that they will be sent to another factory rather than to death camps. At the conclusion of the film, the war is coming to an end, and Schindler has managed to save hundreds of lives.

Key Points

- Intimate orchestral sounds with strings and woodwinds
- A solo violin plays the Schindler theme, which dominates the passage
- A single mood is projected throughout

Principal Themes

Example 25.7 Schindler a

Example 25.8 Schindler b



PLOT	MUSIC
Schindler has come to say farewell to his workers. He makes a few last requests of Itzhak Stern.	The strings enter quietly. Fragments of the Schindler theme a are played in the woodwinds.
A worker gives Schindler a signed statement from all the workers affirming that he had saved their lives.	Warm string melody
Itzhak presents a ring to Schindler out of gratitude for his efforts.	The solo violin plays the Schindler theme a.
Schindler regrets not saving more lives.	A contrasting melody is presented by the strings, then the main theme repeats.
Schindler looks at his car and Nazi lapel pin and considers how many more could have been saved.	A small development of Schindler a leads to another statement in a lower register.
Workers give Schindler comfort.	The b portion of the Schindler theme is played in the winds.
Schindler gets into the car with his wife.	The solo violin sustains a pitch while the orchestra plays the Schindler theme a.
Schindler stares out the window, and we see reflected images of workers.	The solo violin plays the closing material of the Schindler theme a.
The workers are sleeping as a Russian soldier arrives.	The orchestra brings the material to a conclusion.

The most prominent melody of the score is Schindler's theme (see EXAMPLE 25.7).

In its complete statement, the Schindler theme has an a-b-a form. Although the b section is a bit livelier (see EXAMPLE 25.8), the prevailing minor mode, the occasional augmented-second intervals, and the expressive use of the minor second create an overall unified mood. In the farewell scene (see VG 25.2), the principal melody of the theme (a) is heard five times, each with a different instrumentation. A brief portion of the b section is inserted after Schindler's emotional breakdown. In this brilliant scene, Spielberg has Schindler regret not saving more lives, even just one more. Through his speech, we are reminded of the losses of individuals during the Holocaust, not just the large numbers from this horrific event.

Williams also employed elements of **klezmer**, the traditional sound of Jewish dance and wedding music. Klezmer ensembles generally feature a solo violin or clarinet, both of which are found in the score. Giora Feidman, clarinetist for the Israel Philharmonic and a recognized master of klezmer music, was brought to Hollywood to record the clarinet solos. As in the underscoring, the solo violin is prominent in source music, including the opening sounds of the radio and the accompaniment of the singer at Schindler's birthday celebration.

In each of the cues, music establishes an overall mood but does not directly interact with the drama. In one of the early scenes, we see both the gathering of Jews into the ghetto and the rising of Schindler's fortunes (19:10). The entire segment is accompanied by dance rhythms and a klezmer tune. The satirical character of the music matches some of the humorous touches in the scene, but the mood of the music never changes, in spite of the seriousness of some of the other moments. In effect, the musical sound remains aloof from the dramatic action and creates an overall atmosphere. The story is a flashback; there will be no surprises, no rescues, and no happy endings. The pervading sense of sadness in the music matches the starkness of the black-and-white photography and brilliantly captures the essence of the film.

CLOSE-UP: MAJOR DIRECTORS

The Close of the Century

A new generation of directors emerged in the 1980s and have continued to flourish in the twenty-first century. Adept at technology and creative in storytelling, these figures created films that range from spectacular adventures to intimate dramas.

Wes Anderson (b. 1969) attended school at the University of Texas, his home state. He began making films in the late 1990s and achieved major critical acclaim for *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001), for which he received an Oscar nomination for Best Screenplay. Subsequently, he received nominations for Best Animated Feature for *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (2009) and Best Screenplay for *Moonrise Kingdom* (2012). For the popular *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014), Anderson received Oscar nominations for Best Picture, Best

Director, and Best Screenplay. His films are known for a distinctive visual style and unusual storytelling techniques. Several of his films use little scoring, but he has also frequently collaborated with composer Alexandre Desplat, who was nominated for Best Score with *Fantastic Mr. Fox* and won an Oscar for *The Grand Budapest Hotel*.

Tim Burton (b. 1958), a native of Burbank, California, studied animation at the California Institute of the Arts and worked briefly for Walt Disney Productions. Burton soon started a lifelong collaboration with composer Danny Elfman, beginning with Burton's first major success, *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* (1985). Elfman would score all of Burton's films except for *Ed Wood* (1994) and *Sweeney Todd*:

The Demon Barber of Fleet Street (2007). Among their most successful films are *Beetlejuice* (1988), *Batman* (1989), *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005). Burton films frequently star Johnny Depp.

Joel (1954) and **Ethan Coen** (1957), more generally known as the Coen brothers, have been active in several diverse areas of filmmaking, including writing, directing, and producing. Their first major success was *Blood Simple* (1984), a dark, twisting crime thriller, and they developed a devoted following after *Barton Fink* (1991). Recognition of their work from the Academy of Motion Pictures began with *Fargo* (1996), which received seven nominations, including Best Picture and Best Director. They won the Oscar for Best Writing for this film, which many feel is among the best movies of the decade. For *No Country for Old Men* (2007), they won three Oscars—Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Screenplay. They have also received nominations for *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000), *A Serious Man* (2009), and *True Grit* (2010). They tend to apply music sparingly in their films, although the soundtracks for *The Big Lebowski* (1998) and *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* are exceptions.

Oliver Stone (b. 1946) is New York product. He dropped out of Yale after a year and went to Vietnam, where he taught English. In 1967 he returned to Vietnam as a soldier and received a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. Back in the United States, he attended NYU and studied filmmaking under Martin Scorsese. He won his first Oscar for the screenplay for *Midnight Express* (1978). He continued writing for a variety of

films, including *Conan the Barbarian* (1982), prior to his directorial debut with *Platoon* (1986). This film was a spectacular success, winning Oscars for Best Film and Best Director. He later completed the trilogy of films about Vietnam with the Oscar-winning *Born on the Fourth of July* (1989) and *Heaven & Earth* (1993). His other films, which are characterized by masterful technique and controversial subjects, include *The Doors* (1991), *JFK* (1991), *Natural Born Killers* (1994), and *Nixon* (1995). His best-known musical choice was using Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* in *Platoon*. Since then, this composition has become associated with Veteran's Day and the sacrifices of American military forces in battle.

Quentin Tarantino (b. 1963) has created a series of successful films, often with extreme violence and a black sense of humor. Three films received Academy recognition: he received an Oscar for writing and a nomination for directing with *Pulp Fiction* (1994); he was nominated in both of those categories for *Inglourious Basterds* (2009), and he won a Best Screenplay Oscar for *Django Unchained* (2012). Other popular successes have been *Reservoir Dogs* (1992) and the two *Kill Bill* films (2003 and 2004). For the most part, Tarantino has borrowed music from other sources. Much of it is in a popular rock style, but he also uses excerpts from television shows, old movie scores (particularly from spaghetti westerns), and classical music. In 2015, he commissioned an original score for *The Hateful Eight*. He chose the spaghetti western veteran Ennio Morricone, who responded with an Oscar-winning score.



Titanic

Living up to its name, James Cameron's *Titanic* (1997) was a colossal phenomenon. No film from the decade matched its box-office success, either in this country or around the world. The sensational achievement invites comparisons with Hollywood's two earlier great epics, *Gone with the Wind* (1939) and *Ben-Hur* (1959); *Titanic* and *Ben-Hur* each won eleven awards, and *Gone with the Wind*, in Hollywood's greatest year, received eight. These three films are extravagant historical epics that reflect their era: *Gone with the Wind* is a Golden Age production with messages for pre-World War II America; the story of *Ben-Hur* provided inspiration for Cold War audiences; and *Titanic* typifies the 1990s trend of portraying, in graphic detail, tragic events in the recent past.

Great expense was taken in bringing the story of the *Titanic* to the screen. Indeed, the production of the film cost more than the original ship. Elaborate details were re-created from the interior of the luxury liner, actual people—the captain, the musicians, and passengers—were portrayed, and the collision, sinking, and horrifying deaths were re-created with grim accuracy. Like *Gone with the Wind* and *Ben-Hur*, *Titanic* seems to signal the end of a line. Unlike *Star Wars*, which sparked a revolution in filmmaking, *Titanic* was not followed in the immediate future by other blockbuster epics.

The scores for these three films also share a number of characteristics, including a largely symphonic setting and a reliance on leitmotifs. Max Steiner's *Gone with the Wind* (see [VG 9.3](#)) is the definitive classic film score, with a beautiful main melody and a multitude of other significant themes. Miklós Rózsa's *Ben-Hur* (see [VG 14.1](#)) also employs numerous themes, but he subjects them to more vigorous manipulation and incorporated aspects of twentieth-century compositional techniques. James Horner's *Titanic* retains a close relationship to current popular-music trends. The synthesizer is used frequently, and the principal melodies are loosely applied in the drama and generally remain intact. Their strength is in their beauty, not in their potential thematic manipulations.

The four principal themes of *Titanic* can be heard in pairs (see [EXAMPLES 25.9–25.13](#)). The Titanic and Southampton themes belong to the ship in all her glory. Initially, the soaring Titanic melody appears by itself, played by a French horn behind scenes of the salvage boat (8:40 and 13:05). With the first flashback to Southampton, the English port from which the *Titanic* departed, the *Titanic* and Southampton themes are both energetically presented (21:10).

VIEWER GUIDE 25.3

Titanic: Fore and Aft

Composer: James Horner



Timing

DVD: Paramount 15522 (31:00–38:50)

Setting

The *Titanic* begins her inaugural voyage across the Atlantic. On the lower deck is Jack (Leonardo DiCaprio), an aspiring artist, and on the upper deck is Rose (Kate Winslet), a socialite unhappily engaged to the wealthy and powerful Cal (Billy Zane). Jack is exuberant about going to the United States, while Kate is distraught about her life and future.

Key Points

- Two themes suggest the excitement of the *Titanic*'s voyage
- Vocals (a wordless choir sound) suggest the magnificence of the ship
- A fragment of the Love theme appears when Jack first sees Kate
- The Rose theme is heard briefly when she considers jumping off the ship

Principal Themes

Example 25.9 Southampton

Example 25.10 Titanic

Example 25.11 Love: "My Heart Will Go On" verse

Example 25.12 Love: "My Heart Will Go On" chorus

Continued on next page

Example 25.13 Rose



PLOT	MUSIC
Jack and his friend Fabrizio run excitedly to the fore of the ship.	Vocals sound the introduction to the Southampton theme.
The entire ship from a distance. The camera moves closer and focuses on the front of the ship with the captain and crewmembers.	The principal portion of the Southampton theme is heard with vocals.
The captain is informed that the ship has reached 21 knots.	Contrasting material
Jack and Fabrizio observe the accompanying porpoises. The captain drinks tea, and the workers below fuel the ship.	The principal portion of the Southampton theme returns.
Jack climbs upward and yells in exuberance. The camera shows us the full length of the ship.	The Titanic theme sounds fully in the orchestra. The music fades.
On the upper deck, Rose, Cal and others sit at the lunch table. Rose leaves unhappy. On the lower deck, Jack and Fabrizio make a new friend.	No music
Jack sees Rose briefly on the upper deck.	A portion of the Love theme verse is played gently by the piano.
Rose narrates her unhappiness with the return to the upper deck for dinner.	A string ensemble with piano plays elegant music in the dining room.
Rose races toward the rear of the ship.	Dissonances, low registers, and melodic fragments accompany her run and suggest her desperation.
She arrives aft.	A brief fragment of the Love theme from the chorus
Rose climbs over the rail, preparing to jump. Jack observes and offers to help her back.	Rose theme. Music stops when Jack speaks.

The most extended statement of the Southampton theme occurs as the ship begins the trip in earnest and picks up speed (see [VG 25.3](#)). Horner successfully captures the excitement of the event, as man's "largest moving object" races with dolphins that manage to swim in tempo. When Jack excitedly calls out, the Titanic theme soars forth once again. The magnificence of this scene, along with the stunning view of the ship, is given musical support by the full symphony, wordless vocals, and bells. Except for a brief reference to the Titanic theme at the end of the film, neither melody is heard again, as the ship has just enjoyed its finest moment.

The Rose and Love themes are also frequently paired together. The Rose theme is performed hauntingly and wordlessly at the beginning of the film by a solo soprano voice. The Love theme has its initial full presentation in one of the most romantic scenes in all of film. In the *Titanic*'s last sunset, the two lovers stand at the bow of the boat and kiss for the first time (1:20:20). In keeping with its relationship to the folklike Rose theme, the melody is initially presented on a pennywhistle. The full orchestra eventually enters, but fades as the solo voice finishes the tune. As the image of the sunken ship replaces the flashback, the voice and the pennywhistle take on a ghostly character. The Love theme returns in a piano rendition when Jack sketches Rose in the nude (1:26:50), and an oboe plays it delicately when they make love in the back seat of a car (1:34:05).

Later, the two themes appear together in some of the most potent scenes of the film. When Rose is being lowered in a lifeboat (2:18:00), we hear her theme. Suddenly, she leaps back onto the *Titanic*, and the Rose and Love themes are combined contrapuntally. For the climactic moment when Rose realizes that Jack is dead and releases her hand from his frozen grip (2:55:45), the Rose theme adds a strong emotional element. As she whistles for help, we can also hear a fragment of the Love theme. The two themes are again heard in counterpoint more joyfully at the end of the film, when Rose apparently joins Jack on the *Titanic*. Also note the reference to the Rose theme during the closing credits, as the Love theme is transformed into "My Heart Will Go On," one of the most popular melodies of the 1990s and certainly one of the most effective of all movie themes (AFI No. 14 Greatest Song).

Source music helps to define the class system on board. When we see the upper decks, we often hear elegant chamber music; for the lower regions of the ship, Irish dance music is played (1:05:40). In another potent moment, the members of a string ensemble decide to keep playing despite their impending deaths, as shown in the image at the beginning of the chapter (2:30:30). While the quartet plays the hymn "Nearer My God to Thee," we see a montage of people calmly preparing to die, including the crew, an elderly couple holding each other in bed, and a mother telling her children a story.

Kundun

Martin Scorsese's *Kundun* (1997) is a biopic about the Dalai Lama, beginning with the discovery of his identity in a remote Tibetan village at the age of two and extending to his escape from Tibet after China has overrun his country. For music, Scorsese called upon Philip Glass, one of the key figures in a musical



FIGURE 25.3 A fragment of the Love theme sounds as Jack sees Rose for the first time in *Titanic*.



FIGURE 25.4 Minimalism and Tibetan music mix in Philip Glass's score to *Kundun*.

style called **minimalism** (see Close-Up: Minimalism, p. 501). Glass incorporated the sounds of several Tibetan instruments, which, along with his own repetitive minimalist style, suggest the meditative nature of Buddhist contemplation. Most effective are the numerous scenes of rituals and ceremonies. The combination of minimalism and Tibetan instruments can be heard in the scene showing the discovery of the Dalai Lama (9:15).

TRAILER

Films based on historical events produced some of the finest symphonic scores of the 1990s. Symphonic scores similarly served other genres well, ranging from science fiction to comedy. But popular music, adapted scores, and minimalism also proved to be effective for films as we head toward the end of the century.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

bagpipe	Edelman, Randy	klezmer
Cameron, James	Glass, Philip	minimalism
Costner, Kevin	Jones, Trevor	Perlman, Itzhak

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. All of the films in this chapter are based on historical events or people. Research the facts behind some of these stories and discuss how faithful the movies were to history.
2. Many of the films made an effort to incorporate historical musical styles and instruments. What choices were made to give the music a greater sense of authenticity?
3. Music was also used to suggest locations in several of these films. How is this achieved?
4. Discuss the relationship of these scores to the classical Hollywood paradigm from the late 1930s and early 1940s, particularly noting the use of leitmotifs.
5. Why did John Williams feature a solo violin in *Schindler's List*?
6. Listen to the music of Philip Glass and discuss minimalism. If possible, view portions of two documentaries scored by Glass: *Koyaanisqatsi* (1983), which addresses ecological issues, and *Powaqqatsi* (1988), which deals with Third World problems.

1989	<i>Do the Right Thing</i>	1994	<i>The Shawshank Redemption</i>
1990	<i>Goodfellas</i>	1998	<i>Forrest Gump</i>
1991	<i>The Silence of the Lambs</i>	1999	<i>He Got Game</i>
	<i>Boyz n the Hood</i>	2000	<i>American Beauty</i>
1994	<i>Pulp Fiction</i>		<i>O Brother, Where Art Thou?</i>

Life in America

26



Forrest Gump teaches Elvis a new move.

Creating suitable subjects for Hollywood films became increasingly difficult in the 1990s. The country's archrival—the Soviet Union—had collapsed, a much-needed sensitivity to racial and ethnic stereotyping eliminated many of our typical villains, and audiences, raised on television, had tired of standard movie clichés. Creative Hollywood minds turned to history (see Chapter 25), fantasy, and animation, and developed dramas based on life in America, including crime, the African-American experience, the Vietnam War years, and suburban lifestyles. Musically, the innovative use of popular music provided a fresh sound for many of these dramas, but traditional symphonic music continued to have a place, along with the emerging sounds of minimalism.

CRIME

Filmmakers understood that, at the box office, crime does pay. The focus on realism in historical films from the 1980s now extended to stories about crime, in which city streets and prisons were depicted with graphic visions of violence. Two major crime films appeared in 1990: *The Godfather: Part III* and *Goodfellas*. The long-awaited completion of *The Godfather* trilogy was somewhat of a disappointment, but *Goodfellas* became a major hit with critics and audiences.

Goodfellas

Martin Scorsese's *Goodfellas* provides a new look and sound for this traditional genre. Based on an actual case, the plot follows the crime career of Henry Hill (Ray Liotta) from his youth in the 1950s into the 1980s. The story is told in relatively brief segments that often shift time (forward and occasionally backward). Lending cohesiveness to these abrupt cuts is the narration of the main character.

For musical support, Scorsese chose a large number of popular songs that are chronologically appropriate for the various stages of Henry's career. Beginning with music suited for Las Vegas lounges performed by singers such as Tony Bennett and Dean Martin, the mood moves with the passing of time (and the greater hedonism of Henry's lifestyle) to drug-oriented songs by The Rolling Stones and The Who, among others. This shift in musical mood is reinforced at the end of the film. The closing credits begin with "My Way," a signature song for Frank Sinatra. Yet, instead of the rendition by the famed Italian-American crooner that would match the mood established early in the film, we hear a raspy performance by Sid Vicious of the Sex Pistols.

Like the choruses in Greek drama, the songs provide commentaries on the action, but they occur during the action. For example, the opening song, Tony Bennett's 1953 hit "Rags to Riches," foretells Henry's rise in the crime world. The sometimes-humorous links between the lyrics, the predominantly cheerful mood of the music, and the story line reinforce Scorsese's not-too-subtle message about the superficial way that violence is treated in modern society.

The turning point of the plot occurs on May 11, 1980, a very bad day for Henry, ending with his arrest (see [VG 26.1](#)). Six songs are heard in this excerpt: "Jump into the Fire," Harry Nilsson (1971); "Memo from Turner," Mick Jagger (1970); "Magic Bus," The Who (1968); "Monkey Man," The Rolling Stones (1969); "What Is Life," George Harrison (1970); and "Mannish Boy," Muddy Waters (1955). The music plays almost constantly through these scenes, but the volume is, by necessity, turned down for narration and dialogue.

VIEWER GUIDE 26.1

Goodfellas: May 11, 1980



Timing

DVD: WB 116312 (1:53:10–2:03:15)

Setting

Henry Hill (Ray Liotta) has risen through the ranks of a crime family. Later in his career, he begins to sell and partake in drugs. On May 11, 1980, he is physically and emotionally stressed. The day begins badly and gets worse.

Key Points

- A variety of popular songs in the underscoring
- Song texts that comment on aspects of the story

PLOT	MUSIC
After taking cocaine, Henry loads a bag of guns into his car. He notices a helicopter that seems to be following him. He takes the guns to Jim, who rejects them.	"Jump into the Fire," Harry Nilsson. The voice enters as he gets into the car and starts driving. The volume is diminished during the monologue and dialogue.
Returning to the car, Henry is nervous about the continued presence of the helicopter.	"Memo from Turner," Mick Jagger
Looking for the helicopter, Henry nearly gets into an accident.	"Magic Bus," The Who
A doctor examines Henry. Henry drives his brother Michael home, still followed by the helicopter. At home, Henry prepares dinner. He drives with his wife Karen, who sees the helicopter.	No music initially. "Jump into the Fire" returns as the doctor offers him a pill.
Henry hides the guns at Karen's mother's house.	"Monkey Man," The Rolling Stones
Henry and Karen leave and return to retrieve the guns. They make a transaction for cocaine. He makes arrangements on the phone to see Sandy, who is assisting with the drug deal. He calls Lois, a drug runner, and reminds her to make the trip arrangements on an outside phone. Lois ignores and calls from Henry's house. Henry returns home.	"What Is Life," George Harrison
Henry snorts more cocaine. He has sex with Sandy and leaves. At home, he has dinner with Karen, Michael, Lois, and the children.	"Mannish Boy," Muddy Waters
Lois insists on being driven home.	No music
Henry and Lois get into the car and are arrested.	"Magic Bus" returns with the opening drum solo.
Henry has some final thoughts.	No music

Two songs are quoted twice in this portion of the film. "Jump into the Fire" is heard at the beginning and when he drives his brother home. The key line in the lyrics is "You can jump into the fire but you'll never be free," which aptly describes Henry's complicated life. "The Magic Bus" plays when Henry almost has a car accident, and at the end of the day, just before he is arrested. There is some humor in this choice, as the lyrics describe a driver and suggest his addiction to drugs. For the second quotation of this song, only the drum riff is borrowed.

The other four songs also comment on the action. Mick Jagger's "Memo from Turner" is about gangsters. In this segment, we hear only the guitar solo, played by Ry Cooder (recall *Paris, Texas* in Chapter 24). "Monkey Man" sounds while Henry and Karen are driving to her mother's house. The lyrics deal with drug addiction (as in the slang expression, "a monkey on your back") and express satisfaction that the singer's girl is also hooked on drugs (Karen is also an addict). George Harrison's love, or devotional, song "What Is Life" (with Eric Clapton on guitar) plays during the drug transaction and the fateful turn of events when Lois makes a phone call from Henry's house. After Henry makes love to Sandy at her place, Scorsese brings in "Mannish Boy," which includes the humorous line, "I can make love to you woman, in five minutes' time." Sandy is, of course, complaining about the quickness of their interaction.

Pulp Fiction

Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994), winner of the Palme d'Or, is one of the most influential films of the 1990s. Unlike *Goodfellas*, *Pulp Fiction* is not based on an actual event. Three separate plotlines are intertwined and linked by two hit men, played by Samuel L. Jackson and John Travolta. Abrupt jumps in time create a jigsaw plot, in which the viewer can finally fit the various pieces into a proper chronological order only near the end of the film.

The soundtrack is limited to classic rock, but its use is different than in *Goodfellas*. Rather than selecting songs that are period-appropriate and that comment on the action, Tarantino primarily chose the upbeat sound of surf music. Moreover, all the music in this film can clearly be heard as source music. Tarantino establishes this effect with the title credits, which open with "Misirlou" performed on electric guitar by Dick Dale. The tune ends abruptly with the sound of a car radio changing channels to "Jungle Boogie" performed by Kool & the Gang. The divergent nature of the two songs reflects the musical tastes of the two hit men we see in a car in the opening scene; "Jungle Boogie" quickly fades



FIGURE 26.1 *Pulp Fiction* features John Travolta in a twist competition, a reference to his most famous role in *Saturday Night Fever*.

under their loquacious chatter. Music is not as omnipresent as it is in *Goodfellas*, but the linking of pop music with violence supports a similar theme about the use of violence as entertainment in American culture.

The Silence of the Lambs

A dark thriller, *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991) tells of the pursuit of a serial killer who skins his women victims. Desperate to catch him, the FBI solicits the help of another serial killer, Dr. Hannibal Lecter, nicknamed "Hannibal the Cannibal." This character, played brilliantly by Anthony Hopkins, was voted number 1 on the American Film Institute's list of Hollywood's all-time greatest villains. The chemistry between Lecter and Clarice (Jodie Foster) makes this film one of the best of the decade.

Supporting the often-grisly images is an effective musical score by Howard Shore. The music for *The Silence of the Lambs* is predominantly in a low register and subdued in character. Shore avoids extended melodies and unifies the score through the use of repetitive motives. In the opening scene, the principal theme is heard ascending and descending. Soon it appears as an ostinato pattern, over which ominous chords shift. The theme reappears when Clarice sees pictures of mutilated bodies, the victims of the serial killer "Buffalo Bill" (5:10). Throughout the score, numerous variations are derived from this brief idea, sometimes used in counterpoint. At the end, Shore continues to play with these motivic elements, as Hannibal is about to "have a friend for dinner."

Source music is used effectively throughout the film. Buffalo Bill prefers a more contemporary rock style than the killers in *Goodfellas* and *Pulp Fiction*. Hannibal Lecter likes Bach. In the most stunning portion of the film, Hannibal is listening to Bach's *Goldberg Variations* just prior to his escape (1:14:15). The choice of music is not arbitrary. Bach is considered one of the most brilliant of all composers, and the *Goldberg Variations*, one of his most complex works, is suitable listening for a psychopathic genius. Once Hannibal takes action, the underscoring overwhelms the source music and reflects the horror of the scene and the terror of the guards. As the underscoring subsides, the sounds of Bach reemerge.

Moments later, when the dead guard is discovered, the low brass darkly intone the descending version of the principal theme (1:19:50). The police—and the audience—think that Hannibal has been killed, but a sudden cut takes us to the



FIGURE 26.2 Hannibal Lecter quietly conducts Bach after brutally murdering two guards in *Silence of the Lambs*.

ambulance (1:24:35). Since the music crescendos over the cut, we sense that something is wrong. Building in intensity with pounding timpani, the music ultimately lets us imagine what happens next without actually having to witness it.

The Shawshank Redemption

Adapted from a Stephen King novella, *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994) exhibits a number of the characteristics of films of the 1990s, including dark tones, realism in its depiction of prison life, and a twisting plotline. The Oscar-nominated score by Thomas Newman rarely reflects details of the drama, but rather establishes background moods with melodic fragments and sustained pitches, as many of the cues incorporate minimalism. For the most part, Newman maintains a cold and distant mood. At various times, this tone represents the personality of one of the two main characters, Andy (Tim Robbins), which the judge describes as “icy and remorseless”; the hopelessness of life in and out of prison; and Andy’s calculation of an escape plan.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Thomas Newman (b. 1955)

The son of film music great Alfred Newman (see Composer Profile, p. 176), Thomas was raised in Los Angeles along with his older brother and fellow film composer David (*Anastasia*, 1997, and *Ice Age*, 2002). Both attended the School of Music at the University of Southern California and emerged as successful film composers in the mid-1980s. In the 1990s, Thomas became one of the most prolific composers in Hollywood and has worked on many popular films in recent years. He is recognized today as one of the most original and influential composers currently working in Hollywood.

Important Film Scores

The Shawshank Redemption 1994 ☒

Little Women 1994 ☒

American Beauty 1999 🎻 ☒

Erin Brockovich 2000

Road to Perdition 2002 ☒

Finding Nemo 2003 ☒

Lemony Snicket's A Series

of Unfortunate Events 2004 ☒

The Good German 2006 ☒

WALL-E 2008 ☒ ☒

Skyfall 2013 ☒

Saving Mr. Banks 2013 ☒

Spectre 2015

Bridge of Spies 2015 ☒

Passengers 2016 ☒

_Osc = Best Picture Oscar

_* = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination

The detached mood is established in the opening scene. At first, we hear the Inkspots' 1939 hit "If I Didn't Care" (Jack Lawrence), which we learn is emanating from Andy's car radio. The film soon crosscuts in time between the night that Andy's wife was murdered and his subsequent trial for the crime. At times we are watching Andy in his car while listening to the trial. When we first begin to hear the trial voices, underscoring replaces and sometimes intermixes with the song. The minimalistic scoring here primarily consists of a single pitch, called a **pedal**, and a repetitive and somewhat dissonant piano part. By sustaining these elements across the time cuts, Newman helped to connect the two events and lend a sense of unity to the opening.

Throughout the film, minimalistic cues combining a pedal and repetitive melodic fragments create a somber mood. In one of the most moving scenes of the film, an elderly inmate named Brooks (James Whitmore) is released (1:00:45). He tries to cope with the fast-paced modern world but eventually gives up and hangs himself. During the entire scene, melodic fragments are heard in a setting similar to the opening. Later, when longtime inmate Red (Morgan Freeman) is released and tries to deal with life outside of prison, the same material returns (2:08:30). Other than this, the connection of melodic ideas to specific characters or aspects of the drama tends to be generalized.

VIEWER GUIDE 26.2

The Shawshank Redemption: Escape

Composer: Thomas Newman



Timing

DVD: WB C2583 (1:52:00-2:02:15)

Setting

Andy Dufresne (Tim Robbins), wrongly imprisoned for the murder of his wife, is serving two life sentences in Shawshank Prison. He has befriended Red (Morgan Freeman), but he suffers a series of abuses from inmates and officials. Most recently, a man that could have proven his innocence was killed by order of the warden. Seemingly trapped, Andy has quietly made plans to escape. On a dark and stormy night, Andy disappears.

Key Points

- Repetitious musical cues sustain moods
- The music climaxes with Andy's escape

Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
Stunned by Andy's disappearance, the warden yells at the guards and questions Red. The warden throws some of Andy's rocks. Shockingly, one rock penetrates the poster, revealing the escape hole.	Music is withheld until everyone stares at the hole in the poster. Sustained pitches enter, suggesting their surprise.
Police arrive, and Red narrates their fruitless search for Andy.	The strings play a dance-like passage in a middle register.
Red continues to narrate, as flashbacks show Andy conceiving of his plan to dig a hole and his actions on the night of his escape.	Sustained pitches suggest Andy's thinking of a plan. The piano enters with the material from the beginning of the film as he implements the plan. The music pauses briefly as Andy switches the financial records in the warden's office.
Andy crawls through the escape hole into the sewer passageway. With a rock, he breaks the sewage pipe.	The low strings slowly reiterate fragments of the piano melody.
Andy enters the pipe and crawls 500 yards to a stream outside of the prison.	A dissonance signifies that the pipe is broken. The earlier material returns and crescendos as he emerges.
Andy runs through the stream, takes off his prison shirt, and holds up his arms triumphantly.	The earlier music is now played strongly by the full orchestra, climaxing in a triumphant sound as he raises his arms.
Andy enters a bank, withdraws money, and asks that a package with evidence of the warden's activities be mailed.	Minimalist music returns with the timbre and similar melodic contour as heard at the beginning of the flashback.
The package arrives at a newspaper, and the story is published.	No music
The warden looks at a sign on his wall saying "His Judgement [sic] Cometh and that Right Soon," as police cars approach the prison. Looking at Andy's Bible, the warden sees a note to him and a hole where the pick was hidden in the book of Exodus.	A rhythmic pulse suggests the inevitable outcome of this turn of events.

In the scene showing Andy's escape (see [VG 26.2](#)), the music continues to create general moods rather than reflect specific actions. When the flashback first shows Andy digging a hole, the music from the opening scene returns; the cue lacks any change of mood that might have been suggested by his discovery of the soft plaster and his formation of a plan. Similarly, the music does not indulge in dramatic chords as he makes his escape. Rather, the music simply gets louder and, because of the reserved quality of the music up to this point, the climactic moment of freedom has a powerful impact. For the remainder of the escape scene, music remains unobtrusive.

In this film, Newman established a successful formula for minimalism in film scoring. The repetition of motives and the sustaining of moods match various aspects of the story, but he avoided the potential monotony of minimalism through the inclusion of distinctive source music and the occasional expansions of the repetitive material. The source music contains various contrasting musical styles, ranging from Hank Williams to a duet from Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*. The latter (1:07:30) provides a sublime moment in the film that sparks a debate about the value of art and hope. In the final moments of the film, as Red joins Andy by the Pacific Ocean, a full melodic theme emerges that reflects the joy of their reunion. By Hollywood standards, the sound is understated, but within the context of this film, the cue is more than satisfying. Although the melody sounds fresh and new, it was originally suggested in a scene when the prisoners sat on a rooftop, drank beer, and momentarily felt normal (37:05).

THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Spike Lee

One of the seminal films from 1989 was director Spike Lee's critically acclaimed *Do the Right Thing*. In the next few years, Spike Lee would complete a series of outstanding films, including *Mo' Better Blues* (1990), *Jungle Fever* (1991), and *Clockers* (1995). These films deal realistically with grim aspects of urban life, including racial and ethnic prejudice and drugs. While the primary focus is on African Americans, Lee's visions also encompass Italians and other New York ethnic groups, and his stories generally deal with problems faced by all of society. *Jungle Fever*, for example, is a compelling story of an interracial affair outside of marriage. While the race issue ultimately dooms the relationship, the story embraces topics of love and marriage that touch the lives of a wide spectrum of America.

Music by African-American jazz and rock performers, such as Stevie Wonder and Spike's father Bill Lee, form a significant portion of the soundtracks for these films. Yet Spike Lee also allowed for a number of traditional symphonic cues that effectively touch the full range of emotions, from humor to tragedy. Among the musical highlights are the extended jazz sequences composed by Bill Lee for *Mo' Better Blues* and the performances of Terence Blanchard (trumpet) and Branford Marsalis (saxophone).



FIGURE 26.3 Denzel Washington and Wesley Snipes play jazz musicians in Spike Lee's *Mo' Better Blues*.

CLOSE-UP: AFRICAN AMERICANS AND FILM

Throughout the history of American film, the industry has been torn between the racist attitudes of whites and the potentially significant audience of blacks. This conflict was evident even to distributors and exhibitors of the earliest films. In many theaters, especially in the South, the answer was segregation. Whites sat on the main level and blacks in the balcony. Another solution, called "the midnight ramble," had showings for black audiences only late at night. Segregation appeased white audiences, but there still remained the problem of enticing black audiences to the theater. Throughout the silent film era, standard movie offerings rarely featured African Americans, and black characters who were included in a story were most likely stereotypes and were often played by white actors in blackface.

Among the remarkable artistic achievements in American film are the works of African-American director Oscar Micheaux. Inspired and supported by the Harlem Renaissance movement in New York, Micheaux became one of the most prolific filmmakers in the United States during the 1920s and '30s. Using black actors, he dealt with serious subjects, such as interracial marriage, racism, and alcoholism. It is likely that jazz musicians accompanied the showing of many of these films prior to the advent of sound.

Gradually, racial stereotyping lessened in Hollywood films. By the late 1940s, racism was one of the many social issues that were brought to the screen. Sidney Poitier, a talented African-American actor, became a major Hollywood star during the 1950s. He appeared in a number of important films dealing with the black experience in the United States, including *The Defiant Ones* (1958), a story about the flight of two convicts, one white and one black, who are chained together; *A Raisin in the Sun* (1961), an adaptation of a Broadway play with an all-black cast about an African-American family moving to an all-white suburb; and Best Picture-winner *In the Heat of the Night* (1967), a drama about a black

Philadelphia police detective and a white Mississippi sheriff solving a murder case.

In succeeding decades, two trends can be observed. African-American actors, such as Louis Gossett Jr., were increasingly cast in roles that could have been filled by white actors. A second trend, beginning in the 1970s, dubbed "blaxploitation" targeted black audiences by creating new stereotypes, often featuring black heroes who triumph over the white establishment (see Chapter 19). The most successful of these was *Shaft* (1971). In addition, black issues continued to be addressed through the '80s in films such as *Ragtime* (1981), *The Cotton Club* (1984), *A Soldier's Story* (1984), and *The Color Purple* (1985).

The era since the late '80s and '90s has seen the emergence of a distinctive new style of black filmmaking. John Singleton's *Boyz n the Hood* (1991) focuses on life in South Central Los Angeles. Steve James created a sensational documentary in *Hoop Dreams* (1994), and Spike Lee rose to major directorial status with *Do the Right Thing* (1989). Lee, the son of the prominent jazz musician Bill Lee, was raised in Brooklyn. The most important black director since Micheaux, he was the first to create commercially successful films based on African-American stories, as well as stories dealing with life in New York in general. Among his best-known films are *Mo' Better Blues* (1990), *Jungle Fever* (1991), the epic *Malcolm X* (1992), *Clockers* (1995), *Summer of Sam* (1999), and *25th Hour* (2002). During this era, a new generation of black actors has emerged. In 2002, the Oscars for best actor and actress were awarded to Denzel Washington and Halle Berry, the first time two African Americans were honored jointly.

When black composers have been asked to create a film score, it is generally because of their background in jazz or rock. Among the most prominent film scores created by African Americans are Duke Ellington's *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959), Miles Davis's *Elevator*

to the Gallows (1958), Isaac Hayes's *Shaft* (1971), and Terence Blanchard's *Malcolm X* (1972). Quincy Jones (b. 1933), who is best known for his work with Michael Jackson, became one of Hollywood's most respected

composers through his music for television (*Roots*, 1977) and films, which include *The Pawnbroker* (1964), *In the Heat of the Night* (1967), and *The Color Purple* (1986).



In *He Got Game* (1998), Lee explored a bold new musical sound. Adapting musical passages from Aaron Copland's ballets (*Appalachian Spring*, *Rodeo*, and *Billy the Kid*), movie scores (*Our Town* and *The Red Pony*), and other works (*Lincoln Portrait* and *Fanfare for the Common Man*), Lee created a musical score that might otherwise be associated with middle-class white America—and that clashes stylistically with the spirituals and rap heard as source music. In the end, the choice of Copland helps us to see basketball not as an African-American sport, but as an American sport. Likewise, the family drama that unfolds is a conflict that could happen within any American culture. A resolution of sorts comes at the end (2:06:35), as the son (NBA star Ray Allen) shoots baskets on the court of his selected college, and the father (Denzel Washington) plays inside a prison yard. Their long-distance reconciliation comes with music of Copland's *Billy the Kid*.

Boyz n the Hood

In *Boyz n the Hood* (1991), John Singleton's riveting drama of life in South Central Los Angeles, source music also plays a significant role. Ranging from jazz to Motown to rap, the music defines the barriers between generations and between neighbors. When popular music is used as background, the choice of styles is often dictated by who is on screen or what they are doing. Considering that Ice Cube plays one of the central figures and that the movie is named after one of his rap albums, there is a surprising balance of musical styles that include some sparse but effective symphonic music by Stanley Clarke. The most extended passage of rap appears in the closing credits.

OTHER VISIONS OF AMERICAN LIFE

Forrest Gump

Forrest Gump, the Best Picture winner for 1994, is the engaging story of a mentally challenged man (Tom Hanks) and of the United States during a turbulent time. The contrast between the two subjects is fascinating, as Forrest



FIGURE 26.4 *Forrest Gump* concludes with Silvestri's Feather theme.

maintains his childlike wisdom while the nation undergoes major upheavals. Through Forrest's eyes we see the innocent early years of Elvis Presley, the struggle for racial integration, the tragedy of the Vietnam War, and the ultimate maturation of the baby boomers. In addition, his relationships with his girlfriend Jenny and his war buddy Lieutenant Taylor allow the film to touch on serious personal issues, such as child abuse, disabilities, and death.

Music plays several critical roles in this drama. As the film moves freely through a variety of flashbacks, popular music helps to provide smooth transitions and establish the various time periods. In the process we hear a miniature history of rock, beginning with Elvis Presley's Gump-inspired rendition of "Hound Dog," as seen in the image at the beginning of the chapter (11:40). Popular music also provides an energetic background for several montages, such as Gump's early experiences in Vietnam (40:35).

The composer, Alan Silvestri, reserves his orchestral underscoring for the quieter and more joyful moments of the film. The film is framed by a floating feather, first gathered by Forrest at a municipal bus stop and placed into his *Curious George* book, and ultimately released from the book, now in the hands of Forrest Jr., at a school bus stop. Silvestri's Feather theme, the most memorable original tune of the film, makes its only two appearances at these points. The gentle character of the melody, played in the upper register of the piano with delicate syncopations, suggests the simplicity and innocence of Forrest.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Alan Silvestri (b. 1950)

A drummer and guitar player, Silvestri studied at the Berklee College of Music in Boston and began his scoring career in television. His first major film, *Romancing the Stone* (1984), contains a mixture of Romantic, modern, rock, and Latin American popular styles, largely created using a synthesizer. Silvestri is equally adept at scoring for acoustic instruments and synthesizer; his versatility can be heard in the wide range of musical styles, including minimalism.

Important Film Scores

Romancing the Stone 1984

The Abyss 1989

Back to the Future 1985

Forrest Gump 1994  

Who Framed Roger Rabbit 1988

Cast Away 2000

The Polar Express 2004 ☒

Night at the Museum 2006

Captain America: The First Avenger 2011

The Avengers 2012

☒ = Best Picture Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination



A light quality is sustained throughout the underscoring. The timbre of the piano's upper register frequently accompanies Forrest, especially in scenes with his mother. Several other themes also recur. When Forrest first sees Jenny (13:45), the strings play a lyrical melody that will follow her through her many changes. Forrest also has a Running theme, first heard when he breaks his braces (16:45) and later when he runs for the Alabama football team, in Vietnam, and across the country. In a way, the gentle underscoring reflects Forrest's consistent view of the world, while the popular music reflects the changing nation.

O Brother, Where Art Thou?

Period popular music also plays a significant role in *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2000), a comedic story of escaped convicts during the Depression. The plot is loosely based on Homer's *Odyssey*. Everett (George Clooney) leads his two companions on a journey from the chain gang to his home. On the way, they encounter a blind prophet, a one-eyed man (like the Cyclops), and seductive women singing on rocks (like the Sirens). Arriving home, Everett, like Odysseus, discovers that his wife is being wooed by a suitor. Both men disguise themselves as old men and go to a banquet to vanquish their foes. In this version, the weapon for battle is music. Featured throughout the film are songs drawn from traditional American folk music, many of which became popular sensations. The soundtrack album won a Grammy.



FIGURE 26.5 Everett and his companions discover that their song is a hit in *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*

American Beauty

In a different comic tone, 1999 Best Picture-winner *American Beauty* takes a dark look at life in suburbia. Through the lives of three members of a dysfunctional family, a cynical view of the superficial values and insecurities of fin-de-siècle America is presented. A wide variety of diegetic popular music



FIGURE 26.6 Lester enjoys an erotic rose fantasy to Newman's minimalist cue in *American Beauty*.

reflects the divergent tastes of the family members and further suggests the facades that surround each of their lives. The Oscar-nominated score by Thomas Newman also contributes to the stagnant quality of the film, in which people are trapped by their self-images.

In *Shawshank Redemption*, we observed how Newman employed repetitive musical elements in order to sustain moods. This quality is even more evident in *American Beauty*, as Newman more fully embraced minimalism. At the beginning of *American Beauty*, a lively two-measure motive is repeated for over three minutes, suggesting the repetitive nature of Lester's life. The mesmerizing sound, which

suggests a Javanese **gamelan** orchestra, also underscores Lester's rose fantasies (19:00). Throughout the film, this repetitive sound is creative and fresh, matching the spirit of the film itself.

TRAILER

Films such as *Do the Right Thing* and *American Beauty* illuminate serious issues in contemporary life. Other films from this time allow for an escape from these realities, often through comedy, fantasy, and animation. The last of these is particularly important for children, and the 1990s responded with some of the finest family films in Hollywood history, as we will see in the next chapter.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

gamelan	Lee, Spike	Singleton, John
<i>Goldberg Variations</i>	pedal	Tarantino, Quentin
Lee, Bill	Silvestri, Alan	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Directors Martin Scorsese and Quentin Tarantino have used popular music for their crime films. What effect does the music have on their stories? How are the directors similar in their musical choices? How do they differ?

2. In *Silence of the Lambs*, what does the music preferred by various individuals tell us about their character?
3. Why is minimalism effective in *Shawshank Redemption*? *American Beauty*?
4. After watching clips from films of Spike Lee, discuss his use of music. What do you think of the adaptation of Copland's music for *He Got Game*?
5. What roles do the examples of source music play in *Forrest Gump*?

SIGNIFICANT FILMS

1985	<i>When Harry Met Sally</i>	1994	<i>The Lion King</i>
1989	<i>The Little Mermaid</i>	1995	<i>Toy Story</i>
	<i>Batman</i>	1996	<i>The Hunchback of Notre Dame</i>
1990	<i>Pretty Woman</i>		<i>The English Patient</i>
	<i>Home Alone</i>	1998	<i>Shakespeare in Love</i>
1991	<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>	1999	<i>The Matrix</i>
	<i>Hook</i>		
1993	<i>Sleepless in Seattle</i>		
	<i>Jurassic Park</i>		

Animations, Comedies, Romances, and Fantasies

27



Sebastian conducts music under the sea in *The Little Mermaid*.

Running counter to the dark moods of crime films and other types of dramas described in Chapter 26, animations, comedies, romances, and fantasies provided an escape from the harsh realities of life at the close of the



twentieth century. The traditional symphonic score can be heard frequently in fantasies and animations, but popular music and lighter alternatives to symphonic scoring highlight many of these films as well.

ANIMATIONS

In the 1980s, animated movies were infrequent, musicals were out of fashion, and high-quality children's films were limited primarily to the Muppets. These trends ended abruptly in 1989 with the sensational success of *The Little Mermaid*. The resurgence of the animated musical is the most significant development in film music during the early 1990s, and it has proven to be both a financial and artistic success.

The principal force behind the revival of animation features has been the Disney Studios. With *The Little Mermaid*, Disney returned to several characteristics of past classics: the re-creation of a fairy story with a strong female role, comic sidekicks for both the antagonist and protagonist, the casting of well-known entertainment figures as voices, and the incorporation of a number of engaging songs. The principal composer behind Disney's second renaissance is Alan Menken, who has become one of the most honored figures in the Academy's history. Within a span of six years, he won eight Oscars—four for Best Song, and four for Best Original Score.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Alan Menken (b. 1949)

Alan Menken has won a remarkable number of Oscars in a brief period of time. Born in New York City, Menken studied both piano and violin. He became interested in musical theater and was first known as a songwriter. He wrote the music for a successful Broadway musical, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and when that was made into a movie (1986), he began to score films. He has a close association with the Disney Studios, and his music for animated films has garnered him eight Oscars, second only to Alfred Newman in music and third on the all-time list for any category.

Important Film Scores

Little Shop of Horrors 1986 ☒

The Little Mermaid 1989 !! ☒

Beauty and the Beast 1991 !! ☐ ☒

Aladdin 1992 !! ☒

Pocahontas 1995 !!

The Hunchback of Notre Dame 1996

Hercules 1997

Enchanted 2007

† = Best Music Oscar

= Music Oscar Nomination

Tangled 2010



The Little Mermaid

The first of Menken's double Oscars is for *The Little Mermaid*, which retells a Hans Christian Andersen story, with an altered happy ending. Like many of the most successful animated films of this time, the setting is exotic, allowing Menken to incorporate a non-Western sound. Exploiting the underwater locale, Menken mixes a number of popular Caribbean musical elements with other traditional styles. In the opening concert directed by the crabby conductor Sebastian, Menken mimics the sound of a European musical revue. Later, Sebastian cuts loose in two calypso numbers, both of which were nominated for best song: "Under the Sea" (the Oscar winner) and "Kiss the Girl." In addition to the effective songs, Menken supplies strong underscoring that ignores many of the clichés associated with cartoons, such as nonstop music and the use of music to mirror physical movement.

Beauty and the Beast

Many of these same elements are apparent in *Beauty and the Beast* (1991). Based on a French fairy tale, the film mixes serious adult themes with standard features of Disney animation, making this one of the studio's high points. It received six Oscar nominations, including one for Best Picture, the first such nomination for an animated feature.

Menken won the only two Oscars awarded to the film, for Best Original Score and Best Song. In the latter category, "Beauty and the Beast" was selected over the other two nominees from the same film, "Belle" and "Be Our Guest." In several of the musical numbers, Menken, as in *The Little Mermaid*, incorporated musical characteristics reflecting the locale—France. In addition to French folk instruments, one of the principal singers, Lumière, mimics the voice of Maurice Chevalier. With that distinctive gravelly vocal quality, Lumière leads the kitchen



FIGURE 27.1 Lumière leads the dishes in a spectacular French revue in *Beauty and the Beast*.

objects in a rousing rendition of “Be Our Guest” (38:50). The extravagant entertainment is an enjoyable spoof of the French revue and of the related spectacular dance sequences created for movies by Busby Berkeley in the 1930s. This and all of the other musical numbers effectively develop the characters or advance the plot.

Menken provided effective underscoring throughout the film. Appropriate moods are established for sequences of humor, action, and romance. In one particular scene, the villagers attempt to invade the castle but are repulsed to an energetic instrumental version of “Be Our Guest” (1:09:40). Menken also crafted a number of leitmotifs. The most important of these is the theme for the enchanted spell, which is first heard during the prologue (see [VG 27.1](#)). At the climax of the story, this motive is transformed into a thrilling brass fanfare and joyful acclamation, as the Beast transforms into an overly handsome prince (1:16:20).

VIEWER GUIDE 27.1

Beauty and the Beast: Opening Scenes

Composer: Alan Menken



Timing

DVD: Disney 102270 (1:00-9:30)

Setting

The film opens with a prologue about the Prince/Beast and then segues into the opening scene featuring Belle.

Key Points

- Colorful and delicate orchestration
- Leitmotifs are established
- An extended song with chorus that establishes some of the central characters

Principal Themes

Example 27.1 Enchanted Spell



Example 27.2 Prince (Beast)



Example 27.3 The Rose/Love ("Beauty and the Beast")



Example 27.4 Belle a



Example 27.5 Belle b



Example 27.6 Belle c



PLOT

MUSIC

A narrator tells of how the prince became a beast.	The Enchanted Spell theme is played delicately.
The narrator refers to the prince.	The Prince theme is heard in a low register.
The visit of an old woman.	The Enchanted Spell returns with an added oboe.
The prince turns the woman away.	Portions of the Prince theme are heard.
The old woman responds and turns into a beautiful enchantress.	The Enchanted Spell theme with flute is heard.
A spell is cast upon the prince and the castle.	The music turns darker, and the Prince theme returns.
The narrator mentions the rose.	The Rose theme is heard quietly in the flute.
The spell is explained.	The Enchanted Spell theme
Belle leaves her house.	The orchestra establishes an idyllic mood with variations on Belle b.
Belle walks toward town.	She sings an introduction to the main song.
The town wakes.	Townspeople sing "bonjour."
People of the town are described.	Belle sings the first verse of "Belle" (Belle a).
Dialogue	The orchestra plays Belle c.
The townspeople sing about Belle and then greet each other.	Various characters sing Belle a and the melody repeats with variations.

Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
Belle enters the bookstore.	The orchestra repeats Belle c multiple times.
The townspeople sing about Belle again.	Various characters sing Belle a.
Belle sings of her desires.	Belle b is sung twice as slowly, over the same beat.
The two people continue to sing about Belle.	Belle a
Gaston is hunting.	The orchestra plays Belle c.
Gaston vows to marry Belle.	Gaston sings Belle a.
Three ladies sing about Gaston.	Belle a variation
Gaston attempts to catch up to Belle.	The orchestra plays Belle a. Gaston, Belle, and the choir sing.
The town people sing of Belle again.	The choral version of Belle a leads to conclusion.
Gaston and Belle talk.	The orchestra continues with motives of the song.

The prologue and first scene establish the characters of the Beast and of the Beauty successively. In the prologue, a narrator describes the events that led to the prince's transformation into a beast. Menken's scoring presents three leitmotifs here (see [EXAMPLES 27.1-27.3](#)). The Enchanted Spell melody has three full phrases and is heard with a music-box sound (from a celesta and various other solo instruments). The Prince is given a descending idea in a low register, which will later be altered for his appearances in a Beast state. For the Rose, Menken borrows the opening motive of his Oscar-winning song "Beauty and the Beast."

The first scene of the narrative, as is typical in the Disney–Menken films, presents an extended musical number that includes soloists and chorus. Three new musical ideas are presented that will recur later in the film. The principal melody is a simple tune that is sung multiple times (see [EXAMPLE 27.4](#)). With this melody, Belle describes the people; they, in turn, describe her, and Gaston expresses his desire for Belle. Vocal contrasts are provided by Belle's introduction and her sung desire for something more in life (see [EXAMPLE 27.5](#)). Also significant is an orchestral motive heard underneath dialogue, which serves as Belle's leitmotif during the story (see [EXAMPLE 27.6](#)). All of these musical ideas are interwoven and varied throughout this tuneful score.

Other Menken Scores

In the next several years, Disney continued to draw stories from around the world. Menken lent his golden touch to two films, *Aladdin* (1992) and *Pocahontas* (1995). *Aladdin*, from the *Arabian Nights*, provides excellent entertainment, led by the

sidesplitting voice of Robin Williams as the genie. Menken mixes Arabian sounds with other popular musical styles in an Oscar-winning score, and two of his songs were nominated, with the award going to "A Whole New World."

Similarly, Menken received Oscars for his score for *Pocahontas* and its principal song, "Colors of the Wind." The story, which is loosely based on the epic poem "Song of Hiawatha" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, allowed Menken to intermix musical sounds of England and of Native Americans. In a musical highlight, the song "Mine, Mine, Mine" begins as a simple minuet, an aristocratic English dance, and builds to Governor Ratcliffe's intense song of greed, mirrored by John Smith's song of discovery (25:50).

Disney's next two productions, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996) and *Hercules* (1997), were less popular than their predecessors. Despite the sophisticated and moving score, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* created some controversy over its dark adult themes. Still, the music, at times operatic in nature, is considered by many to be the finest and most sophisticated that Menken ever wrote for Disney. Particularly striking are the numbers that combine soloists and chorus. In the Notre Dame Cathedral, Esmerelda sings an impassioned "God Help the Outcasts," while church members pray for



FIGURE 27.2 Esmeralda sings "God Bless the Outcasts" inside the Notre Dame Cathedral in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

TABLE 27.1 Major Disney and Pixar animation features, 1989–2000

YEAR	ANIMATED FEATURE	COMPOSER	SCORE	SONG
1989	<i>The Little Mermaid</i>	Alan Menken	!	!
1990	<i>The Rescuers Down Under</i>	Bruce Broughton		
1991	<i>Beauty and the Beast</i>	Menken	!	! ☒ ☒
1992	<i>Aladdin</i>	Menken	!	! ☒
1994	<i>The Lion King</i>	Hans Zimmer/Elton John	!	! ☒ ☒
1995	<i>Pocahontas</i>	Menken	!	!
1995	<i>Toy Story</i>	Randy Newman	☒	☒
1996	<i>The Hunchback of Notre Dame</i>	Menken		
1997	<i>Hercules</i>	Menken		☒
1998	<i>Mulan</i>	Goldsmith/Wilder/Zippel	☒	
1998	<i>A Bug's Life</i>	Newman	☒	
1999	<i>Tarzan</i>	Mark Mancina/Phil Collins		!
1999	<i>Toy Story 2</i>	Newman	☒	
2000	<i>The Emperor's New Groove</i>	Debney/Hartley/Sting		

! = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination

wealth and glory (35:50). An even more striking contrast occurs when Judge Frollo sings with a priestly chorus “Beata Maria,” a traditional Catholic Latin text in praise of the Virgin Mary; the music soon turns into the lustful “Hellfire,” with images of Esmerelda dancing erotically in the flames (47:45). The dark spirit of the 1990s had now touched even Disney animations. In a rebuff, the film received no Academy nominations. The reception for *Hercules* was also modest, although Menken was nominated for his song “Go the Distance.” After this film, Alan Menken took a seven-year hiatus from film composing.

The Lion King

Two major animated features appeared in mid-decade with music by other composers. Both exhibited traits that look to future developments. Turning to an African legend, Disney produced another critical and popular hit with *The Lion King* (1994). A new approach was taken for the music: rather than contracting a single composer, the studio hired Hans Zimmer to score the film and Elton John to compose the songs. The move paid dividends, as Zimmer won an Academy Award for the score, and Elton John received three nominations for his songs: “Circle of Life,” “Hakuna Matata,” and the Oscar winner “Can You Feel the Love Tonight?”

In another innovation for this group of Disney films, several musical numbers are sung by unseen voices, not by characters. Typically, the film opens with a choral number, but the music for “The Circle of Life” is presented as underscoring for the birth of Simba and is not sung by any of the characters. In this scene, African choral singing combines with a Western popular music style. Elsewhere, the African choral sound gives a fresh quality to this outstanding musical score.

The other major animation was the first computer-animated feature film from the Pixar studios, *Toy Story* (1995). This new animation technique has a more natural look, and the music was written to take on a more realistic quality as well. Gone is the wall-to-wall accompaniment heard in traditional animations, and *Toy Story* is not a musical—toys apparently do not sing. Instead, songs are inserted into the underscore, most notably Randy Newman’s Oscar-nominated “You’ve Got a Friend in Me.”

COMEDIES

With an eye on appealing to the public and on selling soundtrack recordings, numerous comedies were created that feature standards of popular music. Three romantic comedies from the mid-1980s to the mid-'90s have become

classics: *When Harry Met Sally* (1985), *Pretty Woman* (1990), and *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993). All three employ a wide range of songs, often from diverse eras, with lyrics appropriate to the plot and season. *When Harry Met Sally* includes "Love Is Here to Stay" (Gershwin) and several versions of "It Had to Be You" (Isham Jones and Gus Kahn). *Pretty Woman* takes its title from the 1964 Roy Orbison hit "Oh, Pretty Woman," which energizes the film along with other popular songs that are heard during transitions and montages. The film also prominently features several excerpts from Verdi's opera *La Traviata* (about the love between a paid companion and a wealthy young man). *Sleepless in Seattle* touches nostalgic heartstrings with its references to the movie and music of the 1957 film *An Affair to Remember* and its use of classic songs from the 1930s and '40s.

Home Alone

Several excellent symphonic scores can be heard in comedies as well, particularly in films that contain an underlying message. Rather than just settling for a humorous farce about a kid who outsmarts the bad guys, *Home Alone* (1990) treats serious issues of family relationships and the spirit of Christmas. John Williams's score lends an amusing yet sophisticated aura to the story. The music begins with a quotation from Albert Hague's music for the 1966 television Christmas classic *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, and then moves into a darkly jolly theme with a magical orchestration featuring sleigh bells and a celesta, a sound that Williams would use later in the Harry Potter films.

Throughout the film, Williams deftly crafts musical materials out of traditional Christmas tunes. In one extended cue (1:13:00), Kevin races home from the church where the choir has been rehearsing "Carol of the Bells." Williams plays with motives from the tune as Kevin declares, "This is my house!" and begins to create defenses. At one point, Williams even introduces a brief fugue to suggest the scurrying activity.



FIGURE 27.3 John Williams displays a lighter side with his score for *Home Alone*.

Hook

More fully developed is Williams's tuneful score for *Hook* (1991). An adult fantasy, *Hook* is the story of Peter Pan, who has grown up to be a lawyer. The magical

tale of the rediscovery of the innocence and joy of youth is energized through the combined talents of three box-office giants—Robin Williams, Dustin Hoffman, and Julia Roberts. The score contains four principal themes. Two are associated with Peter. A gentle theme, beginning with a falling minor third, the interval we use to sing “Yoo-hoo,” is associated with memories of Peter’s boyhood. It is first heard when we see Grandma Wendy (10:30), and later as Peter flies to Neverland (35:00). Peter’s second theme is the exuberant adventure melody, heard most frequently after he regains his confidence, flies, and fights pirates (1:40:15).

The remaining principal themes are associated with the other two stars in the film. Captain James Hook has a delightfully sinister theme in the low register. The tune provides a comic counterpoint to Peter’s arrival on Hook’s ship (37:45), and it accompanies Hook’s appearances right up to his demise caused by a falling crocodile (2:04:00). The other major theme in the film is the whimsical melody associated with Tinker Bell, which is played on a piano at the beginning of the film at the children’s play. When she makes her first appearance, John Williams engages in a bit of musical fun by adapting a passage from Stravinsky’s *Firebird* ballet, since Peter initially thinks that she is a firefly (31:00).

ROMANCES

Titanic won Best Picture in 1997, between two Best Picture winners that were also set in the past: *The English Patient* (1996) and *Shakespeare in Love* (1998). All three have passionate love affairs that end sadly, and all won Oscars for Best Score as well. But unlike the 1997 blockbuster, the other two films are less monumental, use history only as a backdrop, and contain lighter musical scores.

Gabriel Yared’s score for *The English Patient* incorporates a wide range of musical styles, from a folksong performed by Márta Sebestyén with the Hungarian folk-music ensemble Muzsikás to the keyboard music of Bach. The common factor amidst this variety is the melodic lyricism. Yared was economical in the amount of music and in his orchestration. Some of the most beautiful cues are set for strings only, and he frequently added a solo woodwind for color, such as an oboe, English horn, or clarinet.

Shakespeare in Love

Shakespeare in Love is set against the historical background of London’s Rose Theatre. More lighthearted than the earlier Best Picture winners, the story ends as the lovers separate with bittersweet sorrow, but not tragedy.

Shakespeare in Love is a tender and humorous tale that draws strength from the simplicity of its story and setting. Much of this tone is the result of Stephen Warbeck's score, which is consistently light and warm (predominantly strings). The incorporation of Renaissance instruments contributes to the fresh sound of this period film.

VIEWER GUIDE 27.2

Shakespeare in Love: Shakespeare Meets His Muse

Composer: Stephen Warbeck



Timing

DVD: Lionsgate 44671 (27:00-33:30)

Setting

Suffering from writer's block, Shakespeare (Joseph Fiennes) is being pressured to complete a comedic play, which will eventually become the tragic romance, *Romeo and Juliet*. Without a written work yet, he still auditions actors. The last of these is Viola De Lesseps (Gwyneth Paltrow), a noblewoman with a passion for theater. Since women are forbidden to appear on stage, she has dressed as a man. Smitten by the audition and believing that she is a man, Shakespeare follows her to her wealthy home and soon falls in love when she appears as a woman, not yet knowing that she is the actor that initially attracted his attention.

Key Points

- Renaissance instruments play dance music
- Underscoring overlaps with the source music
- The themes for Shakespeare and Viola are simple lyrical melodies

Principal Themes

Example 27.7 Shakespeare



Example 27.8 Viola



Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
Unable to gain access into the house of Viola De Lesseps, Shakespeare joins a band of musicians. Lord Essex races by on a horse.	A chord fades, and then no music.
Lord Essex enters the home, where the musicians are playing.	Led by the harp, the ensemble plays dance music.
Lord Essex inquires about the nature of Viola.	The music briefly ceases.
The dance begins.	An ensemble of Renaissance instruments, including a lute and a recorder, plays a dance tune.
Shakespeare joins the dance and engages with Viola.	The dance contains syncopations. Tremolos in the low strings are added.
Viola is startled as she recognizes Shakespeare.	The dance features the recorder, and orchestral strings are heard briefly. The dance continues.
Viola and Shakespeare dance together again.	The dance rhythm continues while the recorder and violins play contrasting lyrical material.
Lord Essex pulls Shakespeare away and threatens him.	The dance tune returns louder.
Later, Viola stands on the balcony and Shakespeare appears. They exchange words of love.	The dance music fades.
Shakespeare ascends the wall only to find Viola's attendant on the balcony. Shakespeare falls and races away.	Strings play a variation of the Viola theme. There is no reaction to the screams of Shakespeare and Viola's attendant.
Inspired, Shakespeare writes feverishly.	The strings play the Shakespeare theme with a quick pulse that suggests love and inspiration.
A cut takes us to the rehearsal.	After the Viola theme, the music fades.

In the opening sequence described in [VIEWER GUIDE 27.2](#), an ensemble of Renaissance instruments plays dance music, but as Shakespeare (Joseph Fiennes) and Viola (Gwyneth Paltrow) meet, the sound of a modern orchestra enters. Soon the recorder and violins play contrasting lyrical lines, suggesting their intense attraction to each other. The lightness of the music contributes to an overall sense of humor, highlighted when Shakespeare is threatened and proclaims his name to be Christopher Marlowe, his chief competitor as a playwright. The subsequent balcony scene is also lightly scored with the Viola theme (see [EXAMPLE 27.8](#)), despite the dual screams at the end and Shakespeare's run for his life. Inspired by his new music, Shakespeare begins to write feverishly as the melody from the opening title returns (see [EXAMPLE 27.7](#)).

FANTASIES

Fantasy films had lost their mass appeal by the middle of the 1980s. They continued to appear occasionally into the 1990s, paving the way for the eventual return of the fantasy blockbuster—films such as the *Star Wars* prequels, the *Harry Potter* series, and the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Among the most successful of the other fantasies were *Batman* (1989), *Jurassic Park* (1993), and *The Matrix* (1999).

Batman

One of the key films of 1989 is Tim Burton's *Batman*, which premiered only two years after the last *Superman* sequel (*Superman IV: The Quest for Peace*, 1987). Both *Superman* and *Batman* are based on superheroes from D.C. Comics. The differences between these movies, however, point to the changing mood of Hollywood films. Superman lives in the thriving city of Metropolis, has a bright, secret Fortress of Solitude, goes on a formal and gentlemanly first date with Lois, and saves lives. Batman lives in the dark and decaying world of Gotham City, has a dark secret Bat Cave, sleeps with Vickie on their first date, and vengefully kills people. While the fantasy/action subject links *Batman* to the traditions of the 1980s, the film's darkness points to the prevailing mood of the 1990s.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Danny Elfman (b. 1953)

Danny Elfman is one of several new film composers from the late twentieth century that did not receive formal training in music. His career began because Tim Burton was a fan of his rock group Oingo Boingo, and the two have established an extended collaboration. For *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, Elfman not only composed the music, but sang the role of Jack as well. A gifted melody writer, Elfman has scored a significant number of popular films, including *Spider-Man* and Best Picture-winner *Chicago*. He has received three Oscar nominations. Among his television credits is the theme for the cartoon series *The Simpsons*.

Important Film Scores

Pee-wee's Big Adventure 1985

Beetlejuice 1988

Batman 1989

Edward Scissorhands 1990

The Nightmare before Christmas 1993

Mission: Impossible 1996

Good Will Hunting 1997 ☑

Men in Black 1997 ☑

Continued on next page

Planet of the Apes 2001

Spider-Man 2002

Chicago 2002 

Big Fish 2003 

Spider-Man 2 2004

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory 2005

Milk 2008 

 = Best Music Oscar

 = Music Oscar Nomination



Essential to the brooding character of *Batman* is the musical score by Danny Elfman, one of several talented young composers to emerge in the 1980s. Elfman's friendship with director Tim Burton led to his initial opportunities to score major films, as the two collaborated on *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* (1985) and *Beetlejuice* (1988). The score to *Batman* marked a significant step in Elfman's growth as a film composer.



FIGURE 27.4 The music covers the ending of *Batman* with a chilling shroud of darkness.

Orchestration plays an essential role in the creation of a dark score. Elfman generally features low-pitched instruments, and when higher-pitched instruments are employed, they are heard in their lower registers. Elfman frequently uses the full power of the orchestra, with dominating parts given to the brass and percussion. At the opening, the bassoon, the lowest-pitched member of the woodwinds, sets an ominous mood with the Batman motive (see **EXAMPLE 27.9**). As the title appears, the full orchestra quickly turns to a dark minor chord, supported by an organ. The latter not only adds a gothic effect, but also foreshadows the location of the climax—a dark cathedral. The prevailing minor keys and the recurring

motive contribute to the overall mood. Even at the end of the film, when Batman's triumphant music is sounding, an abrupt turn to minor closes the film in a shroud of chilling darkness.

Example 27.9 *Batman*



The Batman motive begins with four rising pitches; the first three ascend by step, and the last is a leap. As with motivic themes heard in earlier films, this theme is subject to numerous variations. At times, only the first four notes

are played. The motive can be heard in counterpoint, at the beginnings of new melodies, and transformed into a variety of moods, including a romantic piano melody and a music box. Further manipulations of the motive can be heard in the drive to the Bat Cave (1:12:20), where the motive is played quickly, as an accompaniment, and slowly, as the melody. During the closing credits, the motive can also be heard as a constant accompaniment to the theme song "Scandalous," sung by Prince.

Jurassic Park

Escapist action films continued to enjoy great box-office appeal in the 1990s. Four of the decade's top ten films mix elements of action and disaster: *Jurassic Park* (1993), *Independence Day* (1996), *Twister* (1996), and *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (1997). All these films have substantial symphonic scores, fully exploiting the remarkable virtuosity of the contemporary studio orchestra. While some of the musical effects may be lost in the sheer amount of wall-to-wall music, many of the excerpts are exhilarating and play a large role in the success of the special-effect action sequences.

The most memorable music among these films is John Williams's score for *Jurassic Park*. This Spielberg film has several parallels to the 1933 *King Kong* (see Chapter 9), including a setting on an exotic island, visions of a variety of dinosaurs, a gate separating the beasts from the humans—one of the characters in *Jurassic Park* even points out the similarity of the gate, the initial introduction to the beast through the sound of his footsteps, and the patient but intense buildup to the action, which, once started, becomes unrelenting. There is one difference: viewers have to wait for the sequel (*The Lost World: Jurassic Park*) to see the beast transplanted to the United States.

Like Steiner's music for the earlier classic, Williams's action music contributes to the horrific effects through loud dynamics dominated by brass and percussion, harsh syncopated accents, and strong dissonances. The major difference between the two scores is the inclusion of more contrast in *Jurassic Park*. Both films use minimal music in the openings, but Williams also withholds music for the initial views of the *Tyrannosaurus rex*. In this way, the music lends a greater sense of realism to the first attacks, and the early silence allows Spielberg and Williams to turn up the intensity by adding music to the later sequences.

Williams also includes two themes that provide contrast to the action music. When the helicopter arrives at Jurassic Park, the awe-inspiring view of the island is supported by an exhilarating trumpet theme (16:35). This theme returns later in the film when the *T. rex* ironically saves the lives of the remaining



FIGURE 27.5 Neo and Morpheus battle in a training exercise accompanied by a succession of different musical styles in *The Matrix*.

world, we also marvel at the incredible technology that went into the making of the film. Composer Don Davis matched the vision of a machine world with mechanical-sounding music. Mixing the modern concert-hall sounds of minimalism with the popular sounds of techno and heavy metal, Davis created an effective score that supports the dramatic action and sets an overall mood.

survivors (1:57:00). The other contrasting theme is the warm melody associated with the brontosaurus (20:15). Appearing in the scenes with the gentler dinosaurs, this beautiful cue also underscores our relief when they escape.

The Matrix

Blending science fiction and martial arts, *The Matrix* is a slick, highly polished view of the future. Ironically, while we observe a disturbing scenario about machines taking over the

CLOSE-UP: HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Since the 1970s, technology has revolutionized our movie-watching habits. Prior to that time, movies could be viewed in one of two ways—either by going to the theater to see a new release or by waiting for a television network to broadcast an older movie. Other options became available in the mid-1970s, when the videocassette recorder (VCR) went on sale. In 1975, a Betamax VCR with a recording capability of one hour cost \$2,295. Competition from the rival VHS model drove prices down and recording times up. Within a decade, the VHS format dominated the market, and the VCR was a standard companion to the television in American homes. The impact on movie watching was twofold. You could now record movies shown on television, view them at your own convenience, and keep the tape as part of your permanent collection. You could also go to a video store and rent relatively new films, bypassing the television networks completely.

Also bringing greater access to recent movies were the cable movie channels. The cable phenomenon began in 1972 with the initial broadcasts of the “Home Box Office” (HBO) channel. After HBO began to distribute its programming with the aid of a satellite in 1975, it became a dominant force in cable television. Soon other movie channels appeared on cable, including Showtime (1978), The Movie Channel (1979), Cinemax (1980), and The Disney Channel (1983).

The 1980s and '90s brought about more changes. In 1988, CDs outsold LPs for the first time. The disc format was then applied to films, and in 1997, DVDs became available for public sale in the United States. The clarity and convenience of the DVD has enabled us to study, appreciate, and understand the art of filmmaking in a way that was never possible before.

Throughout the early twenty-first century, improvements continued to be made, such as high-definition televisions and Blu-ray discs. New digital

technology, which had appeared in the late 1990s (*Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace* was the first feature film projected with the new technology), essentially made the DVD obsolete. As a result, movies can now be downloaded or viewed directly

on computers and phones through streaming. Yet, even as these new innovations improve our home entertainment centers, movie theaters continue to thrive. Technology, it appears, will never replace the public-theater experience.



Among the recurring musical ideas are fast, repetitive scale fragments (usually three or six notes) that accompany the rapidly moving numbers of the matrix, and ominous dark and unrelated chords that accompany Agents, the humanized forms of the machines. In the training combat between master Morpheus and apprentice Neo (49:00), the music begins with taiko drums and a gong, a clear reference to the Asian origin of kung fu. As the battle commences, techno music by the group Lunatic Calm is introduced. By the end, minimalist sounds from the orchestra have taken over with a passage that resembles one of the foremost minimalist works for orchestra, John Adams's *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* (1986). The transitions between these distinct musical styles are nearly seamless, as Davis merges the popular and concert styles.

TRAILER

The musical scores for films extending from 1989 to 2000 are characterized by diverse styles and creative approaches. Masterful symphonic scores by veterans such as John Williams and James Horner and newcomer Danny Elfman underscore both historical dramas and fantasies. Popular music, both classic rock and original music, appears in films ranging from animated features to violent crime stories. The new century would see continued musical diversity and stylistic diffusion, along with a growing emphasis on non-melodic scores and minimalism.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

Burton, Tim

John, Elton

Warbeck, Stephen

Davis, Don

Menken, Alan

Yared, Gabriel

Elfman, Danny

Newman, Randy

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Describe the variety of approaches to music in animation feature movies between 1989 and 2000. Give examples of the incorporation of ethnic musical qualities.
 2. What is different about the music for *Toy Story*? Why?
 3. Compare the use of popular songs and instrumental underscoring for classic comedies.
 4. Describe the differences in music between three romances, *Titanic*, *The English Patient*, and *Shakespeare in Love*.
 5. How does Batman differ from Superman? What are the musical differences between the movies featuring those characters?
 6. Describe the musical styles used in *The Matrix*.
-

FOR FURTHER READING

- Halfyard, Janet K. *Danny Elfman's Batman: A Film Score Guide*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2004.
- Laing, Heather. *Gabriel Yared's The English Patient*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2004.

1991	<i>Raise the Red Lantern</i>	1998	<i>The Red Violin</i>
	<i>The Double Life of Veronique</i>		<i>Run Lola Run</i>
1993	<i>Three Colors: Blue</i>	2000	<i>Maléna</i>
1994	<i>Il postino</i>		<i>Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon</i>
1997	<i>Life Is Beautiful</i>		<i>Chocolat</i>

World Cinema after the Cold War

28



Frederick Pope performs with the Red Violin.

The Cold War that had divided Europe for over four decades ended abruptly in the early 1990s. In the aftermath, a new sense of freedom and hope created a sense of optimism, at least temporarily. During this decade, film centers from around the world produced a number of exceptional dramas, many with

...theatrical releases in 1998

outstanding musical scores. Between 1994 and 2000, four movies produced outside of the United States would win Oscars for Best Original Score, two others would be nominated, and many would feature music as a central element. Within this output, dramas focusing on the lives of women garnered much worldwide attention.

ITALY

Il postino, *Life Is Beautiful*, and *Maléna* provide glimpses into the troubling times in Italy during and after World War II. The first two won Oscars for Best Original Score, and the third was nominated for that award. Despite their subjects and serious endings, all three stories are bathed in warmth and humor, which is reflected in the music.

Il postino (1994) tells of a simpleminded Italian postman who becomes enthralled with poetry through his friendship with the Nobel Prize-winning poet Pablo Neruda. An advocate of communism, Neruda fled from his native Chile to avoid imprisonment and, in 1952, took residence on the Italian island of Capri, where the story is set. Composer Luis Bacalov, who is best remembered for his music for spaghetti westerns, created a light, melodic score. Many of the cues include the sound of a bandoneon, a type of accordion common in South America. It is often heard in duets with other instruments, such as a clarinet, mandolin, violin, or piano. In an amusing sequence that shows Neruda assisting Mario in his relationship with Beatrice (48:40), the title theme can be heard in a series of simple yet diverse settings, including a gentle tango. This light character is sustained throughout the film, even through the violence shown at the conclusion.

The Italian actor-comedian Roberto Benigni won the first Best Actor Oscar given to a non-English-speaking character for his portrayal of Guido, a quick-witted Jewish man in *Life Is Beautiful* (1997). The first half of the film shows him wooing and marrying his “princess,” while foreshadowing the darkening politics in Italy during the early years of World War II. In the second half, Guido protects his son from harm in a concentration camp by telling fantasies and making their imprisonment into a game. Although Guido is ultimately executed, he does save his son, who is reunited with his mother. For this bittersweet story, Nicola Piovani crafted a score that balances the joyfulness of Guido’s view of life with the



FIGURE 28.1 Music creates a warm mood for Guido and his family in *Life Is Beautiful*.

horror of the historic events. Piovani's cues tend to be tuneful with dance-like rhythms, and the darker, more ominous moments are musically handled with restraint.

In *Maléna* (2000), the life of a beautiful woman in an Italian village is seen through the eyes of an infatuated boy named Renato. After her husband is reported to have been killed in the war, Maléna is forced into prostitution in order to survive. At the end of the war, the women in the village strip her, beat her, and drive her away for sleeping with German soldiers. When her disabled husband reappears, only Renato has the nerve to tell him how to find Maléna, and the couple is reunited with dignity. For this coming-of-age film, Ennio Morricone (see Composer Profile, p. 405) provides a light, melodic score that often plays under the gossip and quarrels. Running counter to the mood, the scene showing Maléna's humiliation is set against cheerful marching source music as Americans enter the town (1:07:00).

GLOBAL DRAMAS

The Red Violin

The other two international films with Oscar-winning scores are *The Red Violin* (1998) and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000). Directed by François Girard and produced largely in Canada, *The Red Violin* has an episodic plot that follows the journey of a violin from its creation in seventeenth-century Cremona to its sale at an auction in twentieth-century Montreal. Between these two framing events are three principal episodes:

- Delivered to a monastery, the violin is played by generations of orphan boys. Eventually Kaspar Weiss, a young violin prodigy, is given the violin, and Georges Poussin, a violin teacher, takes him to Vienna.
- Stolen by Gypsies, the violin eventually is brought to England in the nineteenth century. Frederick Pope, a famed violinist, obtains the instrument and performs virtuoso compositions with it.
- The violin is taken to China, where it remains through the early years of the twentieth century. During the Cultural Revolution, it is secretly given to an old man who collects musical instruments.

At first glance, the film would appear to have a loose structure. The time period spans over three hundred years, and the location encompasses five countries, necessitating the use of five different languages. Like many recent films, *The Red Violin* contains numerous jumps in time and location. Intermixed with the



FIGURE 28.2 Anna Bussotti sings the Red Violin theme.

three principal episodes are recurring scenes of the violin's origin and its twentieth-century fate. The auction in Montreal is shown seven times, each providing more details about what is really going on.

Lending unity to the tale is the finely crafted music of the prominent concert composer John Corigliano, who limits the ensemble to a string orchestra and a solo violin, which was performed by Joshua Bell. The principal theme (see EXAMPLE 28.1) belongs to both Anna Bussotti, the wife of the violin maker, and the

Red Violin. Anna initially sings the haunting tune, but it is played by the violin during the credits and subsequent episodes. The melody is modal, lacking a leading tone, and hence can easily be heard as a Renaissance tune or as a modern melody. The theme begins on D, and, in subsequent phrases, cadences on G, A, and E. These four principal pitch points are also the four open strings of a violin. Later in the film, the melody will be heard in Baroque, gypsy, Romantic, and modern styles.

The principal melody appears over a recurring bass line in a **chaconne** (see EXAMPLE 28.2), a musical form dating from before 1800, in which a pattern of harmonies is constantly repeated. At times, chaconnes also featured a repeated bass in an ostinato pattern. The exact rhythm of this chaconne varies, but the rising seven-note pattern is maintained throughout the film. The melody can be heard by itself and underlying the first two phrases of Anna's theme (4:45). With the chaconne and main theme, Corigliano generates all of the music in the film.

VIEWER GUIDE 28.1

The Red Violin: Kaspar Weiss

Composer: John Corigliano



Timing

DVD: Lionsgate 20676 (17:30-27:40)

Setting

In a flashback to seventeenth-century Cremona, Italy, master violin maker Nicolo Bussotti (Carlo Cecchi) is devastated by the loss of his wife and infant in childbirth. He completes his last and greatest violin and then retires from his trade. In present-day Montreal, Bussotti's violin, called the

Red Violin, is on auction under the watchful eye of Charles Moritz (Samuel L. Jackson), a violin appraiser. Other flashbacks follow that show the well-traveled history of the violin from its inception to its arrival in Canada.

Key Points

- The concerto is in the Baroque style of Vivaldi
- The solo part is derived from the Red Violin theme
- Kaspar auditions with an unaccompanied prelude in the style of Bach
- The prelude is also derived from the Red Violin theme

Principal Themes

Example 28.1 Red Violin



Example 28.2 Chaconne



PLOT	MUSIC
Bussotti sits at his workbench. He finally picks up the violin and prepares it for varnish.	No music
Bussotti applies the varnish and then hangs it up to dry.	A solo violin plays the Red Violin theme and is soon joined by the string orchestra, rising to an emotional climax.
Cut to the present time, where a Stradivarius violin is being auctioned in Montreal.	The music fades as the orchestra violins play a portion of the Red Violin theme.
Moritz enters and is quietly cursed by the Russian violin virtuoso Mr. Ruselsky. A violin is sold, and the Red Violin comes up for bidding.	No music
Cut to a late-eighteenth-century monastery, where young orphan boys are raised and trained to play violin.	The boys play the orchestral introduction to a Baroque concerto in the style of Vivaldi.
The Red Violin is donated to the monastery and passed from child to child until it reaches the hands of Kaspar Weiss.	The music stops momentarily. When the concerto resumes, the solo part—a variation of the Red Violin theme—is heard.
The story returns to Cremona, where Cesca reads a tarot card and sees a curse, danger, and illness.	No music

Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
The eminent violin teacher Georges Poussin arrives at the monastery. He is immediately attracted to the Red Violin.	No music
Kaspar plays for Poussin, who agrees to take him to Vienna as a student.	Kaspar plays a Baroque unaccompanied prelude in the style of Bach. The melody is derived from the Red Violin theme.

The shifting between time periods can be observed in **VIEWER GUIDE 28.1**. Initially we see Nicolo Bussotti devastated, just after his wife and infant have died at childbirth. A master violin maker in seventeenth-century Cremona, Italy, he completes his work on the Red Violin, which he had intended for his child. A cut then takes us to present-day Montreal, where that instrument is about to be auctioned. Just as the bidding starts, we flash back to a late-eighteenth-century monastery in Austria.

During these segments, three versions of the Red Violin theme are presented. When Bussotti applies the varnish to the violin, the most recognizable form of the theme is heard. It begins with a solo violin, and the orchestra soon enters with the chaconne harmonies. With the cut to Montreal, the music fades, as Corigliano never underscores the bidding in these scenes. When we first see the monastery, young boys play a Baroque concerto. The solo part, which is always performed by an orphan with the Red Violin, is an embellished version of the main theme. The violin finally ends up in the hands of the child prodigy Kaspar. When Kaspar auditions for master teacher Poussin, he plays an adaptation of the Red Violin theme that resembles the Prelude of Bach's Sonata No. 1 for unaccompanied violin.

CLOSE-UP: POSTMODERN CONCERT COMPOSERS

Over the last two decades, it has become more common for American concert composers to write film scores. Among those who have achieved recognition for both concert music and film music in recent years are John Corigliano, Tan Dun, Philip Glass, and Elliot Goldenthal.

John Corigliano (b. 1938) is among the leading musical figures in America today. A composer of sympho-

nies, chamber music, and the highly regarded opera *Ghosts of Versailles* (1987), he received a Pulitzer Prize for his Symphony No. 2 (2001). He is also recognized as an excellent teacher and has been associated with the Manhattan School of Music and Juilliard. Corigliano composed three film scores: *Altered States* (1980), *Revolution* (1985), and *The Red Violin* (1999). The first of these created a sensation, as his modernistic

musical style was a fitting support to this out-of-body story. The film received an Oscar nomination for Best Dramatic Score. Corigliano would subsequently earn that Oscar with *The Red Violin*.

Chinese-born **Tan Dun** (b. 1957) was raised during the Cultural Revolution and, as a composer, began to explore Western musical styles when restrictions were loosened. Still, the Chinese government banned public performances of his works in 1983, and he came to the United States shortly thereafter to study music at Columbia University. Among his best-known works are the opera *Marco Polo* (1995), which mixes Western avant-garde sounds with those of Beijing opera; the *Symphony 1997: Heaven Earth Mankind*, composed for the ceremony marking the return of Hong Kong to China; and *2000 Today: A World Symphony for the Millennium*, a work commissioned by the BBC, PBS Television, and Sony Classical that was broadcast to the world on January 1, 2000, on more than fifty-five international television networks. His best-known film scores are *Fallen* (1998), *Hero* (2002), and the Oscar-winning *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000).

Philip Glass (b. 1937) is one of the key figures in the early years of minimalism. In adopting this style, Glass was influenced by the music of Ravi Shankar,

the renowned sitar player from India. By the mid-1970s, Glass had created a significant repertoire of works, including the landmark opera *Einstein on the Beach* (1976). Glass created a sensation with the music for two fascinating documentaries: *Koyaanisqatsi* (1983) and *Powaqqatsi* (1988). In 1992 he composed the music for the horror slasher *Candyman*, but his minimalist style is more evident in subsequent films, including *Kundun* (1997), *The Hours* (2002), and *Notes on a Scandal* (2006), all of which were nominated for Oscars. He also collaborated with Marco Beltrami on the music for *Fantastic Four* (2015).

Elliot Goldenthal (b. 1954), born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, studied composition with John Corigliano at the Manhattan School of Music and had informal lessons with Aaron Copland as well. His best-known concert work is the *Vietnam Oratorio*, commissioned and performed by the Pacific Symphony in 1995 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War. In addition, Goldenthal has composed for the theater and for film. Among his film credits are Oscar nominations for *Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles* (1994) and *Michael Collins* (1996), and an Oscar win for *Frida* (2002). Other popular scores include *Batman Forever* (1995) and *Across the Universe* (2007).

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

The music for Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) was entrusted to a concert composer who is primarily active in the United States, Chinese-born Tan Dun. Using a mixture of Western and Chinese musical styles, Tan Dun created a sensational Oscar-winning score in which he combined traditional Chinese instruments, such as the erhu and the flutelike bawu and dize, with Western instruments, most notably a solo cello played by the Chinese-American musician Yo-Yo Ma. The melodic material for the cello features slides and quick ornaments, reflecting some of the vocal traditions of Beijing Opera. Throughout



FIGURE 28.3 Jen leaps to her death to the mournful sound of a cello in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*.

the film, Tan Dun freely combined traditional Western harmony, Western popular-music rhythms, avant-garde timbres, and traditional Chinese sounds.

An excellent martial arts fantasy with stunning visual effects, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* tells of two sets of doomed lovers. The mixture of action, romance, and tragedy allowed Tan Dun to incorporate a variety of musical effects. Chinese drumming propels scenes of combat (16:00), and lyric duets between an

erhu and cello accompany the lovers (1:09:45). The timbre of these duets recalls a similar sound in the celebrated Chinese musical work *Butterfly Lovers' Violin Concerto* (He Zhanhao and Chen Gang). The music achieves a timeless beauty during the final moments of the film (1:52:15). During the ensuing closing credits, the love theme, originally heard as a traditional Chinese melody, is transformed into a Western popular song, "A Love Before Time," which received a nomination for Best Song.

DRAMAS ON THE LIVES OF WOMEN

Women are often neglected or merely given supportive roles in films. This tendency has led to the designation "women's movie" as a minor genre in Hollywood. The portrayal of life from a woman's perspective has become increasingly prevalent in film since the 1990s, particularly in international productions. Like *Maléna*, the following films feature a woman as the protagonist and show her struggles to survive.

Raise the Red Lantern

Hong Kong filmmaking received a major critical boost from the evocative *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991). Based on Su Tong's 1990 novel *Wives and Concubines*, the film portrays the experiences of a young woman who agrees, for the sake of her family, to become the fourth wife of a wealthy man despite her potential as a university student. With beautiful cinematography and sensitive acting, the tale of her competition with the other wives and a devious concubine unfolds and leads to her eventual madness. Unlike *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, the music for *Raise the Red Lantern* retains an authentic Chinese character while incorporating synthesizer drones, a few passages of triadic harmony, and a Westernized conclusion. Source music is essential to the plot, as the third wife is a

former Beijing opera singer, and the master's son plays the Chinese flute. The most prominent timbres in the film are voices and percussion.

Double Life of Veronique

The Polish director Krzysztof Kieslowski, with the collaboration of composer Zbigniew Preisner, created some of the most celebrated films of the early 1990s. Diegetic music plays a pivotal role in a number of their works, and they even created a fictitious Dutch composer (Van den Budenmayer) as a common source for music in multiple films. In *The Double Life of Veronique* (1991), two women are visual and spiritual doubles; Weronika is a Polish singer, and Véronique is a French music teacher. Other than an incidental encounter, they never meet, but Véronique senses that she is not alone in the world, which a chance photo of Weronika substantiates. Essential to the story is a grand Van den Budenmayer cantata. While performing the solo soprano part in that work, Weronika collapses and dies, and the music hauntingly echoes at the end of the film.

Three Colors: Blue

Kieslowski and Preisner subsequently collaborated on a trilogy of films entitled *Three Colors: Blue* (1993), *White* (1994), and *Red* (1994). The colors, which visually dominate each of the respective films, are those of the French flag, symbolizing liberty (blue), equality (white), and fraternity (red). These themes are the central focus of each story. At the onset of *Blue*, Julie is in a car accident that kills her husband and daughter. In a sense, she is abruptly liberated from her family roles. She subsequently attempts to be freed from her memories as well, but ultimately she achieves true freedom through reconciling with the past while moving forward in her own life.



FIGURE 28.4 Weronika performs a solo just moments before her collapse in *The Double Life of Veronique*.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Zbigniew Preisner (b. 1955)

Preisner, a self-taught composer from Poland, has scored films from Poland, France, and the United States. His musical style is unabashedly Romantic, bearing a strong resemblance to that of the turn-of-the-century Finnish composer Jean Sibelius. Preisner created a sensation with his music for *The Decalogue* (1989–1990), a series of ten television episodes based on the Ten Commandments and directed by Krzysztof Kieslowski. The director and composer would continue to collaborate with *The Double Life of Veronique* and the *Three Colors* trilogy. Based on

Continued on next page

their appreciation of the Netherlands, the two created a fictitious Dutch composer named Van den Budenmayer, who plays a part in the three previously mentioned joint ventures.

Important Film Scores

The Decalogue 1989–1990 (television miniseries)

The Double Life of Veronique 1991

The Secret Garden 1993

Three Colors: Blue, White, and Red 1993–1994

When a Man Loves a Woman 1994

Élisa 1995

A Secret 2007

Music plays a particularly significant role in *Blue*. Before the accident, Julie's husband was a famous composer nearing completion of a monumental work entitled *Concerto for the Unification of Europe*, based on biblical texts in Greek from 1 Corinthians 13. A concerto in the early Baroque sense of the term (that is, a composition for orchestra, chorus, and solo singers), the work was to have been performed by twelve different orchestras in twelve different European cities. Julie destroys what she believes is the only copy of the composition, as it haunts her along with his memory. Her detailed knowledge of the score and subsequent revisions of a surviving manuscript suggest that she was at the very least a collaborator, if not the principal composer of her husband's work. Beginning a new life, Julie has to deal with several issues, including the knowledge that her husband had a mistress, who is now pregnant, and the love of Olivier, a former family friend. She finally achieves an emotional release (liberation) at the end of the film, as she reconciles with her memories, her relationship with Olivier, and her passion for music.

For this moving story, Preisner composed a powerful and haunting score. The full version of the concerto as completed by Julie is performed at the conclusion of the film. Prior to this, fragments and variations of the composition are heard, primarily in Julie's mind. Several of these function as leitmotifs. Two scenes are particularly noteworthy. At one point, Julie is looking at the manuscript of the music and hears the melody played on a piano (19:20). When the notation ends on the page, the music continues in her head, signifying that she knows the work well. In a later scene, Olivier reads a portion of the concerto on the piano for Julie (1:21:50). As he plays, we hear not only the piano, but also the orchestra, as if Julie were hearing the composition in her head. When Julie calls out instruments and corrects herself, those adjustments are heard immediately while never interrupting the musical flow.

VIEWER GUIDE 28.2

Three Colors: Blue: Conclusion

Composer: Zbigniew Preisner



Timing

DVD: Miramax 28658 (1:29:05–1:38:00)

Setting

Julie (Juliette Binoche) has lost her husband and daughter in a car accident. Her husband was a composer, and his unfinished last composition haunts her. She clearly helped in the creation of this work as an editor or perhaps primary composer. Ultimately, she embraces her past, including the music. She completes her husband's last work and moves forward in a relationship with one of their former friends.

Key Points

- The completed version of the composition heard in the final scene and credits
- Inclusion of orchestra, chorus, and solo soprano
- Questions left unanswered by stern quality of the music and the final visions

Principal Themes

Example 28.3 Introduction



Example 28.4 Orchestra



Example 28.5 Solo Soprano



Example 28.6 Violins



Continued on next page

Example 28.7 Conclusion



PLOT	MUSIC
Julie touches the music manuscript. She then rolls it up and takes it with her, as we see through a blue mobile.	The choir begins the introduction as she touches the score (see Example 28.3). It continues after she rolls it up.
After a few moments of black screen, we see Julie making love with Olivier. Another black screen follows.	An orchestral interlude begins with the violins playing a passionate melody (see Example 28.4). A solo soprano enters with a new melody (see Example 28.5).
Antoine who chanced upon the accident, wakes with the cross necklace he found.	Passage with full chorus
Julie's mother is shown in a nursing home.	The solo soprano begins a new section with chorus.
Lucille the stripper is shown, and then Julie.	The violins play a new melody (see Example 28.6).
Julie's husband's mistress is seen pregnant.	The solo soprano initiates another section. A dramatic climax follows.
After a black screen, Julie is shown crying. The closing credits begin.	The final portion begins with vocal humming and pizzicato strings (see Example 28.7).



In the final scene of the film (see [VG 28.2](#)), Julie is shown making love with Olivier, visualizing individuals that recently touched her life, and ultimately releasing her emotions through crying. The full version of the concerto is presented for the first time, beginning with the chorus. Following an orchestral interlude, we hear three passages featuring a solo soprano and other dramatic choral statements. The composition concludes quietly with the closing credits. Julie has completed her husband's composition, suggesting that she has finished her emotional journey. While we are listening to a composition celebrating the unification of Europe, Julie has unified her past with her present. Yet, these final visions continue to haunt her, as she appears to be suffocating against glass in her lovemaking, and each of the images of others suggests a somber reflection of their lives. Julie's final tears seem to represent both the resolution of emotions from her past and doubts about her return to familiar roles for the future.

Chocolat

Chocolat (2000) exposes the facades and pretentiousness of a French village in 1959 with a warm and uplifting mood. Juliette Binoche portrays Vianne, a drifter and a chocolatier who finds a permanent home and romance with a gypsy named Roux (Johnny Depp). The Oscar-nominated score by Rachel Portman effectively sets the tone for this magical tale. Portman employs a number of light melodic ideas that create evocative moods with elegant simplicity. Many of the tunes have folk features, such as dance-like accompaniments. These folk qualities link up both to Roux and the river people and to the South American origin of Vianne's chocolate recipe. Some folk instruments are used, but for the most part, solo woodwinds play the melodies, notably the flute, clarinet, and English horn. A number of the recurring melodies are associated with the wind, magic, the village mayor, and other aspects of the story.

Run Lola Run

The popular German film *Run Lola Run* (1998) deals with fundamental philosophical questions about meaning and randomness in life. The female protagonist Lola must get 100,000 deutsche marks to her boyfriend Manni in twenty minutes or he will face serious consequences. Through sheer willful force, the young Lola makes the same race to the rescue three separate times. With each run, there are slight variations of coincidences that have enormous consequences for the lives of the people that Lola encounters and for the final outcome.

Director Tom Tykwer created his own music for the film with a technopropelled score. **Techno** is a rock style characterized by a relentless driving rhythm, repetition similar to minimalism and ambient music, and a dependence on electronic sounds (as suggested by its name). It is a perfect complement for the energized running scenes and the youthful appeal of the movie. Unlike the classical Hollywood score, Tykwer's music does not change for nuances of the story. In the excerpt described in the **VIEWER GUIDE 28.3**, a window is almost broken, a gun fires accidentally, the police surround Lola and Manni, and yet the mood of the music remains unaltered from one moment to the next. Within these minimal parameters, Tykwer made slight modifications to the sound that emphasize significant moments, such as the addition of a high pitch when Manni is about to go into the supermarket, the entrance of a violin sound when Lola arrives too late, and the sound of a drum when Lola is forced into action.

VIEWER GUIDE 28.3

Run Lola Run: Robbing a Store

Composer: Tom Tykwer



Timing

DVD: Sony 04014 (25:10-32:00)

Setting

Manni (Moritz Bleibtreu) has lost 100,000 deutsche marks that belong to a local criminal. He has twenty minutes to replace the money or face reprisal. He calls his girlfriend Lola (Franka Potente), who immediately runs to her father's bank in order to obtain some money. She is unsuccessful and races to meet Manni.

Key Points

- Scoring primarily for synthesizer
- Techno musical style
- Music does not reflect specific actions or emotions
- Adaptations of two borrowed works

PLOT

Lola runs alongside an ambulance, and both avoid hitting a windowpane. In a crosscut, we see Manni waiting and Lola running.

Manni surveys a supermarket. A split screen shows Manni, Lola, and a clock.

When time runs out, Manni enters a store and pulls out his gun.

Lola arrives too late; the guard pulls a gun.

Lola goes into action; she hits the guard, takes his gun, and accidentally shoots it.

Lola and Manni try to escape as police arrive.

Lola is accidentally shot.

Lola falls.

MUSIC

A techno beat is heard throughout.

Vocals and high-pitch string sound are added.

The music crescendos.

A string sound (consisting of two alternating pitches) is added when Lola arrives.

A rhythmic pulse is added. There is no musical reaction to the gunfire.

We hear Dinah Washington sing "What a Difference a Day Makes."

Stunned silence

The strings play *The Unanswered Question* by Charles Ives.



Matching the film's postmodern images that mix black and white, color, and animation, the music incorporates diverse musical styles in a few select moments. As Lola and Manni make their escape from the supermarket, we hear Dinah Washington sing the 1959 classic "What a Difference a Day Makes." Not only does the mood of this song run counter to the visual images, but the words are also quite humorous in light of the movie as a whole. After Lola has been shot, we hear a passage from Charles Ives's *The Unanswered Question*, a work that deals with the meaning of life. Once again, the borrowed music has implications for the essential theme of the movie. This excerpt is repeated at the end of Lola's second run, when an ambulance hits Manni. Fortunately, circumstances change just enough for a happy ending after Lola's third run.

TRAILER

The twentieth century closed with numerous musical highlights. Film scores were invigorated by the numerous new musical sounds coming from innovative sources, both in the United States and abroad. The search for new musical sounds would continue to characterize film music of the twenty-first century, as the world would be challenged by events in 2001.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

Bacalov, Luis	Girard, François	Portman, Rachel
chaconne	Kieslowski, Krzysztof	Preisner, Zbigniew
Corigliano, John	Lee, Ang	techno
Dun, Tan	Piovani, Nicola	Tykwer, Tom

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. The stories of *Il postino*, *Life Is Beautiful*, and *Maléna* contain both humor and tragic elements. What moods are projected in their music? How does the music project their location, time period, and personalities?
2. John Corigliano is noted for his incorporation of multiple musical styles, a trend that is called polystylistism. How is this reflected in his score to *The Red Violin*?
3. Describe the mixture of Chinese and Western musical elements in Tan Dun's score to *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. How does this differ from the music for *Raise the Red Lantern*?

4. Listen to the performance of the *Concerto for the Unification of Europe* at the end of *Three Colors: Blue*. Identify important thematic elements and trace their appearance throughout the entire film.
 5. Listen to examples of techno music. Discuss its use and effectiveness in Tykwer's *Run Lola Run*.
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FOR FURTHER READING

Reyland, Nicholas W. *Zbigniew Preisner's Three Colors Trilogy: A Film Score Guide*. Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2012.

8

THE NEW MILLENNIUM,
2001-2016

SIGNIFICANT FILMS

1999	<i>The Phantom Menace</i>	2004	<i>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban</i>
2001	<i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone</i>	2005	<i>Revenge of the Sith</i>
	<i>The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring</i>	2009	<i>Avatar</i>
2002	<i>Attack of the Clones</i>	2010	<i>Inception</i>
	<i>The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers</i>	2014	<i>Interstellar</i>
2003	<i>The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King</i>	2016	<i>The Force Awakens</i>

Blockbuster Fantasies and Adventures

29



Professor Filius Flitwick leads the Frog Choir in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*.

The United States entered the twenty-first century as the dominant political, economic, and cultural force in the world. The first two of these are a natural outgrowth of winning the Cold War and the country's leadership in technology. Cultural dominance, however, is a surprise. In seeking a cultural identity, the United States has traditionally turned to Europe. American composers and artists studied in Europe, and Europeans were brought to our country as teachers and creators. When the film industry needed composers in the 1930s,



FIGURE 29.1 Belleville's Statue of Liberty is an obese figure holding a hamburger and an ice cream cone in *The Triplets of Belleville*.

it immediately sought out foreign-born musicians such as Korngold, Steiner, Tiomkin, and Rózsa. As American artists began to assert themselves, they excelled at the more revolutionary styles of traditional European art forms; abstract expressionism and American avant-garde music gained international recognition.

But while we were preoccupied with emulating European art, the world was embracing our popular culture. A pair of Michaels (Jackson and Jordan), McDonald's, and movies carried the American image abroad more effectively than all the politicians, diplomats, and military leaders together. Ironically, in some regions that consider the United States to be an enemy by day, Hollywood films attract large audiences at night. Europe also experienced a wave of Americanization, and,

consequently, a European backlash against American culture has developed. This attitude is readily apparent in the French satirical animated feature *The Triplets of Belleville* (2003; see Chapter 32).

Despite the general popularity of American music abroad, the U.S. role as an economic and political power has faced serious challenges. The events of September 11, 2001, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the constant threat of terrorism have had a major impact on daily life in the United States. Initially, Hollywood did not know how to respond (see Close-Up: 9/11 and Hollywood, p. 510). But in the unsettled years of the early twenty-first century, the film industry turned to a number of successful formulas, highlighted by action-oriented fantasies.

THE STAR WARS PREQUELS

At the turn of the century, the long-awaited prequels to the *Star Wars* trilogy finally appeared: *The Phantom Menace* (1999), *Attack of the Clones* (2002), and *Revenge of the Sith* (2005). In composing the music for these films, John Williams faced a major problem—creating a new sound while maintaining ties to the original trilogy. Tradition is followed at the beginning and end of each film, as Williams quotes the original music for the opening credits and the initial section of the closing credits. These passages are also retained in the first *Star Wars* sequel, *The Force Awakens*.

Williams incorporated numerous leitmotifs from the original trilogy. Of the seven shown in Chapter 21 (see EXAMPLES 21.1–21.7), six are reprised in the

prequels. In *The Phantom Menace*, familiar themes appear only sporadically, largely because Obi-Wan Kenobi and Yoda are the only two original figures present at the outset. But as the saga continues, the earlier themes are heard with more frequency. Obi-Wan's theme is the most prevalent throughout, since it also serves as the theme for the Force, and it accompanies the multiple visions of the Tatooine binary sunset. Darth Vader's theme is heard first in *The Phantom Menace* when Yoda worries about Anakin's future (2:06:50). This theme becomes more pronounced in *Attack of the Clones*, and it emerges as a dominant theme in *Revenge of the Sith* as Anakin heads toward the Dark Side. The leitmotifs for Luke and Leia make their appearance in the last of these films, although Luke's theme is occasionally heard elsewhere without any association to the character.

Example 29.1 Emperor



Several of the minor *Star Wars* themes also recur, most notably the Rebel Fanfare and the leitmotif for the Emperor (see EXAMPLE 29.1). The latter is relatively obscure in the original trilogy, making only a few brief appearances in *Return of the Jedi*. In the prequels, this theme achieves prominence. As it is first heard in *The Phantom Menace* (4:30), the Emperor's leitmotif is frequently sung by low male voices, giving it a particularly ominous quality.

For the most part, however, Williams strove for a distinctively new sound in the prequels. Some of this newness stems from his use of voices, which have a minimal role in the original trilogy. Most striking is the dark, Carl Orff-like "Duel of the Fates" that underscores the battle with the Sith in *The Phantom Menace* (1:50:20) and recurs in the other two prequels.

For each of the first two prequels, Williams composed a new lyrical melody. In *The Phantom Menace*, Anakin is accompanied by a gentle tune appropriate for the innocence of a young child (see EXAMPLE 29.2). The final cadence of the theme (bracketed in the example), however, resembles Darth Vader's theme, hinting at what we know lies in Anakin's future. This connection is



FIGURE 29.2 The "Duel of the Fates" accompanies an action sequence in *The Phantom Menace*.

withheld until the end of the closing credits as a bonus for the *Star Wars* faithful who stay to the last moment of the film. Here, the cadence of Anakin's theme is quietly transformed so that it becomes Darth Vader's theme (see EXAMPLES 29.3–29.5). In case the point was missed, the Vader theme is repeated several times as the music fades, and the sound of Darth Vader's breathing is added in the background.

Example 29.2 Anakin



Example 29.3 Altered cadence



Example 29.4 Ending form



Example 29.5 Darth Vader



Anakin's theme makes only a brief appearance in *Attack of the Clones*. Instead, Anakin now has a love theme that he shares with Padme (see EXAMPLE 29.6). Perhaps the most beautiful melody in all the *Star Wars* movies, this theme is first heard when Anakin and Padme begin to speak on a more personal level (29:20), and it grows in intensity as their relationship develops. The triplet rhythm in the second and third measures is sometimes isolated and used in action sequences involving the two lovers. One might also note that the same descending triplet is one of the distinctive characteristics of the theme for Luke Skywalker, who will be a product of their love and marriage.

Example 29.6 Anakin and Padme



THE STAR WARS SEQUELS

The Force Awakens (2016) marks the triumphant arrival of the *Star Wars* sequels. Quickly surpassing *Avatar* as the all-time top-grossing movie in the domestic market, the film offers an action-packed story tempered with *Star Wars* nostalgia. Hearing back to the first trilogy, several “old” familiar characters return, visual references are plentiful, and the plot contains numerous similarities to the original story. One of the more enjoyable parallels is the cantina on Takonda (57:20), which recalls a similar establishment on Tatooine in *Star Wars*. Once again, musicians provide source music, but a rock style has replaced jazz, an appropriate development considering that thirty years have elapsed. As with *Star Wars*, we learn that rock music first appeared a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away.

John Williams composed a score that successfully balances new material with quotations of leitmotifs linking back to the original trilogy. The roles for some of the familiar themes are slightly altered. The Rebel Fanfare picks up a clear association with the *Millennium Falcon*, and Luke’s theme is heard on multiple occasions without a direct connection to the character, as it serves more as a battle cry for the Resistance. Luke Skywalker is now identified primarily with the Force theme, just as this melodic idea had once been associated with Obi-Wan Kenobi. Among the other returning melodies, the most poignant is the Love theme for Han and Leia, which was absent in the prequels.

VIEWER GUIDE 29.1

Star Wars: The Force Awakens: Abduction of Rey

Composer: John Williams



Timing

DVD: Lucasfilm 134010 (1:11:20-1:20:55)

Setting

Circumstances have brought together the scavenger Rey (Daisy Ridley), the ex-stormtrooper Finn (John Boyega), Han Solo, Chewbacca, and the droid BB-8. Aboard the *Millennium Falcon*, this group takes refuge on Takonda, where Maz Kanata (Lupita Nyong’o) runs a cantina. In a vault below the cantina, Rey is drawn to the lightsaber that had belonged to Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker. Unable to deal with the visions she has while holding the weapon, Rey races into the adjacent forest. Shortly thereafter, the First Order attacks Takonda, with Kylo Ren seeking BB-8.

Continued on next page

Key Points

- Wall-to-wall symphonic underscoring
- Leitmotifs include the themes from the original trilogy and newly created ones
- Traditional action music with loud dynamics, fast notes, and syncopated accents

Principal Themes

Example 29.7 Rey



Example 29.8 Kylo Ren



Example 29.9 Resistance March



Example 29.10 Poe



PLOT	MUSIC
Rey momentarily catches her breath and discovers that BB-8 has followed her. She urges the droid to return. When she sees the attack, she begins to race back.	Entering quietly, the orchestra crescendos to a repetitive rhythmic pattern. A brief passage of faster notes accompanies Rey's run. Another cut to the incoming ships coincides with a harsh dissonance in the brass.
Maz leads Han and Finn to Luke's lightsaber and gives it to Finn. She realizes that The First Order is attacking.	A rising line gives way to solemn chords as she shows the weapon. The music begins to ascend and crescendo as the ground shakes.
Rey, followed by BB-8, returns to the edge of the forest, where she observes the attack. Kylo Ren's ship comes into view.	The strings create tension with fast notes. Brass chords underscore the destruction. Kylo Ren's theme is intoned in the low brass when his ship appears.
Rey battles stormtroopers and returns to the forest. Kylo Ren is told that the droid is going west with a girl. After shooting another stormtrooper, Rey tells BB-8 to keep going.	The tempo of the action music becomes faster as she runs. The appearance of Kylo Ren brings out another statement of his theme. The orchestra crescendos when Kylo Ren looks west. The action music subsides while Rey talks to BB-8.

PLOT	MUSIC
Han, Chewbacca, Finn, and Maz climb out of the rubble and join the fight. Maz instructs Finn to use the lightsaber, and he soon engages in a personal duel with a stormtrooper. Han shoots the stormtrooper, saving Finn's life, but he is captured along with Finn and Chewbacca.	No music
Ships from the Resistance arrive in a counterattack.	A rising melodic line leads to the Resistance March. The theme mixes with action music.
Han leads the others back into action, and Finn admires the work of one pilot in particular—Poe.	Action music leads to a brass statement of a theme representing Poe.
Rey frantically looks for more stormtroopers. Suddenly, Kylo Ren appears. He deflects all of Rey's shots with his lightsaber.	Sounds from a synthesizer mix with sound effects. The first three notes of the Kylo Ren theme are played loudly in the brass.
Kylo Ren freezes Rey's muscle movements. Ren demands to know where the droid is.	Strings sustain a tremolo. Another statement of Kylo Ren's theme is played quietly.
A brief cut shows the Resistance gaining the upper hand.	No music
Kylo Ren uses the Force to read Rey's mind. He discovers that Rey has seen the map and decides that he no longer needs the droid.	Low strings play an altered version of Kylo Ren's theme. The music crescendos when Ren renders Rey unconscious.
The First Order forces begin to evacuate. Kylo Ren carries Rey, which is observed by Han and then Finn.	The orchestra, predominantly strings, plays rising figures.
Finn runs in an attempt to save Rey.	The strings play Rey's theme passionately.
Han dismisses Finn's concerns as a new ship lands.	No music
Leia walks out of the ship. C3PO, one of the principal droids from the original <i>Star Wars</i> , interrupts this special moment, but quickly leaves.	The French horn plays the Princess Leia theme.
Han and Leia talk. Chewbacca comes for a hug. Han tells her that he saw their son, referring to Kylo Ren.	The low strings play the Han and Leia Love theme. The oboe plays the same theme briefly, and the cue ends quietly in the strings.

The newly composed material features numerous striking leitmotifs. These include themes for the principal antagonists and protagonists, some of which are connected in timbre to parallel themes in the original trilogy (see [VG 29.1](#)). Rey is given a heroic theme often played by the French horn (see [EXAMPLE 29.7](#)), much like the themes for Luke and Obi-Wan. As with the Emperor, Snoke is accompanied by low voices (twenty-four bass singers) that intone a sinister, dark chant. Kylo Ren's theme (see [EXAMPLE 29.8](#)) resembles that of Darth Vader with its low brass timbre, jagged intervals, and menacing mood. Among the other musical highlights are the rousing Resistance March (see [EXAMPLE 29.9](#)) and the contrapuntal treatment of the Star Wars/Luke Skywalker theme during the attack on the Starkiller Base (1:54:30), which musically recalls the parallel moment in *Star Wars* with Luke's final run at the Death Star.

The mixture of old and new is evident in the music for *Viewer Guide 29.1*. Two themes from the original trilogy appear near the end of the scene. The Leia theme (see [EXAMPLE 21.3](#)) plays when General Leia emerges from the ship, and the love theme for Han and Leia (see [EXAMPLE 21.6](#)) sounds wistfully as the two see each other for the first time in years. Prior to this moment, four prominent new themes can be heard. Most predominant is the motive for Kylo Ren, which sounds when we see his ship, when his figure appears, and when he battles Rey (initially reduced to three notes). The strings play the theme for Rey as Finn futilely runs to rescue Rey and screams her name. The passage is also energized by the Resistance March, played as the New Republic forces arrive, and by a strong theme associated with a resistance pilot named Poe (see [EXAMPLE 29.10](#)). As in the earlier *Star Wars* films, Williams supports the action with loud dynamics, active string passages, and syncopated accents.

HARRY AND FRODO

In addition to the popular *Star Wars* prequels, two new series of films appeared in the early twenty-first century, each based on a series of novels: *Harry Potter* and *The Lord of the Rings*. The *Harry Potter* phenomenon is recent. The author, J. K. Rowling, was a struggling English writer until her first novel, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, was published in 1997. Within three years, Rowling earned over \$400 million, and sales of her initial book and the first two sequels exceeded thirty million copies. By contrast, J. R. R. Tolkien's books have enchanted readers for well over a half a century. An English professor specializing in Old and Middle English, Tolkien published *The Hobbit* in 1937 and the trilogy of novels *The Lord of the Rings* in 1954–1955. While both series are read by young and old, the beginning of the *Harry Potter* series is considered to be

TABLE 29.1 The Harry Potter films and composers

YEAR	FILM	PRINCIPAL COMPOSER
2001	<i>Sorcerer's Stone</i>	John Williams
2002	<i>Chamber of Secrets</i>	Williams
2004	<i>Prisoner of Azkaban</i>	Williams
2005	<i>Goblet of Fire</i>	Patrick Doyle
2007	<i>Order of the Phoenix</i>	Nicholas Hooper
2009	<i>Half-Blood Prince</i>	Hooper
2010	<i>Deathly Hallows: Part I</i>	Alexandre Desplat
2011	<i>Deathly Hallows: Part II</i>	Desplat

children's literature, and *The Lord of the Rings* is aimed at young adults. The difference in intent is reflected in both the movies and their music.

Harry Potter

The eight films of the *Harry Potter* series are shown in **TABLE 29.1** along with their principal composers. John Williams, who created the music for the first three installments, could have modeled the music after *Star Wars*—after all, the stories do have some similarities, both focusing on the struggle between evil forces and an orphan boy who is destined for greatness. Thankfully, Williams chose to preserve the atmosphere of children's literature by evoking the musical style heard in films such as *Home Alone* and *Hook*. Distinctive to this character is the music-box sound created by the celesta and the memorable and somewhat quirky melodic material.

Some of Williams's melodies are used as leitmotifs, while others are applied more loosely in the drama. The principal theme, which is heard during various magical scenes, has been given the title *Hedwig*, the name of Harry's white owl. *Hedwig*'s extended songlike theme is in a minor key and has numerous twists in its melodic contour (see **EXAMPLE 29.11**). It is the only theme heard in all the films, and it often serves as a leitmotif for Harry. Williams initially created several other themes for characters, including Harry's parents and Voldemort, and he composed a three-note motive that symbolizes the sorcerer's stone in the first film and Tom Riddle in the second.

Example 29.11 Hedwig





FIGURE 29.3 Harry Potter has a bumpy ride to jazz scoring in *The Prisoner of Azkaban*.

While the music for the first two films shares much of the same thematic material, the score for *The Prisoner of Azkaban* explores new timbres and styles, including several Renaissance-inspired cues and a frolicking jazz sound for the ride on the Knight Bus (9:45). The succeeding composers continued to move away from the original leitmotifs and created a more action-based style. The young children that began watching Harry Potter in 2001 were, after all,

growing older. After *The Prisoner of Azkaban*, no other film in the series was nominated for Best Score, but Alexandre Desplat elevated the general musical quality and brought back some of the original themes for the final two installments.

The Lord of the Rings Trilogy

Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is an epic story that extends through three novels. Filmmaker Peter Jackson skillfully crafted a film based on each book:

- The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001)
- The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (2002)
- The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2003)

The story is set in Middle-earth, a world invented by Tolkien that is populated by hobbits, elves, dwarves, trolls, orcs (an enhanced species of goblin), men, and sorcerers. The evil Sauron forged an all-powerful ring in an earlier age. Both the ring, which has fallen into hobbit hands, and Sauron are once again regaining power. The only way to defeat these evil forces is to destroy the ring where it was made, at Mount Doom in Mordor. This task falls to a young hobbit named Frodo, who is joined by a fellowship of eight comrades.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Howard Shore (b. 1946)

Howard Shore was the music director for *Saturday Night Live* in the late 1970s. In the 1980s, he created a sensational synthesizer score for *Scanners* (1981) and provided music for a number of popular films. The piano jazz improvisation on "Heart and Soul" during the closing credits of *Big* is one of the most entertaining musical moments of the decade. Shore maintained a steady output of scores in the 1990s and won an Oscar the first time he was nominated, for *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*. He later won two Oscars for *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*.

Important Film Scores

Scanners 1981	<i>The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers</i> 2002
<i>Big</i> 1988	<i>Gangs of New York</i> 2002 ☒
<i>The Silence of the Lambs</i> 1991 ♀	<i>The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King</i> 2003 ♀ !!
<i>Mrs. Doubtfire</i> 1993	<i>The Aviator</i> 2004
<i>Philadelphia</i> 1993	<i>The Twilight Saga: Eclipse</i> 2010
<i>Ed Wood</i> 1994	<i>Hugo</i> 2011 ☒
<i>The Lord of the Rings:</i> <i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i> 2001 !	<i>The Hobbit Trilogy</i> 2012, 2013, 2014

♀ = Best Picture Oscar

! = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination



Howard Shore rose to this formidable challenge and created music for all three films, winning Oscars for the first and third of the trilogy. His work invites comparisons to John Williams's scores for *Star Wars*. The music for both of these mythical fantasies is monumental in scope and features wall-to-wall scoring, full symphonic coloring, and numerous recurring themes. Yet Shore has created a distinctive sound, which can partially be attributed to his extended use of voices, both soloists and choruses.

The Fellowship of the Ring

The Fellowship of the Ring opens with the singing of Gregorian chant, a musical repertory that dates back to the earliest years of the Christian Church. With this sound, Shore establishes the sense of mystery and magic of Tolkien's conception and provides an immediate aural link to the Middle Ages, just as the clothes and weapons of the humans and the gothic architecture provide visual links. Also invoking the sound of the Middle Ages are the numerous chanting choral cues in the style of Orff's *Carmina Burana*, which are typically assigned to visions of the evil forces of Sauron. The implication of these references is that much of the culture of the Middle Ages was based on remnants from the mythical era of Middle-earth. Among the other distinctive uses of voices are the moving laments at the apparent death of Gandalf (2:09:05, extended II/41:55) and the death of Boromir (2:38:55, extended II/1:23:05), the serene chanting accompanying our visions of Rivendell (1:16:05, extended I/1:26:35) and Lothlórien (2:13:10, extended II/47:45), and the hauntingly beautiful solo sung by Enya during the love scene of Aragorn and Arwen (1:24:55, extended I/1:35:55).

In John Williams's scores for *Star Wars*, most of the principal characters have clearly defined themes; one can often tell who is on the screen merely by hearing the music. In *The Lord of the Rings*, themes are applied more generally. The principal characters, including Frodo, Gandalf, and Aragorn, do not have individual themes. Frodo shares a Hobbit theme with his uncle Bilbo, his companions, and the Shire. Gandalf, along with the others who accompany Frodo, are represented by the single Fellowship theme. The King of Gondor theme will eventually be given to Aragorn, but the broader implications of the theme are that it belongs to the world of humankind in general.

The story of *The Lord of the Rings* centers on the struggle between good and evil. Sauron, the Lord of the Rings, is often represented by a harsh four-note theme (see [EXAMPLE 29.16](#)). In one of Shore's most striking moments, this dark motive is transformed into a triumphant chorale when Sauron and Mordor are destroyed in *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King* (2:46:30, extended II/1:27:25). By far the most beautiful of the themes representing evil is the Ring theme, a sinuous nine-note melody that seductively weaves in and out of the score (see [EXAMPLE 29.15](#)). This theme is clearly related to the Sauron theme; the initial three notes of both themes are identical, and each concludes with a downward leap.

The three principal themes representing good, the Fellowship, the King of Gondor, and the Hobbit are also musically related (see [EXAMPLES 29.12–29.14](#)). The Fellowship and King of Gondor themes have the same modal character, with a lowered leading tone. This quality, characteristic of music before 1600, once again links the musical sound of this film to the Middle Ages. Indeed the Fellowship theme begins and ends with a shift down to the lowered leading tone and back to the home pitch. You may recall a similar gesture at the beginning of *Ben-Hur*, where it also was used to suggest the sound of an ancient time period (see [VG 14.1](#)). By contrast, the Hobbit theme is in a modern key (D major), but it is related thematically to the Fellowship theme. In the latter, notice the three-note motive beginning at the end of the second measure that establishes a rhythmic pattern: short-short-long. The pattern is heard three times in succession in this theme.

Many of the themes mentioned are heard in the Council of Elrond scene (see [VG 29.2](#)). The sounds of evil dominate the beginning; dark chords, voices, and the Sauron theme set an ominous mood for the council. In the extended DVD edition of the film, the Ring theme also makes an appearance. After Frodo volunteers to be the ring-bearer, the Fellowship theme swells forth, and the mood changes to optimism. Near the end of the scene, the Hobbit theme enters and provides its usual comic relief, as do the little characters themselves.

VIEWER GUIDE 29.2

The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring: Council of Elrond

Composer: Howard Shore



Timing

DVD Extended: New Line N5549 (1:37:25–1:45:30)

Theatrical Release: 3000042831 (1:26:30–1:33:25)

Setting

The young hobbit Frodo (Elijah Wood) has completed his mission of delivering the powerful ring created by the evil Sauron to the land of the elves. Here, leaders representing various species, including humans, debate what to do. The evil within the ring begins to work immediately on those who have gathered, and they start to bicker. Seemingly, only the simple ways of the hobbit can withstand the ring's seductive power.

Key Points

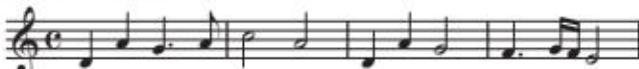
- Dark orchestration with use of brass instruments
- Appearance of numerous leitmotifs

Principal Themes

Example 29.12 Fellowship



Example 29.13 King of Gondor



Example 29.14 Hobbit



Example 29.15 Ring



Continued on next page

Example 29.16 Sauron



PLOT	MUSIC
Elrond describes the seriousness of the situation.	Ominous low chords appear in the midst of his speech.
Frodo sets the ring on the central table.	Several sustained chords crescendo.
The group is taken aback by the appearance of the ring. The human Boromir approaches to take the ring.	Voices and other mysterious sounds are added to the chords. The Ring theme sounds as Boromir talks of the ring.
Boromir reaches out, and Gandalf angrily speaks out in the evil language of Mordor.	The music crescendos into the speaking voices.
Gandalf defends his words, and Boromir argues that the ring can be useful.	A solo horn enters with the King theme as Boromir talks.
Aragorn, the heir to the human throne, argues against Boromir. Boromir refuses to acknowledge Aragorn as king.	The King theme continues. Dark chords return as Boromir sits down.
Elrond concludes that destroying the ring is the only choice. The dwarf Gimli tries to smash it with his ax, but fails.	The King theme is played by the low strings.
Elrond tells the group that the ring, made in Mount Doom, can only be destroyed there.	Dark chords are joined by voices, suggesting the creation of the ring at Mount Doom.
Boromir talks of the impossibility of going to Mordor, and soon the group begins to argue violently.	Dark chords continue and get louder. As the argument begins, a quick pulse is established.
Frodo stares at the ring and hears voices. He decides to take it to Mordor.	Mixed with the dissonant background, Sauron's theme is stated twice. The orchestra crescendos as Frodo stands.
All become quiet when Frodo volunteers.	Solemn chords underscore the moment.
First Gandalf and then four others volunteer to accompany him.	The Fellowship theme appears. Voices sing the solemn chords as Boromir joins the group.
The other hobbits—Sam, Merry, and Pippen—volunteer as well, making nine for the Fellowship of the Ring.	The Hobbit theme is played with the entrance of the three. The scene concludes with the Fellowship theme.



When Boromir addresses the council, a solo French horn, the instrument of heroes, intones the solemn King of Gondor theme. In contrast to the Fellowship theme, the King of Gondor theme is heard only briefly in the first two films of the trilogy. The melody finally achieves prominence in the last film, *The Return of*

the King. At the moment of Aragorn's crowning (2:53:55, extended II/1:35:35), a solo French horn once again plays the theme, recalling its initial appearance in the Elrond scene. Considering the length of the three wall-to-wall epic scores, it is remarkable that Shore has kept the music fresh through subtle thematic variations and avoiding the overuse of any single theme. When the King of Gondor theme soars in the last film, it sounds new, yet its seeds were carefully planted in the earlier films.

EXPANDING MINIMALISM

In a way, the music for *The Lord of the Rings* can be heard as a transition between an older and newer approach to scoring. The scores for *The Lord of the Rings*, like those for the *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter* films, are melody-dominated and have memorable leitmotifs that help shape our perception of the stories and are well recognized and enjoyed outside of the films. But Shore also includes a number of musical passages that consist of a single pitch or chord with a crescendo, one of the characteristics of minimalist film scoring. Often played by the low brass, this frequent gesture represents a variety of moods, including danger, suspense, and solemnity. As we will see in our next three examples, minimalism, with its emphasis on repetitive rhythmic drives and avoidance of tuneful melodies, has become more prevalent in recent action films.

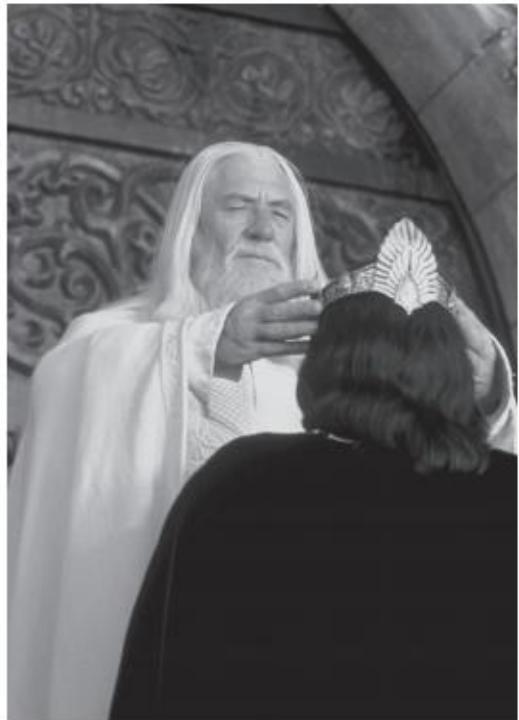


FIGURE 29.4 The French horn plays the King of Gondor theme as Gandalf crowns Aragorn in *The Return of the King*.

CLOSE-UP: MINIMALISM

Minimalism in music refers to compositions with a deliberately simplified melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic character. Their repetitive nature creates a hypnotic sound reminiscent of a machine. The term *minimalism* was first applied to the visual arts, where it denoted a movement in the 1960s that sought to reduce art to its essentials (see FIGURE 29.5). The minimalist style of music began in the 1960s in the works of composers

such as La Monte Young, Terry Riley (*In C*, 1964), and Steve Reich. During the 1980s, musical minimalism developed a stronger audience appeal through the incorporation of elements of rock and by highlighting musical changes. In turn, rock music developed its own minimalist sounds in movements such as new age, ambient (see Close-Up: Krautrock, p. 338), and techno.

Continued on next page



FIGURE 29.5 Minimalist art: Noguchi's *Red Cube* in New York City

With its more popular appeal and its close relationship with non-Western music, minimalism began to enter mainstream Hollywood film scoring during the 1990s. Philip Glass, one of the founders and primary shapers of the movement, played a significant role in its use for film scoring. Particularly notable are his scores for *Kundun* (1997) and *The Hours* (2002). Film composer Thomas Newman also began to incorporate minimalism in the 1990s, including various cues in

Shawshank Redemption (1994) and more thoroughly in the 1999 Best Picture-winner *American Beauty*. In that same year, Don Davis created a model for action minimalism by applying both techno and minimalism to fighting sequences in *The Matrix*.

The growing influence of minimalism is the most significant new development in film music in the first decade of the century. In its most recent manifestation, minimalist film scoring features some of these characteristics:

- repetitive rhythms and melodic ideas
- avoidance of tuneful melodies
- long sustained pitches or chords, often generated by a synthesizer
- sparse orchestration
- minimal dynamic changes
- a single sustained mood

Among the techniques used to avoid monotony are the inclusion of contrasting source music and the emergence of a striking melody at a dramatic moment. In this century, minimalism is most closely associated with Hans Zimmer, Thomas Newman, and James Horner. Other composers that employ the style to a lesser extent include Howard Shore and Alexandre Desplat.

Avatar

Avatar (2009), directed by James Cameron, was a major commercial success. It eventually overcame *Titanic* as the all-time biggest box-office winner. Critically, it had mixed reviews. Some have questioned the message behind the story, which shows a technologically advanced society trying to destroy a peaceful culture for financial gain. Although the plot is set in the twenty-second century and on a distant planet, the parallels to the Iraqi War (note the reference to “shock and awe”) are not subtle. Still, most critics have hailed *Avatar* for its technical bravura, and it was nominated for nine Oscars (including Best Score) and won three. For the leading actors, the film features two relative newcomers, Sam Worthington and Zoe Saldana, as well as Sigourney Weaver, who is no alien to sci-fi films.

James Horner's score provides an aural link between the Na'vi civilization and the non-Western populations of our time. A shakuhachi, a Japanese wooden flute similar to the Renaissance recorder, is frequently heard in visions of the forest. Ornamental vocal melodies sung with a somewhat nasal tone, choral chanting, and plentiful drumming (especially during action scenes) also contribute to the association of this tribe to indigenous peoples in our world. Colorful orchestrations with bells, percussion, harp, voices, woodwinds, and synthesizers match the beauty of the Na'vi forests.

Minimalism is more prevalent in this score than in the music for *The Lord of the Rings*, and tuneful melodies are less prominent. Many cues consist of extended drumming passages and dark, ominous chords, often with crescendos. The ethnic sounds combine well with the intent of minimalist scoring. The change in attitude toward film music since the 1990s can be seen by comparing Jake's "This is our land" speech (2:02:30) to the parallel "Sons of Scotland" plea in *Braveheart* (1995). Horner composed both scores, and each cue is effective and inspirational. The principal difference is the lack of a defining melody in *Avatar* as there was in *Braveheart*. Thematic ideas, although not as tuneful or as plentiful as in *The Lord of the Rings*, are effective in the context of the film. The most important of these is the Avatar/Love theme (see EXAMPLE 29.17). This distinctive four-note rising idea is heard repeatedly with the visions of Pandora, and it is later incorporated into "I See You," sung by Leona Lewis during the closing credits.

VIEWER GUIDE 29.3

Avatar: Initiation

Composer: James Horner



Timing

DVD: Blu-Ray 2265613 (1:05:10-1:14:45)

Setting

In the twenty-second century, an expedition from Earth seeks to exploit the natural resources of the planet Pandora, despite the fact that it would require destroying the environment and the peaceful civilization of the Na'vi. Jake (Sam Worthington), a paraplegic ex-marine, is given a Na'vi avatar, which enables him to have the use of his limbs in a ten-foot blue humanoid body. He encounters Neytiri (Zoe Saldana), a female member of the Na'vi, and she begins to initiate him into the tribe.

Continued on next page

Key Points

- Utilization of orchestra and children's choir
- The Avatar/Love theme suggesting the magnificence of the setting
- Minimalist music accompanying the brief action scene

Principal Themes

Example 29.17 Avatar/Love



Example 29.18 Children's Song



PLOT	MUSIC
Tsu'tey leads Jake and two other aspiring inductees up Iknimaya.	Sustained chords accompany a French horn playing an ascending line.
They arrive at the floating mountains.	A unison children's choir enters with a simple new melody (Children's Song). Sustained sounds underlie the monologue.
They climb by hand and foot.	The choir returns with an energizing rhythmic pulse.
They leap to vines and climb further.	Strings play the Avatar/Love theme. Bells are added.
We see the floating mountains. They continue to a cliff.	The strings play the Children's Song.
They arrive at the edge.	Climactic chords with vocals suggest the beauty of the scenery.
Neytiri arrives on her ikran. Jake is asked to take the first test. He crosses under a waterfall. Neytiri explains what he needs to do.	The French horn line gives way to a shakuhachi. Then no music.
Jake searches for his ikran.	Drums and ominous chords suggest danger.
Jake chooses and begins to subdue an ikran. He nearly falls. He leaps up again and subdues the ikran.	Drums energize the action. Chords again suggest danger. Drums and then a chorus signify Jake's success.
Jake begins to fly on his ikran.	Drums suggest Jake's lack of control.
Jake gains control.	The French horn plays a variation of the Avatar/Love theme.
Excitedly, Neytiri joins him.	Drums, the children's choir, and strings suggest the joyfulness of this moment.
They fly together and bond.	The strings play the Avatar/Love theme.
All five fly.	The children's choir returns with added percussion.
Jake and Neytiri dive straight down.	The brasses capture the excitement.
They continue to fly.	The strings and choir conclude the segment.

The diverse colors of Horner's score are readily apparent in Jake's initiation scene, in which he must tame an ikran or die in the attempt (see [VG 29.3](#)). The Avatar/Love theme appears several times along with a simple folklike melody sung by a children's choir (see [EXAMPLE 29.18](#)). Heard in the French horn, strings, and most prominently in the choral passages, the latter dominates this segment. This simple melody suggests the exotic location, the beauty of the land, and the innocence of the Na'vi. Minimalist scoring with drums is employed briefly during the action portion of the scene, when Jake battles to take control of an ikran and learns to fly.

Inception

Christopher Nolan's *Inception* (2010) is an imaginative fantasy that explores the dream world. Using technology that allows people to share dreams, Cobb (Leonardo DiCaprio) extracts corporate secrets from a target's subconscious. He now believes that he can also plant an idea during a dream that will become the point of inception for someone's future thoughts. Since the technology for dream invasion is known, protective measures have been provided for certain rich and powerful figures. Hence, Cobb has developed a technique of creating dream states within a dream. For the climactic portion of the film, there are four levels of simultaneous activity:

- Reality: the principal characters are sleeping on a plane
- Dream Level 1: the target is kidnapped and put to sleep in a van
- Dream Level 2: the target is befriended by Cobb and induced into another dream
- Dream Level 3: an attack on a snowy mountain fortress

Each of these levels has its own set of action, and Nolan craftily crosscuts between them in a sequence that lasts more than half of the film.

Hans Zimmer's score for *Inception* is one of the finest examples of the minimalist approach to scoring for an action film. The sustained sounds and repetitious patterns of minimalism are clearly supportive of this vision of dream worlds. Zimmer incorporates into the music three essential aspects of the story: the action on various dream levels, the use of a song to signify that the dream is about to end, and the concept of limbo (unconstructed dream space).



FIGURE 29.6 A spinning top is the key to Cobb's sense of reality in *Inception*.



FIGURE 29.7 Marion Cotillard plays Édith Piaf in *La Vie en Rose*.

The events that the subconscious creates in our dreams occur more quickly than in real life. In the movie, we are given a ratio: five minutes of dreaming produces an hour of real events. Hence, with each level of dreaming, action occurs at a quicker pace. Reflecting these simultaneous temporal activities, the score contains layers of music moving at different but related tempos. Typically, the percussion rhythms move at the fastest pace (to generate a sense of excitement), the strings play at an intermediate tempo, and the brasses sustain long chords.

The controller of the sleeping bodies signals when the dreams are about to end by playing a song. For this central musical element, Nolan chose “Non, je ne regrette rien” (Charles Dumont, 1956) sung by Édith Piaf, one of France’s most famous singers. (Coincidentally, Marion Cotillard, who plays Cobb’s wife, portrayed Piaf in the excellent biopic *La Vie en Rose* [2007].) Zimmer extracts two essential elements, both from the piano accompaniment (see **EXAMPLE 29.19**): the rhythm, and the half-step

motion in the bass line (lowest notes in the example). The rhythm of the piano is a repeating pattern alternating long and short notes. Throughout the film, this pairing of long and short can be heard at various tempos. Even during the logo that precedes the credits, slow statements of the two-note idea are intoned in the low register, and this serves as a motto for the entire score.

Example 29.19 The piano accompaniment to “Non, je ne regrette rien”

A musical score for piano featuring a single staff with a treble clef. The music consists of a repeating pattern of eighth and sixteenth note pairs. The first measure shows a sixteenth note followed by an eighth note. This is followed by a series of eighth notes, each preceded by a sixteenth note. The pattern continues throughout the visible portion of the score.

The film opens and perhaps closes in limbo, where time has no value. Zimmer provides simple, repetitive cues for those moments, often with the sound effects of wind. This is the first sound heard in the film, and it recurs when Cobb recalls his years in limbo with his wife and when he experiences limbo during the story. At the end of the tale, Cobb rejoins his children. Is this reality, a dream created by his stepfather, or limbo? The music (along with the spinning top) suggests one of the latter two conclusions.

Interstellar

Christopher Nolan and Hans Zimmer again collaborated on a highly successful film in 2014, the sci-fi *Interstellar*. Blending qualities of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Star Wars*,

Star Trek, and *Gravity* (2013), *Interstellar* provides a glimpse of Earth with a bleak future. Former astronaut Cooper (Matthew McConaughey) is sent on a hopeless attempt to find another livable planet through a wormhole near Saturn. Despite all odds, he triumphs primarily through the love of a father and daughter.

Zimmer's Oscar-nominated score is another excellent example of minimalism, although it is quite different from the minimalist action style of *Inception*. Mirroring concepts such as space travel and time, Zimmer used repetition and long sustained chords with electronics and an organ that recall Philip Glass's score to *Koyaanisqatsi*. Recurring musical ideas unify the score; one of the most effective of which is the simple sound of a clock that generates great tension when time is of the essence (1:08:30). The organ has a substantial role that, at times, recalls the *2001* theme (Richard Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra*). The *2001* theme begins with an extended low register organ pedal and concludes with the isolated sound of an organ chord, both of which are heard in *Interstellar*. The style of Strauss also links two departure scenes—Cooper leaving his daughter (41:40) and later Dr. Brand (2:17:20); these moments heighten emotions with the rich sound of strings in a post-Romantic style that provide a strong contrast with much of the other material.



FIGURE 29.8 Cooper explores a new planet to the sounds of a piano and long, sustained pitches in *Interstellar*.

TRAILER

In these films, we can see the differences between the traditional action film music of John Williams and the newer minimalist sound of Hans Zimmer. Both are prevalent during the first decades of the twenty-first century, but the minimalist approach, with several modifications, is particularly evident in action films with heroes, both old and new.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

Desplat, Alexandre	Hooper, Nicholas	Piaf, Édith
Doyle, Patrick	Jackson, Peter	Rowling, J. K.
Glass, Philip	Nolan, Christopher	Tolkien, J. R. R.

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. John Williams's music for the *Star Wars* prequels did not have the critical impact of that for the original trilogy. Discuss the possible reasons for the contrasting receptions.

2. Compare the musical scores for the *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings* films. Why do they differ? Which do you prefer?
3. *Avatar* shows the conflict between a technologically advanced society and a peaceful culture. How does the music of James Horner reflect the nature of each side?
4. Listen to Édith Piaf singing “Non, je ne regrette rien.” How does this song impact Zimmer’s score for *Inception*?
5. Discuss how Zimmer employs a minimalistic score that supports the various dream levels in *Inception*.
6. What role does music play in *Interstellar*?

2001	<i>Blackhawk Down</i>	2012	<i>Argo</i>
2002	<i>Spider-Man</i>		<i>Skyfall</i>
2003	<i>Kill Bill: Volume 1</i>		<i>Django Unchained</i>
2005	<i>Batman Begins</i>		<i>The Amazing Spider-Man</i>
2006	<i>Superman Returns</i>		<i>The Avengers</i>
2011	<i>Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows</i>	2013	<i>Man of Steel</i>
		2014	<i>Birdman</i>
		2015	<i>The Hateful Eight</i>

Seeking Heroes, Real and Imagined

30



Gypsy violinists play lively music in *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows*.

Atticus Finch (*To Kill a Mockingbird*) tops the 2003 AFI list of 50 Greatest Heroes in American films, followed in succession by Indiana Jones (*Raiders of the Lost Ark*), James Bond (*Dr. No*), Rick Blaine (*Casablanca*), and Will Kane (*High Noon*). The remainder of the list contains heroes from a variety of action films, dramas, science fiction, and history, largely drawn from the events of World War II. Following 9/11, Hollywood has provided us with a parade of new heroes. Some of these appear in realistic stories based on recent American



conflicts, but most are fictional. In this duality, we are once again confronted with Hollywood's ability to show us life as it is and to create fantasy worlds that allow us to escape from the harsh realities of our time.

In the AFI list, only two superheroes are included, Superman at number 26 and Batman at 46. Both continue their heroic activities in the twenty-first century, but they are joined by a host of others, primarily drawn from Marvel Comics. A common superhero plot is a desperate attempt to save an entire city (usually New York), which can be seen as a reference to the tragic events occurring at the beginning of this century. Fortunately, these scenes were not shot on location.

CLOSE-UP: 9/11 AND HOLLYWOOD

America Goes to War

The tragic events of September 11, 2001, brought the Pax Americana to a devastating end. Within a few years, the US military would be engaged in active combat in both Afghanistan and Iraq, and American lives would be changed dramatically. The War on Terror's impact on individual rights has been pronounced, and divisive debates continue.

During the two World Wars and the Korean War, Hollywood rallied to glorify the US cause. Americans were shown as heroes, and enemies were depicted as savage beasts—villains capable of cold-blooded murder, treachery, and rape. During the Vietnam War, such stories lost their appeal in view of scenes shown daily on television. Because of the moral ambiguities of war and a much-needed sensitivity to ethnic stereotyping, it is difficult today for Hollywood to make films about current events. The destruction of the World Trade Center has not been the subject of a major theatrical release, and filmmakers have avoided contributing to the potentially serious issue of prejudice against Arabs in the United States.

Rather than giving Hollywood new subject matter for films, these events have been inhibiting.

Immediately after 9/11, production was delayed on a number of movies. Among the films that were affected were *Sidewalks of New York*, a romantic comedy set in New York City; *Big Trouble*, a story about an atomic bomb on a plane; *Windtalkers*, a World War II action picture; and *Collateral Damage*, in which Arnold Schwarzenegger fights terrorists. Spike Lee, whose many films pay homage to New York, effectively uses 9/11 as a backdrop to the provocative drama *25th Hour*.

In this careful climate, fantasy stories have been a safe choice. Here, our heroes can kill hundreds of clones, droids, or orcs without offending anyone. But even in the adventures of our comic-book heroes, references to current struggles are not completely avoided. At Spider-Man's most desperate moment, the citizens of New York rally to his aid and one of them exclaims, "You mess with one of us, you mess with all of us." Though the heroic stories of how New York coped with this crisis have not yet been tapped by Hollywood, history teaches us it will not be long before some thoughtful and powerful dramas about 9/11 are brought to the big screen.

REAL-LIFE HEROES

Black Hawk Down

One of a handful of war movies to appear shortly after the tragic events of 9/11, *Black Hawk Down* (2001) provides a realistic look at a battle between the technologically equipped Americans and the forces of a developing country. Capturing a moment in recent American history, the film depicts a 1993 skirmish in Somalia. Supporting this clash between two diverse societies are the musical choices of Hans Zimmer, ranging from traditional Muslim vocalizing to blaring American rock. The most intriguing musical sounds are mixtures of the two cultures. Just as visions of the city streets show both non-Western and Western features—architecture, clothes, cars—the music often combines elements of North African and American popular music, as can be heard during the preparations for battle (37:35).

COMPOSER PROFILE

Hans Zimmer (b. 1957)

Born in Germany, Hans Zimmer moved to London and worked as a rock musician. His natural talent for the synthesizer led him to film composition, and his Oscar-nominated score for *Rain Man* made him one of Hollywood's top young composers. In the following year, he provided the music for another Best Picture winner, *Driving Miss Daisy*. During the 1990s, Zimmer would become one of Hollywood's most successful film composers, winning an Oscar for his score for *The Lion King* (1995). Zimmer became the head of Remote Control Productions, a company founded in 1989 that creates film scores. Among the composers that have worked with Zimmer at this studio are Klaus Badelt, John Debney, Ramin Djawadi, James Newton Howard, Alan Menken, Randy Newman, John Powell, Howard Shore, and Alan Silvestri.

Important Film Scores

Rain Man 1988
Driving Miss Daisy 1989
Thelma and Louise 1991
A League of Their Own 1992
The Lion King 1994
As Good as It Gets 1997
The Thin Red Line 1998
The Prince of Egypt 1998

Gladiator 2000
Black Hawk Down 2001
Pearl Harbor 2001
The Last Samurai 2003
Madagascar 2005
The Dark Knight Trilogy 2005, 2008, 2012
Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest 2006
Sherlock Holmes 2009

Continued on next page

Inception 2010 
12 Years a Slave 2013 
Man of Steel 2013

The Amazing Spider-Man 2 2014
Interstellar 2014 

 = Best Picture Oscar

 = Best Music Oscar

 = Music Oscar Nomination

Argo

A similar mixture of cultural sounds characterizes the music for Best Picture-winner *Argo* (2012). Set during the Iran hostage crisis of 1979–81, the film relates the true story of the rescue of six Americans from Tehran through the joint efforts of the CIA and the Canadian government. Under the pretense of shooting a movie, a team enters Iran and successfully helps the Americans escape. As with the general subject of this chapter, *Argo* contrasts the fantasy-making world of Hollywood with brutal reality. Alexandre Desplat's Oscar-nominated score creates a somber tone, incorporating more minimalist cues than in Zimmer's *Black Hawk Down*. These often dovetail with ethnic styles, sometimes mixed with rock. The prevalence of minimalism throughout most of the film sets up the most emotional cue in the film, when an expansive lyric string passage enters joyfully just after the Americans have safely flown out of Iran (1:42:15).

VIEWER GUIDE 30.I

Argo: Reading Scripts

Composer: Alexandre Desplat



Timing

DVD: WB 3000048770 (37:55–42:30)

Setting

In 1979 Iranians overtook the US embassy in Tehran and took hostages; they would hold the hostages for over two years. Six embassy workers avoided capture and hid in the home of the Canadian ambassador. Working with the Canadian government, the CIA settles on a plan to request permission to shoot a sci-fi movie in Iran and use this cover to get the six workers out of the country. Tony Mendez (Ben Affleck) works with Lester Siegel (Alan Arkin) and John Chambers (John Goodman) to fake a production of a movie called *Argo*. During the initial reading of the script, serious events are taking place in Iran.

Key Points

- Rock music represents Hollywood glitz
- Somber chords are sustained through the many crosscuts

PLOT	MUSIC
Various actors in costume join Tony and Lester at the Beverly Hilton.	"Dance the Night Away" by Van Halen
Lester and John walk into the hotel. Lester greets his ex-wife. Tony and Lester answer questions about the movie.	The music fades into the background.
The actors gather.	Rock music continues.
A waiter walks by a television newscast with a Muslim woman reading a lengthy script accusing the United States of terrorism. A crosscut shows the CIA watching.	The music transitions to a sustained, serious style.
The cast is reading the movie script. In the background President Carter is making a speech.	The music continues in the same tone.
Additional crosscuts show the Hollywood reading, the Muslim woman, the escapees in the Canadian embassy, and the American hostages.	The music continues in the same tone.
A crosscut shows American newscasts and a fake execution of the hostages.	The music continues in the same tone.



In one striking passage of crosscutting and montage, we see actors in costume reading the script for the mock space fantasy that gives the film its name. Juxtaposed with the reading are somber scenes of news reports and events in Iran, including a terrifying fake execution of several American hostages (see [VG 30.1](#)). The music's polar moods reinforce the contrast between these images. The scene opens in glamorous Hollywood with Van Halen's contemporaneous "Dance the Night Away" (1979). A waiter passing a television with a live broadcast of an Iranian woman condemning the United States serves as a transition. A new mood is then created with long sustained chords from the synthesizer that generate numerous dissonances; these continue through the remainder of the scene. During the scene, we hear Hollywood actors read their lines, an Iranian woman read her script, President Carter reading a speech, a reporter reading questions to Ayatollah Khomeini, and a broadcast newscaster reading commentary. By sustaining this somber mood through crosscutting, Desplat helped highlight the superficial values of Hollywood and politics in the face of serious world events.

DRAWING FROM FICTION: A SUPER SPY AND A SUPER SLEUTH

During the early years of the twenty-first century, Hollywood has provided several excellent realistic views of our world, as mentioned. It has also given us, as suggested in *Argo*, escapist films involving action heroes based on characters from novels and comic books. Among those based on novels are a British spy, continuing an essentially uninterrupted line of movies, as well as a reinvention of film's most famous literary detective.

Skyfall

Skyfall (2012) marked the fiftieth anniversary of James Bond's first appearance in a Hollywood movie. This event was not lost on London, as Queen Elizabeth participated in a brief skit with James Bond (Daniel Craig) during the opening ceremonies of the 2012 Summer Olympics held in England. *Skyfall* is the twenty-third official Bond movie, and the fourth of five in the twenty-first century, following *Die Another Day* (2002), *Casino Royale* (2006), and *Quantum of Solace* (2008) and preceding *Spectre* (2015). English composer David Arnold, a longtime fan of Bond movies, scored the earlier three films along with two from the 1990s, making him the second-most-prolific Bond composer next to John Barry. Thomas Newman, a newcomer to the series, created the scores for *Skyfall* and *Spectre*.

The music for *Skyfall* was particularly successful, as the film received Academy nominations for Best Score and Best Song, winning the Oscar for the latter. Discussions of music for any Bond film generally center on which elements are new and which are traditional. Newman created a new sound that is less melodic than one finds in Arnold's scores. He does incorporate the traditional Bond theme, as can be heard with the first two chords of the film. Other quotes occur during action scenes and, more fully, with references to visual Bond traditions, such as the alto flute version of the Bond theme when Q gives 007 a gun (40:05) and when we see Bond's old car in vintage condition (1:44:00). Also in keeping with the Bond tradition is Paul Epworth's song "Skyfall," sung by Adele during the opening credits. The melody is later assimilated into Newman's score, notably in his cue that combines elements of the song with other Bond motives as James arrives in Macau (54:50).

VIEWER GUIDE 30.2

Skyfall: Opening

Composer: Thomas Newman



Timing

DVD: Blu-Ray M128541 (00:35-12:55)

Setting

In Istanbul, James Bond (Daniel Craig) is attempting to retrieve some critical documents. One of his colleagues has been shot, but M (Judi Dench) orders Bond to let him die and chase after the man with the stolen file. He soon pursues Patrice (Ola Rapace) with the aid of Eve (Naomie Harris).

Key Points

- Wall-to-wall scoring
- Minimalistic action music with a rock pulse
- Several elements of ethnic music
- Incorporation of motives from the James Bond theme during the action

PLOT	MUSIC
James Bond appears out of focus at the end of a hallway. He approaches, hears a noise, and pulls out his gun.	A big band plays two chords from the Bond theme. Sustained chords, including string tremolos, suggest danger.
He enters a room with several dead bodies. Bond talks to M, who orders him to leave a dying agent.	A rhythmic pulse and subdued chords are sustained. When Bond leaves, the music crescendos, and the harmony becomes more dissonant.
Bond goes outside to the streets of Istanbul.	The rhythmic pulse is more prominent. The melodic style suggests a Middle Eastern setting.
Eve picks him up, and they chase Patrice. The cars race through the streets, creating havoc.	The music assumes an American rock character with the strong rhythmic pulse during the chase. A string timbre is added with brief motives, some of which suggest an ethnic character.
The cars crash and shooting begins.	Sound effects dominate, but syncopated chords and a sustained pedal can be heard.
The chase takes them near the Hagia Sofia.	The rhythmic pulse and melodic fragments once again suggest the setting in Istanbul. A fuller orchestral sound emerges that suggests a Turkish variation of a Bond theme (see Example 18.3) and later, the traditional version.
The bikes crash into the bazaar. The chase continues and Eve pursues.	The orchestra responds with syncopated chords and a more active string line.

Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
Patrice jumps from the bridge to the top of a passing train. Bond follows.	Sustained chords for suspense set up the big band statement of Bond chords.
Eve describes the action to M.	The energetic pulse continues.
Bond and Patrice shoot at each other.	Repetitive motives propel the musical energy.
The film cuts to M at her office.	Sustained low pedal
Returning to action, several VW bugs are destroyed.	The rhythmic energy returns along with syncopated chords. Dissonances build.
As the train cars separate, Bond manages to get to the front of the train.	More syncopated chords lead to the big-band sound, with its Bond theme (see Example 18.5).
Bond engages in some humor with M.	The drums sustain the energy.
Bond and Patrice fight on the train top.	Strings and horns add tension with a repetitive motive.
Bond appears to have the upper hand, but a tunnel stops their fighting briefly.	Loud dissonant chords
M orders Eve to shoot.	Action music continues with full orchestra. Accented chords and rising dynamics build to a climax.
Eve shoots Bond by mistake, and he falls into the river below.	Music ends abruptly.

The action-packed opening (see [VG 30.2](#)), which ends with Bond being shot and falling into a river, contains a blend of various musical elements. This is the third Viewer Guide action sequence, and it is useful to compare this scene with [VG 9.2](#) (Korngold's *The Adventures of Robin Hood*) and [VG 21.2](#) (Williams's *Raiders of the Lost Ark*). All three are energized by a fast tempo, quick rhythmic figures, and hard, syncopated accents. Unlike the earlier examples, Newman relies heavily on percussive elements of rock music. Newman's quicker tempos help sustain the frantic pace of the action, and he was able to incorporate ethnic timbres and melodic references of Turkey that identify the location, as well as a few quotations of motives from the traditional James Bond theme ([EXAMPLES 18.3–5](#)). *Skyfall* is clearly less melodic than action music in earlier films, especially when compared to *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, and its repetitive qualities can be linked to the minimalist action style that is prevalent at this time.

Sherlock Holmes

A watery ending also awaits Sherlock Holmes in *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows* (2011), the second installment of a new series following the 2009

Sherlock Holmes. The demise of the great detective corresponds to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Final Problem" (1893), in which Holmes and archenemy Dr. Moriarty plunge to their deaths during a confrontation. And, just as Doyle gave in to public outcry and later explained that Holmes survived to appear in more adventures, the twenty-first-century counterpart comes back to life at the end; plans for a third installment are currently underway.

Director Guy Ritchie's films deviate from the traditional portrayals of the brilliant sleuth in two substantial ways. First and foremost, Holmes is now a master of martial arts. Second, Dr. Watson, Holmes's assistant and chronicler, is portrayed as intelligent, feisty, and an accomplished fighter, qualities markedly different from the Dr. Watson seen in the classic films from the 1940s. It is unlikely that such changes could have been successful without balancing the dramatic stories and extended action sequences with a keen sense of humor.

Capturing these diverse moods, Hans Zimmer composed the music for both films, earning an Oscar nomination for *Sherlock Holmes*. Action scenes are supported primarily with minimalist scoring that often incorporates a rock pulse. Overall, though, the music is filled with contrasting colors and styles, often with amusing wit and blatant satire. The first film opens with the principal theme of both movies (see EXAMPLE 30.1), played on a piano that sounds like it has not been tuned since the 1890s. The possible connection of this sound to a cowboy western (perhaps a spaghetti western) is further suggested by the use of a banjo.

Example 30.1 *Sherlock Holmes*



Unifying the two scores are three musical elements. The first is the *Sherlock Holmes* theme. Zimmer manipulates it well, as clever variations appear frequently, even in action sequences. The second is the choice of musical timbres. As is well known, Holmes was a devoted violin player. In the first movie, he is shown plucking his violin on numerous occasions. The score uses numerous plucked string instruments, many from various ethnic sources, as in the beginning portion of **VIEWER GUIDE 30.3**. Solo violin passages also appear periodically. The third unifying musical element is particularly prominent in the second film, the music of Gypsies. Two violinists play dance music as Holmes comes to the Gypsy camp. Elsewhere we hear Gypsy violin solos and the sound of a cimbalom, an instrument associated with Gypsy music.

VIEWER GUIDE 30.3

Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows: A Night at the Opera

Composer: Hans Zimmer



Timing

DVD: WB 3000043043 (1:00:00–1:09:10)

Setting

Professor Moriarty (Jared Harris), the archrival of Sherlock Holmes, is taking control of the arms industry and setting in motion a plot that will instigate a world war. Holmes (Robert Downey Jr.) and Watson (Jude Law) are out to thwart his activities. They ask for help from Simza (Noomi Rapace), whose brother Rene has been enlisted in Moriarty's plan. In order to find Rene, the trio enters the hideout of anarchists.

Key Points

- The action music is primarily rhythmic, with minimal melodic material
- Source music from Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* is interspersed in the scoring
- The final scene of the opera has Don Giovanni dragged down to Hell, which is fitting for the visions of Professor Moriarty

PLOT	MUSIC
Holmes, Watson, and Simza go to the hideout of an anarchist group.	The strings provide a strong rhythmic pulse.
They walk into a kitchen and are searched. Holmes observes.	The orchestration is fuller, with woodwinds and sustained brass.
The three go downstairs to meet Claude. Simza speaks to Claude.	Violin pizzicato, with sustained chords in the lower register. Then the music disappears.
Claude mentions Moriarty. He describes his deal, which involves another bomb.	Music enters with a low pitch. A contrabassoon and high-wind timbre add an ominous color. Strings with a rising line enter and crescendo.
Claude shoots himself. Several of the group in the kitchen react to the shot and head downstairs.	A strong rhythm provides a quick jolt of action.
Simza is shocked. Holmes calmly suggests a plan of action.	Two ideas are repeated: the low strings have a quick rhythmic motive, and a solo violin plays on the offbeats.
Holmes pictures the construction of the cellar.	Music and sound effects combine.
Holmes deduces the location of a secret passageway. He leads the others and sees some evidence of the location of the bomb.	Sustained chords play with various rhythmic interjections. The lower strings provide an active pulse.

PLOT	MUSIC
Holmes deduces that the bomb must be at the opera house.	The Commendatore's melody from Mozart's <i>Don Giovanni</i> is played by the trombones with a rhythmic pulse.
The trio races through the streets to stop the bombing.	The pulse continues along with new orchestral material.
The film cuts to the opera, which is in the finale of <i>Don Giovanni</i> .	Source music from the opera is combined with energetic downbeats.
Sebastian, working for Moriarty, slips away.	The opera music is heard along with disturbing sounds.
Holmes forces his way backstage looking for the bomb.	The opera continues with a strong pulse and sounds that suggest Holmes's visions.
Holmes is under the stage. He sees Moriarty in the audience and realizes that he was wrong.	The statue of the Commendatore demands Don Giovanni's repentance. Musical ideas that suggest new visions by Holmes enter.
Holmes exits on stage to the bewilderment of the performers.	The opera continues.
The trio now race to a hotel, and the film crosscuts between them and a conference meeting.	The strings and percussion play energetic rhythms.
The bomb explodes. Crosscuts show the end of the opera and the aftermath of the bombing.	A loud dissonant chord sounds with the explosion. The conclusion of the opera is performed.

Source music enhances the variety of musical colors in these films. Classical music is prominent in *A Game of Shadows*. The brilliant Moriarty appreciates Schubert Lieder (songs) and attends an operatic performance of *Don Giovanni* (see VG 30.3). Once Holmes theorizes that a bomb has been set at the opera house, the trombones intone part of the opera's finale over scurrying strings and pounding drums (1:04:55). We soon hear the live performance layered above action scoring, and the two join briefly at the climactic moment in the opera. Similarly, Johann Strauss's *Wiener Blut* (Vienna Blood) waltz accompanies dancers at an elite political gathering (1:39:15). As the evening progresses and drama begins to unfold, Zimmer alters the dance tune and then incorporates it into his underscoring.

ANTI-HEROES

In creating heroes, Hollywood frequently presents figures that work outside of the law or society's social norms. Michael from the *Godfather* trilogy is a classic example—someone we know is doing wrong, but we want him to succeed nonetheless. Director Quentin Tarantino has excelled in such portraits in recent

years. Known for showing excessive violence, Tarantino does not disappoint in *Kill Bill (Volume 1, 2003, and Volume 2, 2004)*, *Django Unchained* (2012), and *The Hateful Eight* (2015). While his films are full of visions of conflict, callousness, and cruelty, Tarantino's musical choices tend to be popular, run counter to the action on screen, and frequently evoke humor.

Kill Bill

The music for *Kill Bill* is predominantly borrowed and represents a wide range of styles. Some of the musical ideas recur, including a passage composed by Quincy Jones for the television show *Ironside* (1967–75), which was a series about a detective who, like the Bride in *Kill Bill*, survived a crippling assassination attempt. Featuring loud, swooping sounds, this brief quotation serves as an effective revenge motive. For the most part, however, music is used to create patches of color for individual chapters, and there is little musical connection between the two films.



FIGURE 30.1 Bill comforts the Bride just before shooting her, which prompts the song "Bang Bang (My Baby Shot Me Down)," in *Kill Bill, Volume 1*.

For the bloody tale of revenge shown in animation during "Chapter 3: The Origin of O-Ren" (*Volume 1*, 35:55), Tarantino adds music by Luis Bacalov from the spaghetti western *The Grand Duel* (1972). With this borrowing, Tarantino links the traditions of martial arts films to that of westerns. Reinforcing this relationship, Tarantino brings in music composed by Morricone for *Death Rides a Horse* (1968) just prior to the showdown at the House of Blue Leaves (1:13:30). This quotation is especially meaningful, since the plot for *Death Rides a Horse* was the direct model for the plot of the O-Ren chapter.

Several other musical moments are particularly striking. Underscoring the wickedly beautiful assassin Elle Driver, the whistled theme from Bernard Herrmann's music for *Twisted Nerve* (1968) creates an unnerving effect. Perhaps the most memorable music, though, appears at the beginning of *Volume 1*. Just after we see Bill shoot the Bride, we hear Nancy Sinatra's 1966 recording of the haunting tune "Bang Bang (My Baby Shot Me Down)," and the captivating story of survival and revenge commences.

Django Unchained

Django Unchained has a more direct relationship with spaghetti westerns. Django was a recurring character in the Italian cinematic movement, making over thirty appearances beginning with the movie entitled *Django* (1966). From this

film, Tarantino borrows the name of the protagonist, his penchant for killing lots of people, and Luis Bacalov's title song. Moreover, Franco Nero, the star of *Django*, makes a cameo appearance as Amerigo Vesepi.

Few details of the original plot are copied. Indeed, the new *Django* is an African American portrayed by Jamie Foxx, an Oscar-nominated actor and Grammy-winning musician. Under the wing of a bounty hunter named Dr. Schultz (Christopher Waltz), he quickly masters the art of gunplay, and the two of them set off to free *Django*'s wife Broomhilda (Kerry Washington), who is held by Calvin Candie (Leonardo DiCaprio) in his estate called Candyland. By the close of the film, just about everyone is killed, and the house is demolished. In typical western fashion, *Django* and Broomhilda ride off happily at the end.

As in *Kill Bill*, Tarantino employs a wide variety of music from different periods and styles. Some of the borrowed excerpts are taken from spaghetti western scores, primarily those composed by Bacalov and Morricone. Tarantino did not overlook classical music and chose several works, including two nineteenth-century compositions with contrasting styles. Beethoven's "Für Elise" is heard as source music, gently played on a harp (2:03:55), while Verdi's terrifying "Dies irae" from his Requiem Mass accompanies the ride of a Ku Klux Klan-like mob looking to hang *Django* (41:00). The music contributes to the humor here, as the inept lynch-mob members bicker about not being able to see through their masks and ultimately fall into a trap set by Dr. Schultz and *Django*.

These quotations are intermixed with newly composed music; cues with hip-hop music are prevalent after *Django* has learned how to use a gun. Jamie Foxx and Rick Ross composed a cue entitled "100 Black Coffins" for the extended procession to Candyland (1:14:55). The music begins with a spaghetti western sound, including a whistled motive and a wordless male chorus that reflects the weariness of the walking slaves. The chorus continues, combined with Rick Ross's rapping. The song is just another subtle reference to the original *Django*, in which the title character drags a coffin with him throughout the opening portion of the movie.



FIGURE 30.2 "100 Black Coffins" accompanies the procession to Candyland in *Django Unchained*.

The Hateful Eight

Tarantino's eighth film, *The Hateful Eight*, is his first to feature original music. The director looked to veteran Italian film composer Ennio Morricone for a spaghetti western-inflected score. Morricone, who had previously turned down offers to provide music for *Pulp Fiction* (1994) and *Inglourious Basterds* (2009),

responded with an Oscar-winning score that effectively establishes the proper mood for this dark and twisting story. Among the most memorable musical ideas are the menacing and repetitive title theme, which itself is dark (low registers including a contrabassoon) and twisting (melodic contour), and the intense, yet comical passage of counterpoint for a scene in which two men are dying of poison (1:42:40).

SUPERHEROES

Comic superheroes have long held a fascination for the public, particularly with younger readers. DC Comics and Marvel Comics have created dozens of action figures that act independently and sometimes as a team to fight evil. One of the major Hollywood trends in the twenty-first century is to bring these action figures to the screen. Many of these movies feature well-known actors (including several Oscar winners), dazzling special effects, and strong musical scores.

DC Comics

Created in the mid-1930s, DC Comics, Inc. opened a new division entitled *Action Comics* with Superman in 1938. Within a year, Batman was introduced, and these two would become the world's most celebrated superheroes, seen in comic strips, comic books, cartoons, television series, and movies. Beginning in 1978, Superman was featured in four films with John

Williams's exhilarating title theme. Once again, Batman followed Superman's lead and appeared in four movies starting with the 1989 *Batman* scored by Danny Elfman (see Chapter 27). Both series ended with less than memorable productions.

Batman was the first to be revitalized in the twenty-first century, perhaps because audiences had a greater affinity at this time with his darker character. Christopher Nolan directed a trilogy of action-packed films featuring Christian Bale in the title role: *Batman Begins* (2005), *The Dark Knight* (2008), and *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012). The music for the first two films was a collaborative effort with James



FIGURE 30.3 The Joker robs a mob bank to the sounds of minimalist action music in *The Dark Knight*.

Newton Howard and Hans Zimmer. Zimmer completed the music for the trilogy on his own, and a unified musical mood pervades all three films. As in Elfman's score for *Batman*, the darkness of the bat cave, the sinister villains, and Batman's personality are reflected in the choice of instruments and register. Unlike the 1989 film score, these scores contain no unifying melodic idea, but there are several leitmotifs and a significant role for electronic music. Minimalist action cues prevail, modified periodically by brief melodic ideas. The score is not tuneful, but the cues are effective.

Superman made his comeback in *Superman Returns* (2006) and *Man of Steel* (2013). While the three films of the Batman trilogy had an underlying uniform vision, these two Superman films stem from different conceptions. Director Bryan Singer tied *Superman Returns* closely to the earlier Superman movies. Indeed, this film can be seen as an alternate version of *Superman II* (1980). In keeping with that spirit, composer John Ottman incorporated the Superman theme by John Williams into the opening and at appropriate moments in the narrative. Moreover, he hinted at and then quoted fully the "Can You Read My Mind" melody at the point in the story when Superman and Lois reexperience that magical moment of flying together (1:12:00).

For *Man of Steel*, director Zach Snyder, along with producer and writer Christopher Nolan (the director of the Batman trilogy), created a new telling of the Superman story, combining plot aspects of *Superman* and *Superman II*. Action scenes are extended, including a sequence for Jor-El (former gladiator Russell Crowe), Superman's real father. Linking this film's mood to that of the Batman films, Hans Zimmer created a dark score that avoids any references to John Williams.



FIGURE 30.4 The son of Superman plays "Chopsticks" with a kidnapper in *Superman Returns*.

Marvelous Heroes

In the 1960s the reign of superheroes from DC Comics came under challenge from a series of action figures appearing in a new publication, Marvel Comics. Beginning in 1961, characters such as Spider-Man, Iron Man, the Hulk, X-Men, and the Fantastic Four gained popularity, leading Marvel to the top position in the comic-book world. While possessing superhuman abilities, most Marvel characters exhibit common human emotions and endure typical human tribulations, making them more identifiable to young audiences. This is particularly true with Spider-Man.

Spider-Man

Created in August 1962, Spider-Man was an ideal hero for the 1960s—young, bright, creative, and misunderstood by adults. The timelessness of this teenage vision of the world is evidenced by the great box-office appeal of the web-slinger forty years later. Reflecting the events of 9/11, Spider-Man constantly interacts with and often receives help from fellow New Yorkers. Unlike any other comic-book hero in recent years, Spider-Man has been given two establishing films that show how Peter gained his special powers. The first, *Spider-Man* (2002), was followed by *Spider-Man 2* (2004) and *Spider-Man 3* (2007). The web-slinger is then reestablished in *The Amazing Spider-Man* (2012), which has a sequel, *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* (2014), with more sequels in the planning stages.



FIGURE 30.5 Spider-Man and Mary Jane kiss in *Spider-Man*.

Danny Elfman composed the music for the first two, and Christopher Young wrote the third of the series. All three are filled with action, humor, and romance, and the scores support each mood well, freely moving from the dark sounds of brass and wordless vocals to energized action music. The same basic thematic material unifies the initial trilogy. The principal theme, representing Spider-Man, is a four-note motive played by the upper strings during the opening logo (see **EXAMPLE 30.2**). A more fully developed theme, often set with the sound of warm strings and a full orchestra, represents Peter's responsibility in possessing great power (see **EXAMPLE 30.3**). The love theme, which can be heard when Mary Jane kisses an upside-down Spider-Man (1:20:40), is somewhat subdued in the first two films, as Spider-Man places his duty before love. For the third installment of the trilogy, Young adds an additional love theme for Peter and Mary Jane. More lyrical than Elfman's, this is given a full romantic setting as the movie and trilogy end with the two together.

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Example 30.2 Spider-Man



Example 30.3 Responsibility



The Amazing Spider-Man repeats the essential story line of *Spider-Man*, but with new actors, and *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* reintroduces the Green Goblin featured in the initial series. James Horner created the score for the first of these films, and Hans Zimmer was the principal composer for the second. Both discarded the Elfman themes, but assimilated a number of qualities heard in the original trilogy, including a scurrying sound (like spiders), played on a piano in Horner's score and on a guitar in Zimmer's. Horner also provided a wide variety of colors through a mixture of synthesized and orchestral colors, while Zimmer relied heavily on rock tracks and electronic sounds for Electro, the villain.

The Avengers

In response to DC Comics' success with putting superheroes together in the Justice League, Marvel Comics created the Avengers, a similar group that premiered in 1963. For the 2012 *The Avengers*, the creators of the film chose Iron Man, Captain America, Hulk, Thor, Black Widow, and Hawkeye from the Marvel roster. By this time, the first four had already been featured in one or more recent films. Indeed, the series of films with Avenger characters has become the second biggest moneymaker for a franchise, led by *The Avengers*, which by itself is the third-highest-grossing film of all time. In keeping with the spirit of beginning a series, this movie introduces the varied characters and their personal problems, and shows how they united to combat a threat to Earth from a demigod out of Thor's past, Loki.

Veteran film composer Alan Silvestri created the music for *The Avengers*. He included numerous leitmotifs, some of which were borrowed from earlier films, most notably that for Captain America from his own score to *Captain America: The First Avenger* (2011). The heroic theme representing the Avengers (see EXAMPLE 30.4) is most clearly heard during the titles (11:40), at the conclusion of the film, and when the group of six gathers for the first time (1:52:00). Action music is plentiful, and Silvestri adds a nice touch when he seamlessly transforms source music of Schubert's String Quartet in A Minor into scoring for a full orchestra (37:00).

Example 30.4 *Avengers*



FIGURE 30.6 The Avengers come together to the sound of a heroic theme.

AN EX-SUPERHERO: BIRDMAN

We close with a film that returns to the central issue of the chapter: Hollywood's ability to show reality and fantasy. *Birdman* (2014) won four Oscars, including those for Best Picture and for Best Director: Alejandro G. Iñárritu. Michael Keaton portrays the principal character Riggan, a former Hollywood star that achieved blockbuster fame through his role as the movie superhero Birdman. This story line parallels the real life of Keaton, who portrayed Batman for two movies (1989 and 1992) before rejecting the opportunity to star in a third. Riggan desperately wants to reestablish his career as an actor with a Broadway production he is funding, directing, and starring in. The realism of putting on a Broadway show is merged with Riggan's superhero fantasies, in which he converses with his Birdman alter ego and imagines that he truly possesses special powers.

The film is remarkable for the perception that all the action takes place in a single shot. By removing cutting, one of the essential elements of filmmaking, Iñárritu created the sense of a stage play. The camera moves effortlessly backstage, onstage, and outside. The film even incorporates jumps of time and shifts between reality and Riggan's fantasy world.

The music for the film comes from two sources: adaptations of classical music and the sound of a drum set. Both are related to Riggan's fantasies. At one point, he visualizes himself flying over New York streets to the music of Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2 (1:31:50). The blurring of the line between reality and fantasy is mirrored in this music. Normally, we would hear the Rachmaninoff as underscoring, but when he is able to request and stop the music verbally, it suggests that this is source music stemming from his own imagination.

Because of the large number of classical adaptations in the film, the Academy declared that the music was ineligible for an Oscar nomination. This ruling overlooked the innovative use of drumming as scoring during the other portions of the film. Reflecting a creative approach to minimalist scoring, the bulk of the music is entrusted to a drum set played by Antonio Sanchez. The frequent sound of drums in the theater is eventually tied to Riggan. As he walks down the streets of New York, we observe a street drummer (32:40), suggesting that he keeps that sound with him when he enters the theater. That is confirmed when we later see, as part of his imagination, the same drummer



FIGURE 30.7 Riggan flies to the music of Rachmaninoff.

playing backstage (1:40:15; see **FIGURE 1.9**). In a sense, the set drums link the realism of what is heard on the streets to Riggan's fantasy world and his superhero alter ego.

TRAILER

The first two chapters addressing film music in the twenty-first century have primarily focused on symphonic scores with either traditional or minimalist scoring. Popular music and lighter musical styles are also prevalent in many entertaining films from Hollywood and international centers. Animations continued to include songs, and the musical made a strong comeback in the early years of the new millennium. In the next two chapters, we will look at a number of excellent dramas with outstanding musical support.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

DC Comics	Marvel Comics	Sanchez, Antonio
Doyle, Arthur Conan	Ottman, John	Singer, Bryan
Foxx, Jamie	Ritchie, Guy	Snyder, Zach
Iñárritu, Alejandro G.	Ross, Rick	Young, Christopher

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. On a simplistic level, movies tend to glorify or vilify war. Discuss these dual goals in films dealing with World War II, Vietnam, and recent military conflicts. Does music have a role in the film's point of view?
2. Discuss the various types of heroes in films. How does music help define their characters?
3. How does the inclusion of ethnic musical characteristics impact such diverse films as *Black Hawk Down*, *Argo*, and *Skyfall*?
4. What musical traditions can be heard in recent James Bond movies?
5. The character Sherlock Holmes was a violinist. How is this reflected in Hans Zimmer's scores?

6. Discuss the variety of musical choices found in the films of Quentin Tarantino. What factors go into his choices? What is the effect of the overall cheerful mood?
7. Compare the musical support for Superman and Batman. What does this say about their character?
8. How do the various scores for Spider-Man movies differ? What elements are found in all the films?
9. What justifies the use of a drum set for the score of *Birdman*? Is it effective?

2001	<i>Monsters, Inc.</i>	2008	<i>WALL-E</i>
	<i>Moulin Rouge!</i>	2010	<i>The Social Network</i>
2002	<i>Chicago</i>	2012	<i>Up</i>
	<i>Frida</i>		<i>Life of Pi</i>
2003	<i>Finding Nemo</i>	2013	<i>Frozen</i>
2004	<i>Finding Neverland</i>		<i>Gravity</i>
2006	<i>Babel</i>	2014	<i>The Grand Budapest Hotel</i>

Animations, Musicals, and Dramas

31



Christian sings to Satine
in *Moulin Rouge!*

Many of the biggest box-office hits of the twenty-first century have been action films, as we saw in Chapters 29 and 30. Some of these, especially those emphasizing realism, have modest scores, but most feature wall-to-wall music with varied emotions and fully scored action cues, whether they are in the traditional vein or contain minimalist material. A number of films with simpler scores—those with popular music and reduced ensembles—were also critical successes, particularly animations.

ANIMATIONS

While the Disney Studios met with less success in the second half of the 1990s, Pixar (*Toy Story*, 1995) and DreamWorks Animation SKG, Inc. (*Shrek*, 2001) filled the void with computer-generated animations. Most of these movies have fewer songs, as the producers veered away from the Disney tradition of animation stories as musicals. In 2006 Disney purchased Pixar; as a result, the company currently holds two independent animations studios, Pixar and Walt Disney Animation Studios.

Of the two Disney studios, Pixar has generally been the dominant one, having created a series of animation blockbusters, including *Monsters, Inc.* (2001), *Finding Nemo* (2003), and *WALL-E* (2008). Randy Newman supplied an Oscar-nominated score and an Oscar-winning song for *Monsters, Inc.* Throughout the film, Newman's music supports the various moods ranging from action to humor. Especially noteworthy are the jazz-inspired cues for comic scenes. The amusing trombone and saxophone duet during the opening credits can be heard as representing the two main characters in the story, and it pairs nicely with the duet of John Goodman and Billy Crystal singing "If I Didn't Have You" in the closing credits.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Randy Newman (b. 1943)

The nephew of Alfred Newman (see Composer Profile, p. 176), Randy began his career as a songwriter and was recently given a lifetime achievement award by the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers. He received Academy Award nominations for both song and score for his second film, *Ragtime* (1981), primarily based on the strength of a waltz. Since then he has composed several Oscar-nominated scores, most notably for animated features. He won Oscars for "If I Didn't Have You" from *Monsters, Inc.* and "We Belong Together" from *Toy Story 3*.

Important Film Scores

Ragtime 1981 ☒ ☒

The Natural 1984 ☒

Parenthood 1989 ☒

Toy Story 1995 ☒ ☒

A Bug's Life 1998 ☒

Meet the Parents 2000 ☒

Monsters, Inc. 2001 ☒ !

Cars 2006 ☒

The Princess and the Frog 2009 ☒ ☒

Toy Story 3 2010 !

! = Best Music Oscar

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination

Finding Nemo

For *Finding Nemo*, Disney employed a musical sound that is strikingly different from its other animated films. Forgoing the typical melody-dominated score and even the standard theme song, composer Thomas Newman (Randy's cousin and the son of film composer Alfred Newman) mixes relatively subdued styles, ranging from somber passages to subtle sounds of rock. Much of the repetitious thematic material suggests a minimalist approach, but Newman's score maintains variety through changing timbres, as it utilizes a full range of instrumental colors. He also indulges in musical jokes, the most striking of which is the use of the *Psycho* shower theme (see VG 17.3) as the leitmotif for the terrifying little girl Darla (1:15:40). For this film Thomas received an Oscar nomination for Best Score.

WALL-E

Thomas Newman received another nomination for Best Score with his entertaining music for *WALL-E*. Underlying the movie is a bleak view of twenty-seventh-century Earth, covered with trash and blanketed with a dirty sky. In this environment, WALL-E continues to do his job of compacting and storing the trash; the only living thing appears to be a resilient cockroach. In his work, WALL-E discovers a growing plant, and this leads to a romance with EVE, an adventure in distant space, and the return of humans to the planet.

Although this animation is not a musical, several songs appear as source music and as underscoring. Central to many scenes are two songs by Jerry Herman from the 1969 film version of the musical *Hello Dolly*. The film opens with "Put on Your Sunday Clothes," and the multiple reprises of this song-and-dance number are often followed by the duet "It Only Takes a Moment," which serves as the love theme for WALL-E and EVE. Newman also joined with the composer, singer, and instrumentalist Peter Gabriel in creating the Oscar-nominated song "Down to Earth," which Gabriel sings during the closing credits. The main portion of this tune is also used in the score as part of EVE's theme (15:30). Among the other songs used in the film are "La Vie en Rose," performed by Louis Armstrong, and Bobby McFerrin's "Don't Worry, Be Happy."

For the most part, Newman's varied score maintains a mood that is light and fresh. Popular musical styles are employed, including several jazz-styled excerpts featuring Peter Gabriel on the flute. Prominent throughout is a keen sense of humor, most notably in the dance rhythms

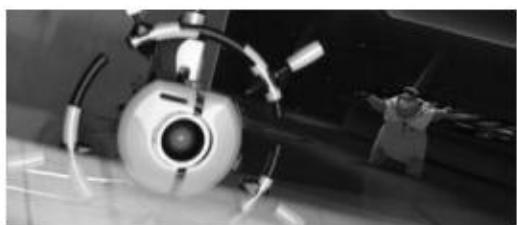


FIGURE 3I.1 The theme from *2001* plays as the captain challenges Auto Pilot in *WALL-E*.

(including the habanera) and two references to *2001: A Space Odyssey*—the *Blue Danube Waltz* (45:00) and *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1:22:15). The latter underscores the captain's determination to stand up and walk in his confrontation with the computer named Auto Pilot, who has a single red eye like HAL from *2001*.

Up

Pixar finally won the coveted Oscar for Best Score with Michael Giacchino's music for *Up* (2009). Included in the film's four other nominations was one for Best Picture, making *Up* only the second animation to be considered for this award; the first was *Beauty and the Beast* (see Chapter 27). Filled with nostalgia, the film tells the story of Carl and Ellie, two childhood friends who are initially linked by their love for adventure. They marry and maintain a loving relationship into old age, regretting only the lack of a child and a planned adventure to South America. After Ellie dies, Carl decides to fulfill their dream and flies to Venezuela in his house lifted upward with balloons. Thus Carl finds the adventure of his life, along with three odd companions—a bumbling boy scout seeking a merit badge, a disgraced dog, and the comical, colorful Kevin, an extinct bird.

VIEWER GUIDE 3I.I

Up: Carl and Ellie

Composer: Michael Giacchino



Timing

DVD: Disney 101700 (2:45-11:35)

Setting

As a boy, Carl loved adventure. On his way home from watching a video about the famous adventurer Muntz, Carl encounters another adventure lover—a girl.

Key Points

- Wall-to-wall scoring
- Centers on Ellie theme
- Numerous styles are employed
- Reflects emotions of story without dialogue

Principal Themes

Example 31.1 Ellie



Example 31.2 Muntz



PLOT	MUSIC
Young Carl happily walks on the sidewalk and imagines that he is Charles Muntz, accompanied by a newsreel description of his trek.	A small combo plays the Muntz theme in a ragtime setting.
Just after the title, Carl stops when he hears a voice yelling Muntz's line: "Adventure is out there."	The music ends abruptly in mid-phrase.
Carl enters an abandoned house and sees the adventurous young Ellie.	After a sustained string chord, a bassoon enters with a playful accompaniment idea.
Ellie confronts Carl.	No music
Ellie admits Carl into the club. Carl is forced to walk a plank.	Strings provide a brief introduction to the Ellie theme, played by the piano with a muted trumpet countermelody.
Carl falls and is injured. Ellie comes to his room while he is recuperating.	No music
Ellie shows her Adventure Book and talks about her plans.	Gentle music, related to the Ellie theme.
Ellie leaves.	No music
Carl and Ellie marry.	A big band plays the Mendelssohn <i>Wedding March</i> with swing rhythms.
Carl and Ellie share numerous activities in their marriage.	Ellie's theme returns, played in a setting for muted trumpet and combo.
Ellie waits at the top of the hill for a picnic with Carl. They look at the clouds. A montage shows other activities.	The Ellie theme continues in various instruments: solo violin, then muted trumpet, and piano.
Ellie tells Carl that she is pregnant, but she is unable to have the baby.	The theme continues but slows to reflect their sadness.
Carl cheers her up with thoughts of an adventure. But unforeseen expenditures deplete their savings while they grow older.	The tempo quickens. The muted trumpet returns and, shortly, the solo violin. The clarinet plays as the fashions change over time. The piano returns with the melody.
They dance together and continue to grow older.	The theme is presented again, now as a waltz.

Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
Carl regrets not having taken Ellie on an adventure, and purchases tickets to Venezuela.	The music slows momentarily, and then the clarinet enters with Ellie's theme.
Carl is waiting on the picnic hill for Ellie, who cannot make it to the top.	The music slows once again.
Ellie is ill and in bed. She passes away.	The unaccompanied piano plays the Ellie theme at a slower pace. The piano brings the cue to a somber cadence.

A veteran of television (*Lost*) and film, Giacchino created a wall-to-wall score for the film with humor and a variety of musical styles. The musical ensembles generally use small combinations of instruments, from which solos by the piano, muted trumpet, and violin are featured. The most prominent melody in the film is Ellie's theme (see [EXAMPLE 31.1](#)), often heard on the piano. Like so many traditional love songs, it is in a triple meter and suggests a waltz. The scene in [VIEWER GUIDE 31.1](#) can be divided into two parts. In the first, the speechless Carl and the talkative Ellie meet as children and plan their future adventure together. In the second, a montage shows their marriage, their bonding, the sadness of losing a child, missing out on their adventure, and Ellie's death. As in a silent movie, Giacchino captured each of these moments with music, so that dialogue is unnecessary.

Frozen

In 2013 Walt Disney Animation Studios reasserted itself with the hottest box-office animation of all time, *Frozen*. Harkening back to earlier Disney feature films, *Frozen* is based on a fairy tale, Hans Christian Andersen's "The Snow Queen," and it is a musical (the characters sing). Like some of the Disney animations of

the early 1990s, the story involves a strong female with several comic sidekicks. It is easy to draw parallels between Anna, the queen's sister, and Snow White. Both await rescue with a "true love's kiss" from a Prince. But in keeping with modern sensibilities, Anna's Prince is obnoxious and self-serving, and she ends up saving herself through her own actions.

The music, too, follows traditional formulas. Like the Disney movies of the 1990s, the film opens with a rousing choral number. Norwegian choruses and folk instruments



FIGURE 31.2 Anna and Elsa sing "For the First Time in Forever" in *Frozen*.

give Christophe Beck's score a fresh sound. But the musical highlights are the ten songs and duets written by Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez. Idina Menzel's rendition of "Let It Go," heard during the closing credits, won the Oscar for Best Song.

MUSICAL REPRISE

Seventy-four years after the first film musical, *The Jazz Singer* (1927), changed film history, *Moulin Rouge!* (2001) revitalized the genre. One year later, *Chicago* became the first musical to win a Best Picture Oscar in thirty-four years. As is typical with musicals, both films involve singers whose performances are part of the story. Beyond this, these two films treat the traditional genre in creatively different ways.

Moulin Rouge!

Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge!* is a fascinating example of **postmodernism**, a movement that freely mixes artistic qualities from diverse time periods. The film's title is the name of a famous cabaret in Paris, known for its dazzling and extravagant stage shows. The characters are drawn from a variety of sources. Christian (Ewan McGregor) and his colleagues parallel the male figures in a popular nineteenth-century story best known in its operatic version, Puccini's *La Bohème* (1896). In both versions the lead male is a writer, but, in a distinctly postmodern twist, we see Christian writing the story as it unfolds. As in *La Bohème*, his closest friends are artists of various types. In the film, the painter is Toulouse-Lautrec, an actual Postimpressionist painter famous for his posters created for the Moulin Rouge, which can be seen in the background. Satine (Nicole Kidman), the heroine, is a courtesan, a high-class female companion, and her role is like that of Violetta in another operatic classic, Verdi's *La Traviata* (1852). In keeping with the plots of both operas, Satine is ill and dies at the end. In nineteenth-century literature, women who had sexual relationships outside of marriage invariably suffered this fate.

Postmodernism can also be seen in the kaleidoscope of stunning visual effects, which effortlessly jump through time and space, and in the pastiche of music, almost all of which is borrowed from other sources. As in the traditional musical, songs are used either as part of an entertainment act or as a natural means of expression. Early in the film (14:30), Satine performs "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend" (Jules Styne and Leo Robin) from the Broadway show *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1949), but she inserts a passage from Madonna's hit "Material Girl," from 1985.

VIEWER GUIDE 3I.2

Moulin Rouge!: Love Duet

Composer-Arranger: Craig Armstrong



Timing

DVD: 20th Century Fox 2000870 (48:00-53:00)

Setting

Christian (Ewan McGregor) is a struggling writer in Paris. He is taken to the Moulin Rouge, where he sees the dazzling performer Satine (Nicole Kidman). She later mistakes him for a wealthy duke, and sparks begin to fly. He comes to her at the giant elephant in the Moulin Rouge gardens.

Key Points

- The love duet consists of melodies from numerous love songs
- At times, new words are given to the melodies to forward the drama
- Love wins

PLOT	MUSIC
Satine and Christian discuss love.	No music, but Christian refers to four love songs: "Love Is Like Oxygen" (The Sweets), "Love Is a Many Splendored Thing" (Sammy Fain), "Love Lifts Us Up to Where We Belong" (Joe Cocker and Jennifer Warnes), and "All You Need Is Love" (The Beatles).
Christian begins to plead with Satine.	"All You Need Is Love"
Satine rejects his advances.	"Love Is Just a Game" (Larry Gaitlin)
Christian comes on stronger. She responds with the same melody, but new words.	"I Was Made for Lovin' You" (Kiss)
Christian softens his approach, and she answers with the same tune.	"One More Night" (Phil Collins)
Christian continues to plead. Satine laughs, but again refuses with his tune.	"Pride (In the Name of Love)" (U2)
Christian sings gently.	"Don't Leave Me This Way" (Thelma Houston)
Satine sings wistfully. They exchange more dialogue with the same melody.	"Silly Love Songs" (Paul McCartney)
Christian becomes exuberant and goes to the top of the elephant, despite Satine's concern for his safety. She responds with the same melody.	"Love Lifts Us Up to Where We Belong"
Christian pleads one more time.	"Heroes" (David Bowie)

PLOT	MUSIC
Satine expresses more concern. She begins to weaken, and they sing together.	The music sustains an energetic pulse under her comments. "Heroes" then continues.
Fireworks go off as they kiss.	"I Will Always Love You" (Dolly Parton)

Satine and Christian become lovers after an extended duet that involves quotations from ten songs from a broad range of singers and time periods (see VG 31.2). Even the dialogue immediately preceding the singing contains references to four different love songs. Craig Armstrong ties the songs together in a cohesive manner. New words are added to the tunes as needed. Initially, Satine rejects the idea of "free" love, but Christian is able to overcome her reticence through his exuberance and persistence. The setting on an elephant is not merely fanciful, as the Moulin Rouge garden did boast a gigantic reproduction of an elephant, rumored to be an opium den.

Chicago

Unlike *Moulin Rouge!*, *Chicago* is a film adaptation of a Broadway show. Its underlying theme seems to be an elaboration of a line from an earlier musical by the same songwriting team of composer John Kander and lyricist Fred Ebb: "Life is a cabaret." Two women murderers use embellished versions of their sordid life stories to build successful entertainment careers. In the process, we learn that show business encompasses the media, the law, and indeed all of life. The film's most celebrated scene drives this message home, as lawyer Billy Flynn (Richard Gere) argues in the courtroom, while dazzling all with tap dancing (1:30:25).



FIGURE 31.3 Courtroom razzle-dazzle in *Chicago*

BIOPICS

Biographies have always been an important film genre, as we have seen with *Lawrence of Arabia* (see Chapter 18), *Out of Africa* (see Chapter 23), and *Schindler's List* (see Chapter 25). Following these trends, many twenty-first-century films

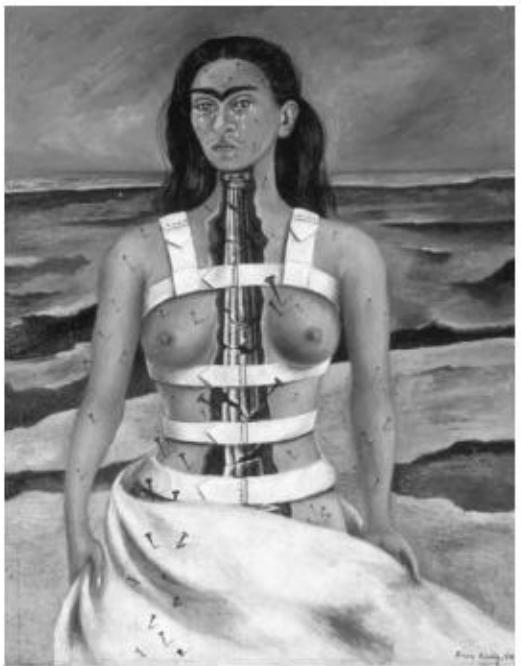


FIGURE 31.4 *Broken Column* by Frida Kahlo

are based on the lives of actual people. The historical figures range from President Lincoln to a slave. In our survey, we will focus on three biopics of figures that have had an impact on art and life. Each film has an individual musical conception; all three won Oscars for Best Score.

Frida

Frida Kahlo (1907–1954) was a creative artist who gained international stature despite the disadvantages of being a woman and coming from a developing country—Mexico. *Frida* (2002) recounts her fascinating life, which includes a turbulent marriage to the famed Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, an affair with Leon Trotsky, a leading figure in Soviet communism, severe health issues, bisexuality, and significant ties to Mexican culture.

Like Kahlo's artwork, Elliot Goldenthal's Oscar-winning score is grounded in Mexican folk traditions.

In both diegetic and non-diegetic passages, traditional

Mexican dances and melodic styles energize the film. Goldenthal also incorporates dissonant underscoring for dramatic situations. Among the musical highlights are “Alcoba Azul,” sung during an erotic tango Frida dances with a female art photographer (31:15), and the Oscar-nominated “Burn It Blue,” heard during the closing credits. Goldenthal composed both songs.

Finding Neverland

Two years after *Frida*, another biopic garnered critical acclaim, *Finding Neverland* (2004). As the title suggests, the film is about the Scottish writer J. M. Barrie and the inception of his most famous work, *Peter Pan*. The inspiration for this fanciful story of a boy who never grew up came from the Llewellyn Davies family. Barrie (Johnny Depp) met the four Davies boys along with their widowed mother Sylvia (Kate Winslet) in Kensington Park, London. The climax of the film is the successful production of Barrie's play about Peter at a theater managed by a character portrayed by Dustin Hoffman, a humorous casting of the former notorious captain from *Hook* (see Chapter 27). After Sylvia's death, Barrie adopts the children. Much of the film is based on

actual events, but there are a few exceptions. In real life, the father was still alive when Barrie began his relationship with the family; he would pass away after the premiere of *Peter Pan*. Understandably, the film does not deal with later developments of this tragic family, in which two of the boys met early deaths, and Peter, the namesake for Peter Pan, committed suicide in 1960.

The music for *Finding Neverland* was entrusted to Jan A. P. Kaczmarek, a Polish composer known for both concert works and film and television music. The Oscar-winning score sustains a mood of magic and imagination, despite serious issues facing Barrie, including the dissolution of his marriage and the death of Sylvia. The tuneful score contains one principal melody that opens the film and recurs when Sylvia is introduced to Neverland. The emotional and musical highlight begins with a private performance at Sylvia's home (1:24:00).



FIGURE 31.5 Barrie shows Sylvia Neverland to Jan A. P. Kaczmarek's warm music in *Finding Neverland*.

The Social Network

The Social Network (2010) is the first biopic of an historical figure active in the twenty-first century—Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook and the youngest billionaire at the time. Based on the Ben Mezrich book *The Accidental Billionaires: The Founding of Facebook: A Tale of Sex, Money, Genius, and Betrayal* (2009), the film focuses on Mark's relationships with Sean Parker, the controversial founder of Napster; his best friend and cofounder of Facebook Eduardo Saverin; and the Winklevoss twins. Saverin and the Winklevosses are involved with lawsuits against Zuckerberg, and the unfolding story of the building of a social institution and financial empire crosscuts with testimony at two separate depositions.

Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross provide the music for the film. Intermixed with the scoring are numerous moments of source music that are appropriate for college life (mostly rock). The latter includes a pan band for a “Caribbean Night” (25:00). A humorous touch is added to the score with a synthesized arrangement of Edvard Grieg’s “In the Hall of the Mountain King” from *Peer Gynt* (1:24:20). This quotation of a work that simply repeats a single melody while steadily getting faster is more than appropriate as we watch the Winklevoss boys in a tight rowing competition.

VIEWER GUIDE 3I.3

The Social Network: The Sean-athon

Composers: Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross



Timing

DVD: Sony 10170223 (1:04:25-1:11:10)

Setting

During a legal deposition, Mark (Jesse Eisenberg) and Eduardo (Andrew Garfield) describe their first meeting with Sean Parker (Justin Timberlake), the creator of Napster.

Key Points

- Repetitive musical idea with piano
- Extended cue of sustained sounds and rhythmic pulse; no melody
- Occasional dissonance in sustained sounds
- Source music at restaurant becomes scoring with increase in dynamics
- Music plays over crosscuts

PLOT	MUSIC
The deposition questioning overlaps with the previous scene.	No music
Eduardo describes a meeting with a potential advertiser.	A repetitive piano figure over a sustained electronic sound is heard quietly in the background.
A flashback shows the interview, which is disrupted by Mark.	The previous material continues.
The deposition continues.	The music fades.
Another flashback takes us to the first meeting with Sean Parker. Mark and Eduardo argue about Sean.	Source music from the restaurant provides a quiet rock beat.
A cut takes us back to the deposition.	No music
Sean arrives. He orders for everyone. A cut shows Eduardo referring to the meeting as a "Sean-athon."	The music becomes louder and a sustained chord is added.
After the comment, we return to the restaurant, as Sean takes control. Eduardo is resentful, but Mark listens attentively. Crosscutting continues.	The music is more energized. Vocals are added over an upbeat rhythmic pulse. The sustained pitches contain some dissonance. The rhythmic pulse pauses for Eduardo's thoughts that Sean is paranoid. Music stops completely when Eduardo recalls Sean saying "a billion dollars."

PLOT	MUSIC
Sean continues with his vision of "Thefacebook."	The sustained sounds and rhythmic pulse return.
Sean leaves, recommending a name change to just Facebook.	The music crescendos with his departure.

For the most part, though, the Reznor and Ross score exemplifies what is called **dark ambient**. Although ambient music is not new (see Chapter 20), its use in the film, often with a fast pulse, provides a youthful and energized sound. The ambient sounds, primarily generated electronically, generally feature long sustained tones. Dark ambient music was an offshoot from the 1980s and tended to create an ominous mood through dissonance and timbre. In **VIEWER GUIDE 3.I.3**, there are basically two musical segments, both of which are periodically interrupted. Each contains sustained sounds; the first includes some repetitive piano pitches and the second, a vibrant rhythmic track. The piano provides a timbral tie to other portions of the score, and the vitalized rhythm suggests the energy of Sean Parker's personality and salesmanship during a meeting that would have a major impact on American life.

CLOSE-UP: AMERICAN INDEPENDENTS

The term "independent film" is vague, but it basically refers to a film that is made outside of the film establishment. In the early history of American film, the establishment was Thomas Edison's Motion Picture Patents Company (see Chapter 5), and many of the independent filmmakers not affiliated with Edison moved to California and founded the Hollywood studio system. Within twenty years, the "independent" California filmmakers had become the establishment and actively discouraged new independents. The decline of studio power in the 1950s forced Hollywood to incorporate the work of independents, and independent filmmaking has steadily gained prominence up to the present time.

There are three principal types of independent films: documentaries, avant-garde films, and narratives. Doc-

umentaries are drawn from a wide variety of subjects, from simple weddings and celebrations to elaborate events like a political gathering or the making of a movie. One of the best known of all independent films is *Woodstock* (1970), a documentary about the historic rock concert. A more recent documentary by filmmaker Michael Moore, *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004), created a storm of controversy over its negative portrayal of the Bush Administration's handling of the 9/11 crisis. The film won the Palme d'Or from the Cannes Film Festival and has set box-office records for a documentary.

Avant-garde films are closely allied to art movements and tend to be experimental and innovative. France is the principal center for such works, but there has been a small but strong avant-garde film movement in the United States since the late 1940s.

Continued on next page

The independent narrative often incorporates non-Hollywood elements into the story. Perhaps the most significant independent element is the focus on nontraditional subjects. Black filmmakers, dating back to the silent film era, have recorded the experience of being African American. Similarly, there are numerous excellent films developed from the perspective of Asian American, Native American, and Chicano filmmakers.

Many independent filmmakers produce films hoping to attract the financial backing of a Hollywood studio. Independent film festivals, such as the Sundance Festival, are held yearly and are attended by Hollywood scouts. Among the independent films that achieved

significant financial success are *Easy Rider* (1969), *Hoop Dreams* (1994), and *The Blair Witch Project* (1999).

Modern technology has proven to be an enormous boost to independent filmmaking. Today most home computers contain film-editing programs, and camera equipment is becoming less expensive. As a result, there has been a flood of independent films in recent years, often available over the Internet. Obviously the quality is not consistent, and film schools cannot keep up with the interest shown by young, eager students. Funding stands as the biggest problem facing the independent filmmaker. Among the most common solutions are government and private grants, university funding, and loans from family members.

WORLD VIEWS

In the twenty-first century, Hollywood has continued to show us diverse locations on Earth and given us one spectacular vision of the planet as a whole. The musical scores for these adventures reflect a variety of styles and approaches, a consequence of the general stylistic diffusion in recent film scoring. Three of the following films incorporate ethnic musical qualities into their scores, and all four won Oscars for Best Score.

Babel

Directed by Alejandro G. Iñárritu of Mexico, *Babel* (2006) presents four unfolding stories that are connected, some more loosely than others. Crosscutting shows two related developments in Morocco, a wedding celebration gone wrong involving both the United States and Mexico, and a vision of a teenage deaf girl in Japan who is coming to grips with her sexuality and the suicide of her mother. Common to all of the stories are problems in communication, suggested by the title's reference to the biblical story of Babel, in which God created multiple languages so that people could not communicate with each other.

Argentine Gustavo Santaolalla, who had just won an Oscar for his music for *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), composed the score and performed on a variety of

instruments. With the Oscar for *Babel*, Santaolalla joined Franz Waxman and Alan Menken as the only composers to win the award in consecutive years. As in the score to *Brokeback Mountain*, the first music in *Babel* is a modest guitar motive without harmony (11:30). He later adds other ethnic instruments and a sustained synthesizer to highlight the incidents in Morocco, while Japan and the US-Mexico scenes mostly rely on source music. As the film moves toward its multiple climaxes, the intervals between scenes become shorter, and the music begins to bleed over the cutting, which ties the stories together emotionally. The final portions of the film bring out the fullest cues, notably the sad music for Amelia's deportation, the subsequent flurry of musical activity with the arrival of the medical helicopter in Morocco, and a fresh change of timbre with a piano trio at the close of the story in Japan. In this process, Santaolalla has effectively created a crescendo that begins simply and concludes with a full and varied musical sound.

Life of Pi

Life of Pi (2012) was both a commercial and critical success. Nominated for seven Academy Awards, it won four, including Best Director (Ang Lee) and Best Score. Based on the 2001 novel of the same name by Yann Martel, the story is divided into three parts. In the present time, an actor portraying Martel interviews Pi, a man from India who survived a fantastic journey. Their dialogue opens and closes the film and is interspersed through the other two portions. The briefer of the other two parts of the story shows Pi when he was young, including scenes that reveal how he got his name, what his life was like at his father's zoo, and how Pi fell in love with someone who eventually became his wife. But the main part of this tale is the journey that he began with his family and zoo animals across the Pacific Ocean and, after the ship sinks, his struggle to survive on a lifeboat with a hungry tiger as a companion.

The story references several international locations. As Martel remarks at one point, the tale involves "an Indian boy named after a French swimming pool, on a Japanese ship full of animals, heading for Canada." He omits Pi's eventual rescue on the shores of Mexico. The Canadian composer Mychael Danna created the music for the film. Trained at the University of Toronto, Danna had an extensive background in music for film and television. For *Life of Pi*, he composed a substantial score that primarily evokes the magical, fantastical,



FIGURE 31.6 In *Life of Pi*, Pi and a tiger complete a long journey to the music of Mychael Danna.

and spiritual qualities of the story. The score makes frequent use of musical qualities of India, and Danna composed a beautiful Oscar-nominated song on the lyrics of the Indian composer and singer Bombay Jayashri, which is heard during the opening credits. Throughout, Danna craftily contrasted various timbres, which include voices, strings, brass, traditional instruments from India, and piano.

Gravity

The length of Pi's journey across the Pacific Ocean is more than matched in Cuarón Orozco's *Gravity*, a 2013 thriller about survival in outer space. In this odyssey, medical engineer Dr. Ryan Stone (Sandra Bullock) is stranded while orbiting the Earth when debris destroys her shuttle. She survives initially through the help and sacrifice of astronaut Matt Kowalski (George Clooney), but her will and ingenuity sustain her through numerous obstacles before she manages to return to Earth safely. The film was a major financial success, and it received ten Academy Award nominations, winning seven Oscars, including Best Original Score for Steven Price.

Price provided a minimalist score for this vision of outer space. Employing colorful sounds from synthesizers, organ, and a glass harmonica, single chords

or simple progressions are often sustained for extended periods. Solo strings and vocals add variety to the sound fabric. Moments of tension are frequently supported with a quick pulse, and climactic moments generally employ string and brass timbres. Although most of the score lacks a predominant melodic line, Price effectively employed slow-moving melodies and a sustained crescendo when Dr. Stone decides to fight to stay alive and begins to take action (1:09:00).



FIGURE 31.7 The music crescendos to a climax as Dr. Stone returns to Earth in *Gravity*.

COMPOSER PROFILE

Alexandre Desplat (b. 1961)

Born in Paris, Desplat began composing for French films in 1986. Two decades later, after scoring numerous films and gaining international recognition, he wrote the music for *The Queen*, for which he received his first Academy nomination for Best Score. He would receive six more nominations before finally winning the Oscar in 2014 with *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. Desplat has shown considerable variety in his musical styles, as his films range from animation and comedy to serious drama and fantasy, such as the last two films of the Harry Potter series.

Important Film Scores

The Queen 2006 ☒
The Curious Case of Benjamin Button 2008 ☒
Fantastic Mr. Fox 2009 ☒
The King's Speech 2010 🎻 ☒
The Twilight Saga: New Moon 2010
Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Parts I
and II 2010 and 2011

☒ = Best Picture Oscar

! = Best Music Oscar

Argo 2012 🎻 ☒
Philomena 2013 ☒
The Imitation Game 2014 ☒
The Grand Budapest Hotel 2014 !

☒ = Music Oscar Nomination



The Grand Budapest Hotel

Nominated for nine Oscars, including Best Picture and Best Director (Wes Anderson), *The Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014) won four awards, one of which was for Alexandre Desplat's score. Set in the fictional Republic of Zubrowka in central Europe, this earthy comedy dazzles the audience with its unique visual style, irreverent humor, and bizarre plot. Desplat added considerably to the light tone with a veritable Hungarian goulash of ethnic and traditional instruments, including a plethora of balalaikas (from Russia), cimbaloms (Hungary), zithers (as in *The Third Man*), harpsichord, organ, alphorns, an assortment of percussion instruments, and a variety of vocal styles. These sounds are sometimes enhanced by electronics.

In keeping with the orchestration, Desplat provided a number of folk-like tunes with limited ranges, lively dance rhythms, and extended repetitions. Music for individual scenes tend to center around a single thematic idea with a distinct timbre, and several themes recur periodically with a loose association to a character or region. The most important of such themes is heard at the beginning of the narrative and later in association with Zero and the hotel (see **EXAMPLE 31.3**). From this simple idea, Desplat devised several variant forms that maintain the freshness of the score as a whole.



FIGURE 31.8 The Zero theme plays through much of the introduction to *The Grand Budapest Hotel*.

Example 31.3 Zero



TRAILER

Hollywood continues to produce films that are financial and critical successes. But international centers in the twenty-first century have achieved parity with the United States, both in quantity and quality. This development is evidenced in the unprecedented number of Best Picture winners for non-American films in recent years. Supporting many of these outstanding films are strong scores from a younger generation of composers from around the world.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

Anderson-Lopez, Kristen	Giacchino, Michael	postmodernism
Barrie, J. M.	Goldenthal, Elliot	Price, Steven
Beck, Christophe	Kaczmarek, Jan A. P.	Reznor, Trent
Danna, Mychael	Kander, John	Ross, Atticus
dark ambient	Lopez, Robert	Santaolalla, Gustavo
Gabriel, Peter	Luhrmann, Baz	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Referring to excerpts from *Up* and *Frozen*, describe the differences between animations made by Pixar and Walt Disney Animation Studios. How does this impact their musical choices?
2. Discuss the postmodern qualities of *Moulin Rouge!* Does the musical patchwork of songs work in this film?
3. Explore the underlying theme in *Chicago*. How does the music support this theme?
4. Several of the films in this chapter contain ethnic musical qualities in their scores. In this regard, compare the music for *Frida*, *Babel*, *Life of Pi*, and *The Grand Budapest Hotel*.
5. Describe the music for *The Social Network*. How does the music support the overall drama?

2001	<i>Spirited Away</i>	2007	<i>Atonement</i>
	<i>Amélie</i>	2008	<i>Slumdog Millionaire</i>
2003	<i>The Triplets of Belleville</i>	2010	<i>The King's Speech</i>
2006	<i>Pan's Labyrinth</i>	2011	<i>The Artist</i>

International Films Achieve Parity

32



Madame Souza performs with the triplets in *The Triplets of Belleville*.

The official birthplace of film is in France, which also produced the first notable narrative, *A Trip to the Moon* (see Chapter 5). Because of the conflicts of the two World Wars, European filmmaking often lagged behind the technology and popularity of Hollywood movies. But in the second half of the twentieth century, international film centers began challenging the American industry. India has supplanted the United States as the most prolific movie producer in the world, and the production of high-quality films

from diverse regions has enriched moviegoing here and abroad. In terms of numbers and quality, international filmmaking in the twentieth-first century has achieved parity with the United States. Within the limited context of this text, we will first consider the animation genre, and then highlight several international films that have received critical acclaim and have strong musical support.

CLOSE-UP: MAJOR DIRECTORS

International Auteurs

The roster of new directors who have emerged in the early twenty-first century includes a number of figures born outside of the United States. These filmmakers have had a major impact on Hollywood filmmaking and will likely help shape the direction of film music and our future movie-viewing habits for decades to come.

James Cameron (b. 1954), a Canadian filmmaker, directed the two highest-grossing films of all time, *Titanic* (1997) and *Avatar* (2009). The former won a record-tying eleven Oscars, including Best Picture and Best Director, and the latter received nominations in the same categories. His first major success was another blockbuster, *The Terminator* (1984), which was followed by several other popular and financial successes, including *Aliens* (1986), *The Abyss* (1989), and *True Lies* (1994). Cameron has often overseen the creation of high-quality scores for his films, as evidenced by James Horner's double music Oscars for *Titanic* and Oscar-nominated score for *Avatar*.

Peter Jackson (b. 1961) was born in New Zealand and began a filmmaking career in the late 1980s. Functioning as director, writer, and producer, he created a number of films with modest success up to the turn of the century. His fortunes turned dramatically when he was given the rights to *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. For the last of these films, *The Return of the King* (2003), he received Oscars for Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Screenplay. Remarkably, this film

received eleven nominations and won all, tying the record for Oscars with *Ben-Hur* and *Titanic*. The other two films of the trilogy were also nominated for Best Picture, and *The Fellowship of the Ring* received nominations for Best Director and Best Screenplay as well. Jackson has followed the success of these films with a new trilogy based on Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. He also received Academy nominations for some lesser-known films: Best Writer for *Heavenly Creatures* (1994) and Best Picture for *District 9* (2009). Part of the enormous success of the Tolkien films can be attributed to Jackson's collaboration with composer Howard Shore, who won three Oscars for the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

Ang Lee (b. 1954) was born in Taiwan and came to the United States in 1979, where he enrolled at the University of Illinois. He later studied at the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, where he was a classmate of Spike Lee. In the 1990s, Lee rose to prominence making Taiwanese films. *The Wedding Banquet* (1993) and *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994) were nominated for Best Foreign Film, and the latter was a major financial success. Coming to Hollywood, he directed two high-quality films, *Sense and Sensibility* (1995) and *The Ice Storm* (1997). Lee created an international sensation with *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000), a joint venture of Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, and the United States. This film received Academy nominations for Best Picture and Best Director.

Lee won Oscars as Best Director for *Brokeback Mountain* (2006) and *Life of Pi* (2012), the latter nominated for Best Picture as well. He also directed the popular *Hulk* (2003). The scores for Lee's movies range from the simple guitar cues in *Brokeback Mountain* to Tan Dun's exquisite music for *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Both of these won Oscars for Best Score, as did *Life of Pi*.

Christopher Nolan (b. 1970) has dual US-UK citizenship and split his youth between London and Chicago. He studied filmmaking and created his first works in England. Following an early success, he

rose to international prominence with the brilliant psychological thriller *Memento* (2000). The dark and moody *Insomnia* (2002) was another success, but these were overshadowed by the blockbuster Batman trilogy—*Batman Begins* (2005), *The Dark Knight* (2008), and *The Dark Knight Rises* (2012). Staying within the genre of action films, Nolan scored major triumphs with *Inception* (2010) and *Interstellar* (2014) (see Chapter 29). He was nominated for Best Screenplay for *Memento* and Best Screenplay and Best Picture for *Inception*. For his later films he has consistently worked with composer Hans Zimmer.

ANIMATIONS

Japanese animation, commonly referred to as **anime**, has provided the most serious challenge to US domination in this field. Building from international successes in television during the 1980s and early 1990s, anime achieved a high level of popularity with films beginning with Hayao Miyazaki's *Princess Mononoke* in 1997. Miyazaki followed this success with two other major films in the early twenty-first century, *Spirited Away* (2001) and *Howl's Moving Castle* (2004). The composer for all three films was Joe Hisaishi.

Spirited Away

Like many of Disney's feature animations, *Spirited Away* features a strong-willed young girl. Unlike Disney heroines, though, the main character, Chihiro, is not from legends or fairy tales, but a contemporary child with anxieties about moving to a new home. Through an adventure in a fantastical world of spirits, she gains strength and self-confidence. Underlying the story are multiple social criticisms of modern life. The film was awarded an Oscar for Best Animated Feature Film over such popular Hollywood films as *Ice Age* and *Lilo & Stitch*.



FIGURE 32.1 Chihiro and her family enter a fantasy world, set to the Human theme, in *Spirited Away*.

Although the movie does not have wall-to-wall scoring, music plays an integral part in the story. Hisaishi's score provides a variety of colors, including a piano, symphonic and choral forces, and traditional Japanese instruments. Some cues are thoroughly in a Western style, such as the humorous dance-like scoring for the sootballs working for Kamaji, a veritable spider-man (25:25).

Example 32.1 Human



In other cues, Hisaishi combines characteristics of traditional Japanese and Western musical styles. Among several recurring thematic ideas, the most prominent might be termed the Human theme (see EXAMPLE 32.1). Heard at the beginning of the film, it is easily recognized by its fourfold repetition of the first pitch. The melody is **pentatonic** (meaning that the notes are derived from a five-note scale that can be found by playing the black keys on a piano) and is a simple succession of eighth notes, both of which are clichés of Japanese and Chinese music. Still, the melody is always heard on a Western instrument, the piano. In one of the highlights of the score, traditional Japanese timbres are mixed with Western instruments and harmonies when Chihiro meets Haku and sees the spirit world (11:15).

The Triplets of Belleville

Disagreeing with the Academy of Motion Pictures and the Arts, both the New York Film Critics Circle and the Los Angeles Film Critics Association gave awards to *The Triplets of Belleville* over *Finding Nemo* as the Best Animated Feature in 2003. This offbeat French film, which sparkles with quirky and irreverent humor, satirizes the influence of American culture on post-World War II France. The most visible manifestation of this pointed humor is the image of an obese Statue of Liberty with an ice cream cone held upwards and a hamburger in her lower hand (see FIGURE 29.1). The animation technique is also anti-Hollywood in style, and the mute principal characters are reminiscent of comic characters.

The Triplets of Belleville employs a variety of musical styles. The Kyrie from Mozart's Mass in C Minor, K. 437, for example, accompanies Grandma Souza's stormy ocean trip on a paddleboat (32:30). This musical quotation is foreshadowed during several earlier cues, beginning with the ominous music accompanying the image of passing time (8:00). Elsewhere, diverse musical styles, including folk, Baroque, and modern, can be heard.

Ultimately, the jazz-inspired passages are the most distinctive of the score. The title of the film refers to three elderly sisters who are former music-hall

singers and who still perform at a local nightclub. Their opening toe-tapping rendition of the Oscar-nominated “Belleville Rendez-vous,” aided by caricatures of Fred Astaire and Josephine Baker, establishes the energy and the *bizarrie* of the film. Later, Souza joins the ladies in a jazz quartet performance that features a newspaper, refrigerator, vacuum cleaner, and the spokes of a bicycle wheel, as seen in the image at the beginning of this chapter (55:15). Jazz is also used as underscoring, most notably in the thematic material representing the gangster bad guys. Canadian composer Benoît Charest created the Oscar-nominated score, which became a great sensation in France, Canada, and the United States. In addition to composing the music, Charest is credited with playing the guitar, drums, piano, and vacuum cleaner for the score.

DRAMAS

In Chapter 28, we examined several international films that focused on life from a woman’s perspective. This trend continues in the twenty-first century. The two animations just discussed have strong female characters, one a young girl who gains strength and rescues her parents, and the other a determined mother who goes to great lengths to save her kidnapped grandson. We continue now with three more films that center on the lives of female characters.

Amélie

The French film *Amélie* (2001) became an immediate popular sensation, and it has not lost its appeal well over a decade later. In this whimsical romantic comedy, the title character performs a series of good deeds anonymously and, in the process, falls in love with a young man who has some rather quirky habits. In order to sustain the lighthearted mood, director Jean-Pierre Jeunet engaged Yann Tiersen, a composer and a performer of multiple instruments. Tiersen relied mostly on the accordion and piano, evoking the sound of French popular music. Several of the musical ideas recur in the film, most notably Amélie’s waltz theme, first heard just after her birth (1:50). Among the many musical moments of humor is the playing of Barber’s *Adagio for Strings*—a piece associated with death after its use in *Platoon* (1986)—for Amélie’s tearful viewing of an imaginary television documentary about her own tragic, early death (37:15).

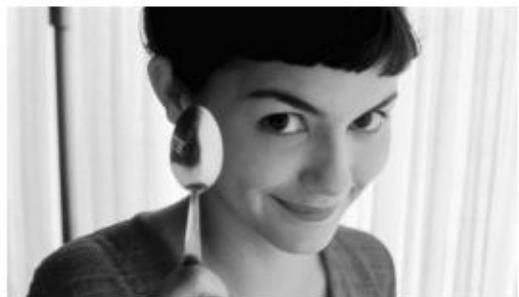


FIGURE 32.2 The mischievous adventures of *Amélie* are generally accompanied by small musical ensembles.

Pan's Labyrinth

The lighthearted tone of *Amélie* contrasts substantially with the moods of our next two films. In the Spanish film *Pan's Labyrinth* (2006), we experience, through the eyes of a young girl named Ofelia, the uneasy juxtaposition of a fantasy world filled with magical creatures and the brutal reality of the early Franco regime following the Spanish Civil War. Ofelia encounters a faun who explains that she may possess the soul of the long-lost princess of the underground, and that she must pass three difficult tests in order to rejoin the kingdom and gain immortality. In real life, she is staying in the military camp of her brutal stepfather, where she gives comfort to her pregnant mother and unborn brother. The plot interweaves these two stories between the opening and closing scenes showing Ofelia lying on the ground and panting for breath.

Javier Navarrete's Oscar-nominated score differentiates the two worlds through timbre, but not thematic material. While many of the cues feature simple musical ensembles including a solo piano, Ofelia's presence in the labyrinth is often accompanied by choral voices and colorful orchestrations. Although the orchestra is not as full as in the standard Hollywood fantasy movie, Navarrete still generates tension, most notably in the scene involving the Pale Man (56:30).

Example 32.2 Lullaby



A single theme (see [EXAMPLE 32.2](#)) filters through both the fairy tale and the real world. It is derived from a lullaby, which we hear hummed by the housekeeper Mercedes three times in the film, essentially at the beginning, middle (50:25), and end. The tune contains two distinct phrases that occur through the entirety of the film. Since Ofelia is the only other constant between the two worlds, the

melody represents her and the comfort she derives from Mercedes and from her fantasy. At the close of the film, we learn that Ofelia, having been shot by her stepfather, is dying. Mercedes hums as Ofelia fades, and the fantasy world opens up to her as we hear the lullaby presented by the wordless choir. The ending is ambiguous. One can either accept the reality of her death and dismiss the kingdom as her escapist imagination, or, for those that do believe in magic, one can take comfort that she passed her final test and reigned long and well in the underworld, as explained to us by the faun.



FIGURE 32.3 Ofelia enters the kingdom of the underworld to the lullaby melody in *Pan's Labyrinth*.

Atonement

Atonement (2007), a British film based on the 2001 novel by Ian McEwan, relates a sad tale about a woman who regrets a spiteful childhood act. Briony, a thirteen-year-old with a talent for writing, has a crush on Robbie, her older sister's lover. Out of jealousy, she falsely identifies him as the man who raped one of her cousins. After spending four years in prison, he is released on condition that he joins the army during World War II. After surviving Dunkirk, he reunites with the sister Cecilia, and the two reject Briony's attempts to mend fences. At the end of the film, however, we learn that Robbie and Cecilia never saw each other again; Robbie died at Dunkirk, and Cecilia died in a bombing raid in London. The second half of the film's plot with the lovers reunited was merely Briony's last fictional novel, written as a token of atonement for what she had done.

VIEWER GUIDE 32.1

***Atonement:* Opening**

Composer: Dario Marianelli



Timing

DVD: Universal 61033285 (00:30-3:15)

Setting

The film opens with the young Briony Tallis (Saoirse Ronan) in her aristocratic home. She has just finished typing her first play and rushes off to show it to her mother.

Key Points

- Incorporation of the natural sound of a typewriter in the music
- A leitmotif is given to Briony
- A repeated pitch in the piano suggests the sound of typing

Principal Theme

Example 32.3 Briony



Continued on next page

PLOT	MUSIC
The title, location, and date are typed on the screen.	Sound effects of typing from a typewriter occur.
The camera moves from a model mansion through a parade of toy figures to a view of the bedroom where Briony is typing.	The sounds of the typewriter continue.
Briony finishes typing.	A piano reiterates one pitch.
She picks up her work and leaves the room.	An accompaniment enters along with the Briony leitmotif.
Briony walks through the house.	The sound of a typewriter becomes rhythmic and is added to the piano material.
We begin to see various servants at work in the house.	An energetic pulse is heard as the strings enter. The Briony theme changes key areas.
Briony engages in a brief conversation with the cooking staff.	The music returns to the repeated note. Briony's theme is added, and then the orchestra enters.
Briony continues through the house.	Scalar passages are presented by the piano, and a Baroque fugue-styled theme is heard in the strings.
She stops and talks to Robbie.	The music continues more softly with the Briony theme heard in the piano followed by the fugue idea in the strings.
Briony goes to her mother, who declares that her work is stupendous.	The orchestra crescendos and comes to a cadence. The music stops.



Nominated for seven Academy Awards, *Atonement*'s only Oscar was given to composer Dario Marianelli. The score is divided into two parts, corresponding with the two principal portions of the story. The first half has three distinctive musical elements. The most unusual of these is an old-fashioned manual typewriter, the first sound heard in the film (see [VG 32.1](#)). Immediately thereafter, Briony is shown typing. The pecking sound quickens and is soon assimilated into the underscore, where it remains part of the musical fabric throughout the first portion of the story.

The other two musical elements at the beginning of the film are played by the piano. Performing on the soundtrack is the internationally acclaimed French pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet. While the timbre of a piano often suggests innocence, the melodic figure associated with Briony (see [EXAMPLE 32.3](#)) is disjointed and disturbing. This motive is often preceded by the other musical idea, a simple reiteration of one note on the piano. This sound is related to the repetitious sound of a typewriter, and it too crosses the boundary between source music

and underscoring. At one moment, Briony sits at the piano and repeats a single pitch, which is then incorporated into the score (46:25).

The second portion of the film begins five years later, with Robbie fighting in northern France. Although Briony's theme is still heard when she is present, the main musical idea here is a new three-note motive that has several variations and often expands into fuller melodies. A distinctive timbre change is evident as well, as the score contains extended lines for woodwinds and a solo cello part, performed by the well-known British cellist Caroline Dale. The most moving cue in the film occurs when Robbie and his two companions arrive on the beaches of Dunkirk (1:06:00). In a remarkable scene shot with a single take, we see soldiers shooting their horses, people in despair, men releasing their anxieties through drinking and games, and others gathered in a makeshift structure to worship God. For over four minutes, the cello leads a powerful lament. For a few moments, Robbie passes by men singing the hymn "Dear Lord and Father of Mankind." The melody combines with the score, but will fade as Robbie walks away.

BEST PICTURE WINNERS

From 2008 through 2011, international films won an unprecedented three out of four Oscars for Best Picture. Two of these films are from England, part of a long series of wins for this country that date back to 1948 with *Hamlet*. The other movie is from France, the first from that country to win the Academy's top award.

Slumdog Millionaire

India has produced quality films since the 1940s. Centering in Mumbai, also known as "Bollywood," the Indian cinema industry has assumed world leadership in quantity by a considerable margin. Traditionally, music has played a large role in Bollywood films, as even the most serious films may contain six or more songs plus dancing. *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), although a British film (Danny Boyle and Loveleen Tandan directors), was highly influenced by the traditions of Bollywood. Songs are plentiful, but they are all part of the underscore; the lead actors never sing. Likewise, the principal characters only break into dancing during the closing credits.

The film takes a question/flashback structure that can trace its roots to *Citizen Kane*. The flashbacks involve two unfolding events. One is the India version of the television game show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*. Jamal, a former "slumdog" (a child raised in the slums), has miraculously answered every question correctly, leading most to suspect that he must be cheating. The police are currently

questioning him, even resorting to torture. The other series of flashbacks are shown as explanations as to why Jamal knew the answers to these specific questions. During these portions, we see the squalor, religious intolerance, and crime of slum life vividly, and we follow the story of Jamal, his brother Salim, and Jamal's childhood love Latika as they grow into adulthood.

COMPOSER PROFILE

A. R. Rahman (b. 1961)

Born in India, Rahman began a career as a professional keyboard player at the age of eleven. He eventually received training and a degree from the Trinity College of Music at Oxford University. Rahman was composing advertising jingles when Mani Ratnam, one of India's most prominent directors, recognized his talent and enticed him to write film music. His early success with Indian films is highlighted by the internationally acclaimed *Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India* (2001). For *Slumdog Millionaire* (2009), a Best Picture winner, Rahman received Oscars for Best Score and Best Song, as well as another nomination for a second song. As a songwriter and performer, he has become one of India's foremost recording artists, and his film scores often blend traditional Indian music with Western electronics and harmonies.

Important Film Scores

Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India 2001

127 Hours 2011



Slumdog Millionaire 2009



! !

The Hundred-Foot Journey 2014

■ = Best Picture Oscar

! = Best Music Oscar

✉ = Music Oscar Nomination

A. R. Rahman composed the Oscar-winning score for *Slumdog Millionaire*. Rahman distinguished the three locations in the film musically. At the police station, there is no music. In the television studio, the diegetic music of the game show dominates. In the outside world of Mumbai, the styles of Indian and American popular music are intermixed in both instrumental cues and songs. The varieties of colors include a sitar, guitar, energized drumming, electronic sounds, vocal performances of traditional Indian music, and rap. In one scene, Jamal, as a young boy, sings "Darshan Do Ghanshyam" (1957) in a simple unadorned manner, but soon he, Salim, and Latika are running for their lives (34:45). The action portion is energized with rock-style drumming, to which is added a pulsating sitar melody, syncopated Western strings, a male choir, and sounds from a synthesizer. Rahman received two nominations for Best Song, for

"O Saya" and "Jai Ho," which received the coveted award. These songs serve as the opening and closing music of the story and provide an upbeat mood to the happy, million-dollar ending.

The King's Speech

Two years after *Slumdog Millionaire*, another British film, *The King's Speech* (2010), won Hollywood's Best Picture award. The film is based on a true story about a period in the life of King George VI, who was thrust into the throne with the abdication of his brother Edward VII. In order to rally his country at the onset of World War II, George needed help from Lionel Logue, a speech therapist, to overcome his childhood stammering. The film climaxes with the king's speech after the United Kingdom declared war on Germany in 1939.

Alexandre Desplat received an Oscar nomination for his modest score to the film. Largely relying on piano and strings, Desplat composed music that would indicate the growing friendship between George and Lionel, rather than the personal and political turmoil of the time. For the gentle title theme presented by the piano, listen carefully to the accompaniment—you can hear a single, repeated pitch that represents the king's speech impediment. Among the musical highlights are the quotations of classical works. Mozart's Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* is used in Lionel's first session with the future king (27:10). The dramatic reading of the war speech is set against the stern and moving second movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7 (1:42:35), and George's triumph brings forth the middle movement of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5, nicknamed the *Emperor* (1:49:55).

The Artist

It is difficult to imagine that, in today's world of dazzling effects, a silent film using intertitles and black and white cinematography would have wide appeal. Yet, with an energetic cast, an outstanding musical score, and a story full of humor, drama, and romance, the film did well at the box office and received widespread critical acclaim. It won Best Picture in both France and England, and it was the first French movie to win Best Picture at the Academy Awards in Hollywood. Among four other Oscars, *The Artist* (2011) garnered one for Best Score, proving once again that silence can be golden.

The plot is essentially a retelling of *A Star Is Born*, which has been produced in Hollywood three times (1937, 1954, and 1976). This variation shows us a romance between accomplished silent film star George Valentin, whose career is rapidly coming to an end, and Peppy Miller, a young actress rising to stardom in the early



FIGURE 32.4 Jamal sings "Darshan Do Ghanshyam" just before his brother prompts him to flee in *Slumdog Millionaire*.



FIGURE 32.5 George and Peppy become a dance team at the end of *The Artist*.

years of sound. Stealing more than a few scenes is George's dog Uggie. Typical of romantic comedies, George and Peppy overcome numerous obstacles and close the film joyfully dancing together for a sound movie. Here, there is one last joke. For the first and only time, George speaks, and we discover that he has a thick French accent. In one moment, we realize why George could not convert to sound, and we are reminded that *The Artist* is, after all, a French film, despite the American story and English intertitles.

French composer Ludovic Bource met the daunting tasks of creating music for a modern-day silent film, re-creating the appropriate music for numerous scenes of silent films with-

in the story, and capturing the mood and musical styles of the 1920s and early '30s in the underscore. **VIEWER GUIDE 32.2** can be divided into four segments—a romantic encounter, a montage showing the rise of Peppy's career and the decline of George's marriage, the juxtaposition of scenes from silent and sound films, and George's nightmare about sound.

VIEWER GUIDE 32.2

The Artist: Romance and Sound

Composer: Ludovic Bource



Timing

DVD: Sony 40031 (21:30–32:35)

Setting

George Valentin (Jean Dujardin) is at the peak of his career as a silent film star.

He has wealth, adulation, and a beautiful wife. Peppy Miller (Bérénice Bejo) is an aspiring actress with talent and personality. Two chance meetings have produced some sparks. Peppy sneaks into George's dressing room as a fan, but the relationship soon changes.

Key Points

- Light, melodic orchestral scoring
- George's leitmotif

- Use of “Imagination” by Red Nichols and His Five Pennies
- Source music for accompaniment to a silent film
- Modern musical style accompanies vision of sound film
- No music used when George dreams about sound

Principal Theme

Example 32.4 George/Artist



PLOT	MUSIC
Peppy enters George's dressing room.	The flute plays a lyrical melody. The music becomes more tentative as she enters.
Peppy writes a message on the mirror.	The flute plays a new theme in a slow waltz tempo. The French horns respond with a rising-and-falling motive.
Peppy amorously plays with George's coat.	The strings enter with a new melodic idea.
George enters.	The string melody, expanded from the George/Artist motive, continues and grows louder.
They talk, and George adds a beauty mark to her face.	A solo violin plays a version of the George/Artist motive. The horns reenter with their rising-and-falling motive.
Clifton makes an untimely entrance, showing a gift for George's wife. Peppy leaves.	The music comes to a cadence. A brief silence follows. The piano with accompaniment closes the scene.
A montage shows Peppy's rise. A breakfast montage showing George and his wife crosscuts with Peppy.	A recording of “Imagination” by Red Nichols and His Five Pennies plays throughout.
1929 has arrived. George is shown in a swashbuckler silent film. One of the actors portrays Napoleon.	Standard action music accompanies the filming. Majestic music is given to the actor portraying Napoleon.
Zimmer, the head of the studio, asks George to look at something, and the Napoleon actor is put in his place.	Humorous music, using drums and piccolo to suggest the military.
George watches a sound test from a film. He scoffs at the idea.	Reflecting the modernism of sound film rather than George's reaction, the music is in a disturbing early-twentieth-century style. When George leaves, pizzicato and a lower-register chromatic idea set an ominous mood.
Alone in his dressing room, George mysteriously hears sounds for the first time, but he cannot talk. Unable to scream, he eventually wakes to his silent world.	No music, but sound effects

The music for the opening segment captures the innocence of Peppy's infatuation with George and the instant emotional bond between them. Peppy is first seen walking to George's dressing room, and we hear a rising line in the flute with a simple accompaniment, suggesting her innocence. Once she decides to enter, the flute continues with a slow waltz, preparing us for her sensuous interaction with his coat. French horns and then strings become prominent as the passion grows. When George enters to see Peppy romantically intertwined with his coat, he is amused, and Peppy is naturally embarrassed. But the music reflects neither of these moods, continuing to grow in romantic intensity, thereby suggesting their mutual attraction. When George motions Peppy over to add a beauty mark on her face with a makeup pencil, a solo violin plays a version of the George/Artist theme, and the waltz tempo continues. This romantic moment, which Uggie is unable to watch, is interrupted when Clifton, George's valet and chauffeur, brings a gift he bought for George's wife. Peppy leaves quietly.

The second segment contains a double montage. In one portion, we see that George's idea to add a beauty mark was spot-on, as Peppy is shown getting more-prominent roles in a series of movies. In the other portion, we see various moments in the relationship between George and his wife as it grows more formal and distant. This sequence pays homage to *Citizen Kane* and its breakfast montage (see Chapter 11). Accompanying both developments is "Imagination" (1928), performed by Red Nichols and His Five Pennies. These lively sounds support the visions of Peppy and provide a sense of irony for the married couple out of touch with changing times.

For the last two segments, the film jumps to 1929. Initially we see George starring in a swashbuckler film, with appropriate period-action music complete with a touch of Mickey Mousing. At the conclusion, he is asked to observe a *Romeo and Juliet* scene from a sound movie. Here, Bource changes musical style substantially. Reflecting the disturbing new challenge facing the industry and George, the music evokes the quality of early-twentieth-century modern music, recalling the revolutionary style of early Stravinsky. For the next scene, the music stops; George hears sound for the first time, but he is still unable to talk or scream. Indeed, the vision turns out to be a nightmare, but it foreshadows the imminent change to the film industry and the end of George's career.

Bource's melodic score has a number of recurring themes. One represents George, the artist referenced in the title, and his theme is presented fully during the opening credits. The first three notes of his melody are the most distinctive, and they form an independent motive that can be heard, with some variations, throughout the film. The recurring Love theme is a waltz, and it first appears when George and Peppy shoot their first scene together (18:40); it too is subject to numerous

variations (see **EXAMPLE 32.5**). Both themes can be heard in close proximity when they are on the stairs, symbolically George going down and Peppy going up (36:35).

Example 32.5 Love



Two of the most striking cues in the film are related to each other. Just after George's new film is clearly a failure (ending with George sinking in quicksand), a simple version of his motive is played by the piano (49:00). After Peppy leaves his house, the darkening cue recalls the style of Gustav Mahler (1860–1911), a master of the full-blown late-Romantic musical style. Later in the film (1:26:10), Bource introduces an extended quote of Bernard Herrmann's love theme from the revelation scene in *Vertigo*, which also recalls Mahler. Like the breakfast montage scene, this is one of several homages paid to great Hollywood films. The *Vertigo* music comes to a bang-up conclusion that could only be accomplished in a silent film (1:32:20).

TRAILER

We end our journey through the history of film and its music where we started—with a silent film. Fittingly, *The Artist* is a French film about Hollywood, linking together two of the principal centers of filmmaking since its inception. Normally at the end of each chapter, we include a teaser (as is the nature of a film trailer) to make you want to read the next chapter. At this point, however, the next chapter will need to be written by you. Take what you have learned and continue to explore new movies and their music.

IMPORTANT NAMES AND TERMS

anime	Jeunet, Jean-Pierre	Rahman, A. R.
Bource, Ludovic	Marianelli, Dario	Thibaudet, Jean-Yves
Charest, Benoît	Miyazaki, Hayao	Tiersen, Yann
Dale, Caroline	Navarrete, Javier	
Hisaiishi, Joe	pentatonic	

DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

1. Japanese anime became an international sensation. How does the music for these films maintain traditions of Japanese music and reach out to Western audiences at the same time?

2. *The Triplets of Belleville* is a good example of postmodernism. Discuss the mixture of musical styles, the use of household items in the score, and the visual look of the film.
3. *Amélie*, *Pan's Labyrinth*, and *Atonement* portray three women with very different personalities and backgrounds. How does the music for each of these films support their characterizations?
4. Discuss how the music plays a role in the contrasting worlds of fantasy and reality in *Pan's Labyrinth*. How does the music unify the two worlds?
5. Describe the mixture of American popular and Indian music in A. R. Rahman's score for *Slumdog Millionaire*.
6. A number of quotations of classical orchestral works are heard in *The King's Speech*. Consider the reasons for their inclusion and discuss whether these choices are successful in the context of the film.
7. In *The Artist*, Ludovic Bource balances the musical needs of a twenty-first-century silent film with period-appropriate cues and source music, including music for older silent films. How did he achieve this goal while maintaining a unified score?

GLOSSARY

a cappella: Vocal music without the accompaniment of instruments. The sound of an a cappella choir is associated primarily with music from the Renaissance.

adaptation: The borrowing of a substantial portion of an existing composition for use in a film score. The music should remain largely intact and recognizable, although it can be altered or adapted to suit the needs of the film. *Amadeus* has an adapted score based on music by Mozart.

adapted score: A type of musical score in which most of the music is borrowed from other sources.

ambient music: An atmospheric style of music featuring sustained electronic tones without persistent beats.

American nationalism: A modern musical style associated with the concert works and film scores of Aaron Copland.

Andean flute: A wooden flute from the Andes with six finger holes and one thumb hole.

anime: A general term for animation from Japan.

antagonist: The adversary in a drama who is in a conflict with the protagonist. Darth Vader is the antagonist in *Star Wars*.

aria: In opera, a musical number for a soloist that contains an expressive melodic line and often features virtuoso flourishes.

arrangement: A new setting of a previously composed melody. Unlike an adaptation, an arrangement borrows only a melody, which is then given a newly composed accompaniment.

auteur: A director who molds all aspects of filmmaking into a unified and distinctive artistic style.

avant-garde: A term associated with experimental artistic styles, such as electronic music. The 1950s and 1960s saw the peak of avant-garde arts.

bagpipe: A musical instrument that produces a nasal sound using reeds and an enclosed bag of air. Prevalent throughout Europe, it is most commonly associated with Scotland and Ireland.

- ballet:** A theatrical performance with dancers and music that has no spoken words.
- beat:** A recurring pulse in music.
- Billboard Top 40:** A listing of the hottest-selling recordings that appears in the journal *Billboard*. The list first appeared in 1940.
- biopic:** A common film genre that presents a biography.
- blacklist:** In general, a list of people that are undesirable, which is often used to exclude them from employment. During the late 1940s and the 1950s, Hollywood blacklisted figures that were suspected of having ties to communism, as investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee.
- blaxploitation:** A filmmaking movement in the 1970s that sought to exploit black audiences with the use of stereotyped characters.
- blockbuster:** Originally a World War II military word for a bomb that could destroy an entire city block, the term was adapted by Hollywood for movies that were enormously successful. *Avatar* is a recent example of a blockbuster.
- Bollywood:** A term that designates the Indian movie industry based in Mumbai.
- bossa nova:** A Brazilian style of music reflecting elements of samba and jazz. It became a sensation in the 1950s and 1960s.
- cadence:** A resting moment in music. The various types of cadences are analogous to punctuation marks in prose; an open cadence is similar in function to a comma or question mark, and a closed cadence is like a period or exclamation point.
- causal plot:** A story in which each incident leads logically to the next with a clear cause-and-effect relationship. Most stories are told in this fashion.
- chaconne:** A type of variation structure in music, associated with the Baroque era, that is based on a harmonic progression or a repeating bass line.
- character dance:** Type of ballet dance in which the music suggests a specific ethnic origin.
- chord:** The simultaneous sounding of three or more pitches.
- chorus:** 1. A musical ensemble of singers, often divided into four parts. When used as an adjective, the term is *choral*, as in *choral music*. 2. The memorable portion of a song that follows the verse. See *verse-chorus*.
- chromatic:** Using notes not found in the diatonic scales of the Western musical system. Chromatic melodies and harmonies can sound unstable, experimental, or exotic.
- CinemaScope:** Appearing in the 1940s, the first practical process of filming and projecting movies on a wide screen.
- Cinématographe:** A motion picture camera developed by the Lumière brothers that could also develop and project images.

cinematography: The art of photography with moving pictures.

Cinerama: A process of creating widescreen images using three cameras and three projectors.

classical film score: Established in Hollywood during the late 1930s and early '40s, the classical film score is characterized by wall-to-wall music, a symphony orchestra, a melody-dominated texture with leitmotifs, and a full range of emotions.

clef sign: The first symbol on a line of music, the clef sign indicates the general range of the music. Two clef signs are commonly used: treble clef for the upper register and bass clef for the lower register.

click track: A series of audio clicks used to help musicians synchronize music with the action in a movie.

closed cadence: See *cadence*.

concert composer: A term applied to composers who create music such as operas, symphonies, string quartets, and cantatas for performances in concert halls and opera houses.

conjunction: Moving primarily by small melodic intervals, without large leaps, creating a smooth quality.

contrapuntal: The adjectival form of the noun “counterpoint.”

counterpoint: The art of combining two or more equal melodies.

country and western: A popular style of music that is associated with rural areas in the US South.

crosscut: See *cut*.

cue: In film music, a passage of underscoring from its entrance to its end.

cue sheet: In the silent film era, a list informing the musicians what types of music would be needed for each of the scenes.

cut: The connection between two shots. There are three principal types of cuts. In the narrative cut, our vision is focused on different objects or people in a continuous scene. A second type of cut joins different times (flashback or flash-forward) or places. In the crosscut, the third type, focus moves quickly back and forth between two or more related events.

dadaism: An art movement in the early twentieth century that mocked artistic conventions and the concept of classic works.

dark ambient: Ambient music that creates a dark or ominous mood.

descriptive music: A term that is applied to music that either depicts a general mood or mimics specific physical movements and natural sounds.

diegetic music: See *source music*.

Dies Irae: A well-known medieval chant from the Requiem Mass. It is frequently quoted in films to suggest death.

- disco:** A type of dance music originating in clubs called “discos.” Characterized by a strong pulse and sophisticated arrangements, disco soared in popularity in the late 1970s.
- disjunct:** Moving by wide melodic intervals, often creating a disjointed character.
- dissonance:** The harmonic clash between pitches that creates tension. In traditional music, dissonances resolve into more-restful harmonies, creating a sense of closure. Expressionism is a musical style that remains dissonant throughout.
- doctrine of affections:** In the Baroque era, the codification of certain musical gestures that represent the basic emotional states.
- dominant-seventh chord:** A mildly dissonant chord that requires resolution to the tonic pitch or chord, and an important element of functional harmony.
- editing:** In filmmaking, the cutting and joining together of various shots in postproduction.
- electronic instruments:** Musical instruments that generate sounds by electronic means.
- electronic music:** Music created with the aid of electronic instruments that either manipulate existing sounds or generate new musical sounds through electronic means.
- entr’acte:** A theatrical term for music played prior to any act other than the first act. It is literally played between acts. For epic films that are shown with an intermission, it is the music that immediately precedes the second half.
- epic:** A lengthy story that treats the achievements of an individual, region, or time period. In film, the term also suggests a lavish production featuring several well-known stars.
- episodic plot:** A story in which many of the incidents are loosely connected and are not the result of cause and effect. Such a plot often centers on a journey.
- ethnic music:** Music from non-Western regions, such as Asia, Africa, or the Middle East. In film music, a geographic area is often suggested by the use of instruments indigenous to the region.
- expressionism:** A movement in painting, literature, theater, music, and film that explores the dark regions of the subconscious mind. Common themes are nightmares, perversions, and insanity. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* is the foremost example of the movement in film. In music, the term is most closely associated with Arnold Schoenberg, who created a style that is consistently dissonant.
- feature film:** Generally, any film over four reels in length; in modern filmmaking, a feature film can extend from ninety minutes to over three hours.

film noir: A term coined by French critics to denote a dark trend in American filmmaking beginning in the 1940s. Common features include dark shadows, nighttime urban settings, and dark, twisted plots; also, a detective genre from this time.

flashback: A cut backwards in time in a narrative film, often revealing something about the present. The inserted vision may be momentary, as if a character has a fleeting memory, or substantial in length—for example, the Paris montage in *Casablanca* (1942) and much of the story of *Titanic* (1997).

flutter-tonguing: A performance technique on wind instruments in which the tongue is moved rapidly while air is blown into the instrument. On brass instruments, the technique can create an agitated, horrific effect.

fugue: A formal process from the Baroque era that develops one or more themes in imitative counterpoint. Full-length fugues are rare in film; passages that use this procedure are called *fugal*.

functional harmony: Traditional Western harmony that defines tonality through the dominant-to-tonic progression.

gamelan: An instrumental ensemble from Java or Bali consisting of a variety of percussion instruments, flutes, stringed instruments, and occasionally singers. The non-Western pitches and the repetitive performance style create a hypnotic character, often suggestive of Eastern philosophies.

genre: A general term denoting a category based on plot, form, or content. Some standard genres are westerns, romances, and action/adventure films.

glissando: A musical sound created by playing a series of adjacent notes in a single quick gesture upward or downward. Common on harps, pianos, and strings, this technique often creates a swooping effect.

Gregorian chant: Unaccompanied, monophonic liturgical chants, largely from the medieval era, created for use in the religious services of the Catholic Church.

half step: In Western music, the octave is divided into twelve, equal half steps, the smallest interval between two notes.

harmonics: A performance technique for string players in which the basic sound is altered by lightly touching the string at certain designated spots. The resulting sound has a soft, ringing quality.

harmony: The element of music dealing with the sound of two or more simultaneous pitches.

harpsichord: A historical musical instrument that resembles a piano. The strings of the harpsichord are plucked rather than struck, as in its modern counterpart.

Hays Code: Developed by the early 1930s, the Hays Code was a guideline named after Will H. Hays. In order to ensure the morality of movies, the code limited what could be said or shown in movies.

historical music: Music in film that comes from or suggests a former epoch in Western culture. Music composed prior to the twentieth century is generally divided into five periods: Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, and Romantic.

homophonic: A term for musical texture dominated by a single melody with accompaniment. The texture is common in Western music in general, and especially in film music.

hurrys: In melodramas, a type of stock music that was used for action scenes.

imitation: Also called imitative counterpoint; a type of contrapuntal texture in which two or more melodies are heard that are similar to each other. It is the basis of the fugue.

incidental music: Music for stage plays, such as overtures, entr'actes, and dances.

intertitles: In the silent film era, printed texts inserted into the film that served as dialogue or provided information about the actors or scene.

interval: The distance between two pitches. For additional information, see Chapter 2.

jazz: In the 1920s, a performance style in which a given melody is subject to numerous improvisations. In the 1930s, sophisticated jazz bands, called big bands or swing bands, were created featuring saxophones, trumpets, trombones, and a rhythm section (piano, bass, and drums). In this style, improvisation was more limited, and formal compositional techniques, such as orchestration, were more important. From the 1940s to the present, jazz has developed numerous new forms and styles.

key: In traditional Western harmony, the central or home pitch that governs the melodic and harmonic movement. If, for example, the home pitch is C, the music is considered to be in the key of C major or minor.

Kinetophone: A Thomas Edison invention that combines the viewing of a Kinetoscope with the sound of a phonograph.

Kinetoscope: A device developed by Thomas Edison for moving pictures viewed through a peephole.

klezmer: A Jewish musical tradition for weddings and dances.

Krautrock: Generally, rock music from Germany; more-specific connotations include the use of electronic instruments and repetitive musical ideas.

leading tone: In traditional Western harmony, the seventh and last note of the major and minor scales. Under normal circumstances, it possesses a harmonic tension that leads strongly to the home pitch of the scale.

leitmotif: A German term associated with Richard Wagner that designates a recurring theme linked with some aspect of a drama. The technique can be found in numerous film scores. Some of the most famous leitmotifs in film are the themes for Darth Vader (*The Empire Strikes Back*, 1980), the shark (*Jaws*, 1975), and Tara (*Gone with the Wind*, 1939).

linear plot: A story that is told in strict chronological sequence.

lyrical: A term that describes melodies written in a vocal style.

magic lantern: An image projector used for showing slides.

major, minor: The primary scales of traditional Western music. Each consists of seven pitches derived from a specific pattern of whole and half steps. Minor scales and harmonies are often used to create dark moods or reflect sad situations.

measure: In musical notation, unit of time (generally two, three, or four beats), graphically delineated by vertical lines.

medley: A series of songs played consecutively as heard in an overture to a stage musical or the opening credits of a film.

melodrama: A theatrical type popular in the nineteenth century that featured exciting plot developments, happy endings, and prominent music.

melody: The element of music that deals with the sequential connection of pitches. Any series of notes that can be perceived as a unit is considered to be a melody.

meter: Recurring patterns of strong and weak pulses in music. Traditional Western music is generally organized into duple (two- or four-beat groupings) or triple (three-beat groupings) meters.

Mickey Mousing: A derogatory term for the mimicking of physical action in film music to such an extent as to suggest cartoon music—for example, creating musical accents for footsteps.

minimalism: A musical movement that achieved prominence in the 1970s, in which short melodic, harmonic, or rhythmic ideas are repeated with little variation. The style can be heard in such diverse films as *Halloween* (1978), *Kundun* (1997), and *Inception* (2010).

minor: See *major, minor*.

mise-en-scène: A theatrical term that refers to the visual elements of film. It encompasses aspects such as lighting, costumes, and décor, the relationship of these elements to each other, and how they are photographed.

modal: A term for a melody or a harmonic system that suggests music created before 1600 or music from other cultures. A distinctive element of a modal sound is the lowered leading tone.

modern music: A general term for a musical style beginning in the early twentieth century that most notably is often characterized by dissonant harmonies and the rejection of functional tonality.

- monophonic:** Characterized by a musical texture featuring a single melodic line with no accompaniment, commonly found in music from the medieval era and music of non-Western cultures.
- montage:** Originally a French term meaning editing, it now generally designates the relatively quick cutting of images that are related in some manner. It is effective in showing the passing of time or the frantic character of large action scenes.
- mood:** The pervading atmosphere or emotional quality in a passage of music or a portion of a film; also called *tone*.
- motive:** In music, a motive is a small melodic unit that is treated as a theme or used to build a larger melodic idea. The first movement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 is largely based on a famous four-note motive.
- movement:** In classical works such as symphonies, an independent section, generally detached from the others, with its own tempo, themes, and moods.
- movie palace:** A large, usually ornate theater built to show silent films.
- Movietone:** The first practical system that placed recorded sound on the film-strip itself.
- MTV:** Beginning in 1981, this highly popular cable channel featured music videos from some of the most influential rock groups and singers of the era.
- music anthology:** In the silent era, a collection of musical excerpts organized by moods for use in accompanying silent film.
- musical:** Originally known as a musical comedy, a popular stage and screen genre that contains numerous performances of songs, such as *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) and *Singin' in the Rain* (1952).
- narrative film:** A film that relates some type of story.
- neo-classicism:** In all arts, a term designating a return to the principles of an earlier classical age. As a movement in twentieth-century music, it is considered to be a modern style generally characterized by restrained emotions, economical orchestration, formal clarity, and disjunct thematic ideas.
- neo-film noir:** A generic term that designates films after the 1950s that consciously return to qualities of film noir. Many of these films have settings in the '30s or '40s and employ distinctive dramatic, visual, and musical characteristics of noir. Unlike the original genre, they tend to be in color.
- neorealism:** A movement in Italian filmmaking immediately following World War II that primarily used outdoor settings and non-actors.
- New German Cinema:** The resurgence of film in West Germany beginning in the late 1960s.

- New Wave Cinema:** An influential new approach to filmmaking in France beginning in 1959 that explored innovative plots and visual effects.
- nickelodeon:** In the early film era, a shop that was converted into a movie theater. The usual admission price was a nickel.
- non-diegetic music:** See *underscoring*.
- nonlinear plot:** A story that is told out of chronological order—for example, with flashbacks.
- octave:** The distance between a pitch and its repetition in a higher or lower range. See Chapter 2.
- omniscient POV:** See *point of view*.
- ondes martenot:** An electronic instrument, played with the aid of a keyboard and able to be played only one pitch at a time, but with a variety of colors. It has been used in numerous film scores, most notably in Jarre's *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962).
- open cadence:** See *cadence*.
- opera:** A theatrical work that is completely or predominantly sung.
- operetta:** A light form of opera that became popular in the late nineteenth century and had an impact on films through the 1930s.
- orchestration:** The act of assigning instruments or voices to the various musical ideas that have been created. A specialist in this task is called an orchestrator.
- orchestrator:** A musician that orchestrates previously composed music.
- ostinato:** A melodic, rhythmic, or harmonic idea that is repeated throughout a portion of a musical composition.
- overture:** Music that precedes a theatrical event. For film epics, the term is used to designate music played prior to the opening credits.
- pantomime:** A dramatic entertainment using gestures and music, but no spoken words.
- parallel harmonies:** Harmonic progressions in which all of the musical lines move using the identical intervals. They occur most commonly with triadic chords.
- pedal:** A long sustained pitch, generally in the lowest register.
- pentatonic:** A musical scale consisting of five pitches, such as produced by the black keys on a piano.
- period film:** This term designates a film that has a plot set in the past. It is most commonly applied to historical dramas and romances.
- phrase:** A melodic unit.
- pitch:** The term designates how high or low a musical note is.
- pizzicato:** A sound created by string instruments when the pitches are plucked with the fingers rather than played with a bow. The resultant sound is similar to that of a guitar.

plot: The order and structure of a story.

point of view (POV): A term that refers to the perspective of the camera eye.

At times, the camera sees through the eyes of one of the characters, which is called subjective POV. More commonly, the view is at a distance and moves freely, which is called omniscient POV.

popular music: Music that appeals to popular tastes, such as jazz and rock.

populist film: Populism is a political term that refers to an attitude that supports the needs of the general population. Populist films focus on the “little guy” in his struggles against the rich and powerful.

postmodernism: A movement in the arts that can be seen as a reaction against the modernistic values held during much of the twentieth century. It rejects the idea that all arts have to be original, incorporates elements of the popular art and musical worlds, and encourages a playful mixture of styles from various regions and eras.

postproduction: The phase of filmmaking that occurs after the film has been shot.

program symphony: A symphony that suggests a story.

programmatic music: Instrumental composition that tells a story, suggests an image, or evokes a designated mood.

protagonist: The principal character of a drama, around whom the plot and theme unfolds.

ragtime: A defining step in American popular music, the title referred to “ragged” rhythms, which we now call syncopation. Associated with Scott Joplin, ragtime was originally a dance written primarily for the piano. The fundamental qualities of the genre were later assimilated into songs and instrumental works.

range: The distance between the highest and lowest note of a melody.

recitative: In opera, a musical number used for dialogue and dramatic interactions. The melodies tend to imitate speech and remain within a limited range (see *aria*).

refrain: A repeated line in a poem. When set as a song, the melody often remains the same and is also referred to as a refrain.

revue: An entertainment for the stage or screen that includes music but no plot.

rhythm: The musical element that deals with the dimension of time. The term can refer to the relative length of notes, and it also encompasses the concept of meter.

rock and roll: Rock music, especially its earliest stages in the 1950s and early 1960s, featuring accents on beats two and four of the measure and incorporating the sounds of electric guitars.

Romanticism: A style of music prevalent in the nineteenth century (Romantic era) that was easily assimilated into film scores.

running counter to the action: In film, the term describes the effect when the mood of the music contradicts the mood of the projected images or the plot.

score: The music notation containing all of the individual parts of the orchestra and singers. This is primarily used by the conductor. In discussions of film music, it refers to the underscoring. See *underscoring*.

scoring: See *underscoring*.

serialism: In its most common use, a term associated with a system developed by Arnold Schoenberg that orders the twelve pitches of the Western musical system into a series that can be manipulated in a variety of ways. The sound of such music, like expressionistic music, tends to be consistently dissonant.

setting: The place and surroundings where an event takes places in a movie.

shot: The length of film from when the camera begins rolling until it stops.

singing cowboy: A term that describes a sensation beginning in the 1920s of cowboy stars that sang. It had a major impact on movie westerns.

slide guitar: A technique of playing the guitar that involves the movement of an object called the “slide.” With the slide, a performer can smoothly connect notes and create vibrato for sustained pitches.

song: A musical setting of a poem that is intended to be sung.

song film: In the silent film era, films or slides used to illustrate or show the words of a song that was performed live.

soundtrack: Strictly speaking, all of the sound in a film, including dialogue, sound effects, and music; more commonly, the musical portion of the sound, and sometimes just the popular songs in a given movie.

source music: Music that has a logical source within the narrative of the film, such as a radio, dance band, or jukebox. Also known as *diegetic music*, it can be thought of as a type of sound effect.

spaghetti western: Westerns made in Italy beginning in the late 1960s.

staff: A term in musical notation that designates five horizontal lines upon which pitch, duration, and other musical elements are indicated.

stinger: A sudden loud accent in the music that is usually intended to coincide with an action on the screen, reveal a reaction of an actor, or startle the audience.

strophic: A type of song form in which each stanza or strophe of a poem is sung to the same melody.

subjective POV: See *point of view*.

- surrealism:** A movement in art and literature in the twentieth century that sought to depict irrational events or images that could be associated with the subconscious world of dreams.
- symphonic poem:** A one-movement orchestral work that is programmatic; also called *tone poem*.
- symphony:** In classical music, a work for orchestra in multiple independent sections or *movements*, usually four.
- synchronized sound:** In the silent film era, recorded music and sound effects to accompany films.
- syncopation:** Musical accents placed on weak beats or between beats of an established meter.
- synthesizer:** An electronic instrument capable of generating and reproducing sounds. Controlled by a keyboard, it can imitate the sounds of acoustic instruments, thereby replacing an entire orchestra, or it can create unique new sounds. Vangelis won an Oscar for his synthesized score to *Chariots of Fire* (1981).
- tableau vivant:** Theatrical entertainment in which people in costumes re-create the image of a specific painting or artwork.
- Technicolor:** The first major process for creating color film in Hollywood.
- techno:** A type of dance music that appeared in the late 1980s. It is largely electronic and is characterized by a strong beat and repetitive rhythms.
- tempo:** The speed of beats in a musical composition.
- texture:** The element of music dealing with the melodic lines and the combination of melodic lines in a composition. A single melody by itself is considered a monophonic texture, a dominant melody with accompaniment is called a homophonic texture, and a passage with two or more equal melodies is contrapuntal.
- thematic transformation:** In film music, an altered version of an established theme that often shows a change in a character or situation.
- theme:** In storytelling, the central idea; In music, a recognizable melodic idea that recurs, thereby lending shape to a musical composition.
- theremin:** Electronic instrument that changes pitches as the player's hand moves closer to or farther from a central antenna. Heard in Rózsa's scores to *The Lost Weekend* (1945) and *Spellbound* (1945), and Herrmann's *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951).
- timbre:** The element of music dealing with the colors or tone qualities produced by voices, instruments, and the various combinations of voices and instruments.
- time signature:** In music notation, the time signature consists of two numbers at the beginning of the first line of music that tells how many beats are in a measure and what kind of rhythmic value receives a beat.

tonal: Music that has a central pitch, called the tonic.

tone: See *mood*.

tone cluster: A dissonant sound created by adjacent pitches sounding simultaneously.

tone poem: See *symphonic poem*.

tonic: The central pitch in a passage of music.

triad: A chord that contains three pitches.

tritone: Also known as a diminished fifth or augmented fourth, the interval that is considered to be the most unstable in traditional Western harmony.

tune: A melody that is memorable, often one that is well-suited for singing.

tuneful: A melody that resembles a song and is easily remembered.

underscoring: Music in film that does not emanate from a source seen (or implied) on the screen. Also known as non-diegetic music, it is often abbreviated to just “scoring.”

verse: The opening portion of a song that precedes a chorus. See *verse-chorus*.

verse-chorus: A common popular-song structure in the first half of the twentieth century, in which the verse is somewhat introductory and often contains clever word play, while the chorus is the more tuneful and memorable.

viola da gamba: A string instrument primarily associated with the Renaissance.

Vitaphone: The first practical system of combining recorded sound with movies. Appearing near the end of the silent era, it coordinated a record with a projector.

Vitascope: The name given by Thomas Edison to his first projector made for showing movies to audiences.

wall-to-wall music: An informal term for the use of a substantial amount of underscoring.

widescreen: Significant innovation in movies during the 1950s in which the size of the projected images was widened.

Wurlitzer organ: A special organ created by the Wurlitzer Company for accompanying movies.

Zoopraxiscope: A projecting device created by Eadweard Muybridge that re-created the sense of movement from a series of still photos.

CREDITS

Film grabs are identified by: *Film title* (year), director, studio

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