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## Film Music Forerunners

There were a variety of 19th-century musical types that are considered to be forerunners of film music. Three of these forerunners are instrumental program music, opera, and ballet. Each of these musical types are distinguished by their basic qualities, relevant composers, and their similarities to film music. Some of the works within these musical types are written by pretty well known composers that many know and have heard today.

The first of these forerunners is program music. Program music can suggest a wide range of emotions from joy to anger. Furthermore, program music has the ability by itself to tell a story by suggesting an image through its instrumental nature. For example, in Beethoven's symphonies he adds in some imagery to the viewer's ears by mimicing certain sounds found in nature like thunder through the timpani drums, or bird sounds recreated through woodwind instruments. Also program music like how films are broken down into scenes can be split into many parts as well called movements. Program music or symphonies are normally four or more movements in relation to the multiple acts within films. Both Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 (*Pastoral*) and Berlioz's *Symphony fantastique* are program symphonies that have five movements. As mentioned frequently, some noticeable composers of program music are Beethoven and Berlioz. Program music share some similarities to film music in such ways that it inflicts emotion and creates a sense of imagery through its mimicing of natural sounds setting the scene and its mood. Furthermore, like the films to which the music is played within, program music has numerous parts or movements just like how there are many acts or scenes in a movie film.

Coming up from program music is ballet music. Similar to program music, ballet has

some unique qualities that breaks away from the instrumental aspect of program music. Ballet is one of the three music types from the 19th century that is a theatrical medium. In ballet, stories are told in rhythmic dance and the characters actions. There is no dialogue spoken at all. Through the dancers actions and dance, a wide range of emotions and moods is visually shown to the audience while the music invokes their imagination on the depth of that emotion. Some notable composers of ballet music include Adolphe Adam, and Pyotr Tchaikovsky. Tchaikovsky was more known with his works such as *Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, and *The Nutcracker*. Some similarities ballet music has to film music such as in ballet there are music themes that can denote a character's appearance in a scene similar to Le'motifs in film music. For example, in Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, the themes for both the White and Black Swan are the same, however their melodies are played with different instruments to represent the contrasting good against evil. Finally, like film music, ballet can also convey a lot of emotion and moods.

The last of these forerunners of music types in the 19th century is Opera. Like ballet, opera music is another theatrical medium that unlike ballet which utilizes dancing and actions is based on singing. Although, unlike ballet where the music is written dependent on the dance, opera music is quite the opposite where the music is written mainly for the instruments not the singers. Music is utilized to express a full range of emotions while using the voice and the characters on stage as a medium to further enhance these aspects. Furthermore, opera itself was performed in a modified theater that Wagner designed to fully implement his control and ideals over his productions. By having a darkened auditorium for performance, detailed scenery, visual effects per scene, and many more theatrical innovations by him, this was the foundations to the modern theater seating for future films. Some important composers of opera music include Richard Wagner, and Georges Bizet. Wagner was a more prominent composer for opera music with his works such as *Tristan und Isolde*, and the Ring Cycle (*Der Ring des Nibelungen*). Similarities that opera music shares with film music is obviously the setting at which it is played, in a dark theater to enhance the

sensory appeal of the audience. Furthermore, like film music a wide range of emotions are conveyed to the audience.