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## Classical Film Genres and their Music

During the Golden Age of Hollywood, there arose many different film genres that each had their own conventions and clichés. Some of these genres include Horror, Romance, and Epics which to each genre gave rise to some films that had music which best represents the clichés of each genre.

The horror film genre had two notable films: *King Kong*, and *The Bride of Frankenstein*. *King Kong*, musical score composed by Max Steiner, utilized raucous brass and pounding percussion in many of the scenes of the film. With harsh harmonies, brass flutter-tonguing, and stuttering of repeating chords, this gave a horrendous sound that as cliché as the genre itself intends to incite fear into the audience of King Kong, and the events that arose within the film. Furthermore, the music goes above and beyond by taking on a thematic transformation of the characters representing Beauty and the Beast. For example, in the beginning King Kong's theme depicted him as a terrifying creature, however as the film goes on his theme then takes on a humanistic representation of the creature. In *The Bride of Frankenstein*, composed by Waxman, he reflects on the concept of *self-parody*, treating the conventions of a genre with humor, within the film's music by having a film score that has its own sense of comedy. The film furthermore utilizes dissonance, a "wrong-note" harmony that is accidentally created by playing two adjacent pitches, in The Monster's motive to create a jarring and horrific effect of Frankenstein.

The next genre is romance which is considered as a subcategory of the drama genre. Romance is also considered as independent since it has the ability to coexist with other genres of film such as horror and epics. A notable film in the romance genre is *Wuthering*

*Heights*. Within the romance genre, the score for these films generally has a full orchestral score like the previous two genres, a predominant string timbre, and a beautiful central theme. *Wuthering heights*, composed by Newman, utilizes the string family of instruments to represent the warmth and endurance of Heathcliff and Cathy love for each other. The score that Newman has composed does not follow the traditional role that film music sets when it comes to its representation in the changes in emotion or mood of the scene. Overall the love theme overcomes all emotions, regardless of Cathy's death to signify joy and ultimate consummation of their strong love for each other.

The final genre is epics which is generally filmed in a historical setting and has an extended story about a person coming from that era. A notable film in the epic genre is *Gone with the Wind*. The score in the film uses a variety of instrumental and vocal musics such as dance orchestras, organ music, band music, and choir chorus. There are many borrowings of short quotations from known songs such as "Dixie", "Old Folks at Home", and "Maryland, My Maryland". The leitmotifs of the characters ethnic backgrounds are also reflective of their melodies. For example, jig underscores are used for Gerald O'Hara's Irish heritage or synocopated rhythmic beats with African Americans.