

Some film **SOUNDTRACKS** include specially composed **SCORES**, either for orchestra (e.g. composers like John Williams, Ennio Morricone) or songs written especially for the film (e.g. Disney films). Other films use pre-existing music e.g. popular songs from the era/place in which the film is set.

### STRINGS

- Violin
- Cello
- Viola
- Double bass
- Harp

### WOODWIND

- Flute
- Clarinet
- Oboe
- Bassoon
- Saxophone

### BRASS

- Trumpet
- Trombone
- French horn
- Tuba

### KEYBOARDS

- Piano
- Electronic keyboard
- Harpsichord
- Organ
- Synthesizer

### PERCUSSION

- Bass drum
- Snare drum
- Triangle
- Cymbal
- Drum kit (untuned)
- Timpani
- Glockenspiel
- Xylophone (tuned)

### OTHER

- Electric guitar
- Bass guitar
- Spanish/classical guitar
- Traditional world instruments

## Musical elements

Film composers use the **MUSICAL ELEMENTS** (tempo, texture, dynamics, timbre, tonality, rhythm, melody, harmony) to create mood and atmosphere to help to tell the story and enhance the action.

For example:

In a **sad, reflective scene**, a composer might use slow tempo, minor tonality, soft dynamics, legato, homophonic texture, long sustained notes, and a conjunct melody.

An **exciting car chase scene** in a thriller might have a fast tempo, busy, polyphonic texture, dissonant chords, loud dynamics, syncopated rhythms, a disjunct melody and short riffs.

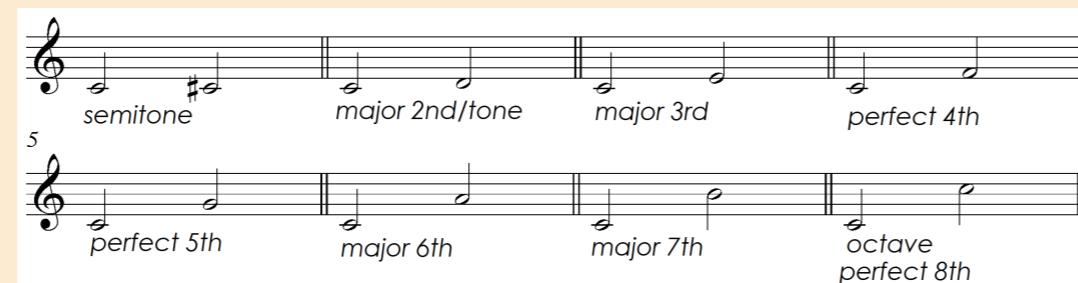
A scene where the **superhero 'saves the day'** might use a major tonality, brass fanfares, loud dynamics, accents, 4<sup>ths</sup> and 5<sup>ths</sup> (intervals).

Composers will often use **CONTRASTS** to create effect (e.g. using a wide range of pitch from very high to very low).

## Intervals

Film composers often use intervals to create a particular effect (e.g. a rising perfect 4<sup>th</sup> sounds 'heroic', and a semitone can sound 'menacing').

An **interval** is the distance between two notes.



**Rising interval:** moving upwards (ascending)

**Falling interval:** moving downwards (descending)

## Specific instrumental terms

<b>Pizzicato</b>	Plucking the strings.
<b>Divisi</b>	Two parts sharing the same musical line.
<b>Double stopping</b>	Playing two strings at the same time.
<b>Arco</b>	Using a bow to play a stringed instrument.
<b>Tremolo</b>	A 'trembling' effect, moving rapidly on the same note or between two chords (e.g. using the bow rapidly back and forth).
<b>Tongued</b>	A technique to make the notes sound separated (woodwind/brass).
<b>Slurred</b>	Notes are played smoothly.
<b>Muted</b>	Using a mute to change/dampen the sound (brass/strings).
<b>Drum roll</b>	Notes/beats in rapid succession.
<b>Glissando</b>	A rapid glide over the notes.
<b>Trill</b>	Alternating rapidly between two notes.
<b>Vibrato</b>	Making the notes 'wobble' up and down for expression.

## Composers also use:

<b>Theme</b>	The main tune/melody.
<b>Motif</b>	A short musical idea (melodic or rhythmic).
<b>Leitmotif</b>	A recurring musical idea linked to a character/object or place (e.g. Darth Vader's motif in Star Wars).
<b>Underscoring</b>	Music playing underneath the dialogue.
<b>Scalic</b>	Melody follows the notes of a scale.
<b>Triadic</b>	Melody moves around the notes of a triad.
<b>Fanfare</b>	Short tune often played by brass instruments, to announce someone/something important; based on the pitches of a chord.
<b>Pedal note</b>	A long, sustained note, usually in the bass/lower notes.
<b>Ostinato/riff</b>	A short, repeated pattern.
<b>Conjunct</b>	The melody moves by step.
<b>Disjunct</b>	The melody moves with leaps/intervals.
<b>Consonant harmony</b>	Sounds 'good' together.
<b>Dissonant harmony</b>	Sounds 'clashy'.
<b>Chromatic harmony</b>	Uses lots of semitones/accidentals that's not in the home key.
<b>Minimalism</b>	A style of music using repetition of short phrases which change gradually over time.

# SOUNDTRACKS

## Exploring Film Music



### A. The Purpose of Music in Film

Film Music is a type of **DESCRIPTIVE MUSIC** that represents a **MOOD, STORY, SCENE** or **CHARACTER** through music, it is designed to **SUPPORT THE ACTION AND EMOTIONS OF THE FILM ON SCREEN**. Film Music can be used to:

- Create or enhance a mood (though the **ELEMENTS OF MUSIC**) ->
- Function as a **LEITMOTIF** (see D)
- To emphasise a gesture (**MICKEY-MOUSING** – when the music fits precisely with a specific part of the action in a film e.g. cartoons)
- Provide unexpected juxtaposition/irony (using music the listener wouldn't expect to hear giving a sense of uneasiness or humour!)
- Link one scene to another providing continuity
- Influence the pacing of a scene making it appear faster/slower
- Give added commercial impetus (released as a **SOUNDTRACK**) – sometimes a song, usually a pop song is used as a **THEME SONG** for a film.
- Illustrate the geographic location (using instruments associated with a particular country) or historical period (using music 'of the time').

### D. Leitmotifs

**LEITMOTIF** – A frequently recurring short melodic or harmonic idea which is associated with a character, event, concept, idea, object or situation which can be used directly or indirectly to remind us of one not actually present on screen. Leitmotifs can be changed through **SEQUENCING, REPETITION** or **MODULATION** giving a hint as to what may happen later in the film or may be heard in the background giving a “subtle hint” to the listener e.g. the “Jaws” Leitmotif



### B. How the Elements of Music are used in Film Music

**PITCH AND MELODY** – **RISING MELODIES** are often used for increasing tension, **FALLING MELODIES** for defeat. Westerns often feature a **BIG THEME**. **Q&A PHRASES** can represent good versus evil. The **INTERVAL OF A FIFTH** is often used to represent outer space with its sparse sound. **DYNAMICS** – **FORTE (LOUD)** dynamics to represent power; **PIANO (SOFT)** dynamics to represent weakness/calm/resolve. **CRESCENDOS** used for increasing threat, triumph or proximity and **DECRESCENDOS** or **DIMINUENDOS** used for things going away into the distance. Horror Film soundtracks often use **EXTREME DYNAMICS** or **SUDDEN DYNAMIC CHANGES** to ‘shock the listener’. **HARMONY** – **MAJOR** – happy; **MINOR** – sad. **CONSONANT HARMONY OR CHORDS** for “good” and **DISONANT HARMONY OR CHORDS** for “evil”. **SEVENTH CHORDS** often used in Westerns soundtracks. **DURATION** – **LONG** notes often used in Westerns to describe vast open spaces and in Sci-Fi soundtracks to depict outer space; **SHORT** notes often used to depict busy, chaotic or hectic scenes. **PEDAL NOTES** – long held notes in the **BASS LINE** used to create tension and suspense. **TEXTURE** – **THIN/SPARE** textures used for bleak or lonely scenes; **THICK/FULL** textures used for active scenes or battles. **ARTICULATION** – **LEGATO** for flowing or happy scenes, **STACCATO** for ‘frozen’ or ‘icy’ wintry scenes. **ACCENTS (>)** for violence or shock. **RHYTHM & METRE** – 2/4 or 4/4 for Marches (battles), 3/4 for Waltzes, 4/4 for “Big Themes” in Westerns. **IRREGULAR TIME SIGNATURES** used for tension. **OSTINATO** rhythms for repeated sounds e.g. horses.

### C. Film Music Key Words

**SOUNDTRACK** – The music and sound recorded on a motion-picture film. The word can also mean a commercial recording of a collection of music and songs from a film sold individually as a CD or collection for digital download. **MUSIC SPOTTING** – A meeting/session where the composer meets with the director and decides when and where music and sound effects are to feature in the finished film. **STORYBOARD** – A graphic organiser in the form of illustrations and images displayed in sequence to help the composer plan their soundtrack. **CUESHEET** – A detailed listing of **MUSICAL CUES** matching the visual action of a film so that composers can time their music accurately. **CLICK TRACKS** – An electronic **METRONOME** which helps film composers accurately time their music to on-screen action through a series of ‘clicks’ (often heard through headphones) – used extensively in cartoons and animated films. **DIEGETIC FILM MUSIC** – Music within the film for both the characters and audience to hear e.g. a car radio, a band in a nightclub or sound effects. **NON-DIEGETIC FILM MUSIC** – Music which is put “over the top” of the action of a film for the audience’s benefit and which the characters within a film can’t hear – also known as **UNDERScore** or **INCIDENTAL MUSIC**.

### E. History of Film Music

Early films had no soundtrack (“**SILENT CINEMA**”) and music was provided live, usually **IMPROVISED** by a pianist or organist. The first **SOUNDTRACKS** appeared in the 1920’s and used existing music (**BORROWED MUSIC** – music composed for other (non-film) purposes) from composers such as Wagner and Verdi’s operas and ballets. In the 1930’s and 1940’s Hollywood hired composers to write huge Romantic-style soundtracks. **JAZZ** and **EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC** was sometimes used in the 1960’s and 1970’s. Today, film music often blends **POPULAR, ELECTRONIC** and **CLASSICAL** music together in a flexible way that suits the needs of a particular film.

### F. Film Music Composers and their Soundtracks



**Jerry Goldsmith**  
Planet of the Apes  
Star Trek: The Motion Picture  
The Omen  
Alien



**John Williams**  
Star Wars  
Jaws  
Harry Potter  
Indiana Jones  
Superman, E.T.



**James Horner**  
Titanic  
Apollo 13  
Braveheart  
Star Trek II  
Aliens



**Ennio Morricone**  
The Good, The Bad and The Ugly  
For a Few Dollars More  
The Mission



**Danny Elfman**  
Mission Impossible  
Batman Returns  
Men in Black  
Spider Man



**Hans Zimmer**  
The Lion King  
Gladiator  
Dunkirk  
Blade Runner 2049  
No Time to Die



**Bernard Herrmann**  
Psycho  
Vertigo  
Taxi Driver

## KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER - Film Music - Year 9

1. KEY IDEAS & CONCEPTS	
<b>2. Purpose</b>	Music in a film is there to <b>set the scene, enhance the mood, tell the audience things</b> that the visuals cannot, or <b>manipulate</b> their feelings. <b>Sound effects are <i>not</i> music!</b>
<b>3. Specially composed music</b>	Some music is <b>composed specially</b> for a film. Much of this is broadly classical in style.
<b>4. Borrowed music</b>	Some music used in film soundtracks was composed for other (non-film) purposes, but is <b>adopted</b> for use in a film because it fits the film-maker's intentions.
<b>5. Theme song</b>	Sometimes a song, usually a pop song, is used as a <b>theme song</b> for a film. This helps with marketing and <b>publicity</b> .

6. KEY TERMS	
<b>7. Click Track</b>	A <b>click metronome</b> heard by musicians through headphones as they record.
<b>8. Cues</b>	The <b>parts of the film that require music</b> . This is agreed between the director and the composer.
<b>9. Diagetic</b>	<b>Music that is part of the action:</b> the characters in the film can hear it.
<b>10. Leitmotif</b>	A <b>short melody</b> that is <b>associated with a character</b> or idea in a film.
<b>11. Mickey Mousing</b>	When the <b>music fits precisely</b> with a specific part of the action in a film.
<b>12. Non-diagetic</b>	<b>Music that is <i>not</i> part of the action:</b> the characters in the film <b>cannot hear it</b> . It is just for the audience.
<b>13. Syncing / sync point</b>	A precise moment where the timing of the music needs to fit with the action.
<b>14. Underscore</b>	Where <b>music is played at the same time</b> as the action or dialogue.

15. INSTRUMENTS & COMMON ASSOCIATIONS (Musical Cliché's)	
<b>16. Woodwind</b>	<b>Natural</b> sounds such as bird song, animals, rivers
<b>17. Bassoons</b>	Sometimes used for <b>comic effect</b> (e.g. a drunkard)
<b>18. Brass</b>	<b>Soldiers</b> , war, royalty, <b>ceremonial</b> occasions
<b>19. Tuba</b>	<b>Large</b> and slow-moving things
<b>20. Harp</b>	<b>Tenderness</b> , love
<b>21. Glockenspiel</b>	<b>Magic</b> , music boxes, fairy tales
<b>22. Timpani / Drums</b>	War, <b>fighting</b> , <b>thunder</b>
<b>23. Strings</b>	Often used to portray <b>emotions</b> : passion, grief, etc.
<b>24. Tremolo Strings</b>	<b>Tension</b> , fear, drama

25. KEY COMPOSERS
26. Bernard <b>Herrmann</b>
27. John <b>Williams</b>
28. John <b>Barry</b>
29. Jerry <b>Goldsmith</b>
30. Hans <b>Zimmer</b>
31. James <b>Horner</b>
32. Danny <b>Elfman</b>
33. Alan <b>Silvestri</b>
34. Howard <b>Shore</b>

35. MUSICAL ELEMENTS & COMMON ASSOCIATIONS (Musical Cliché's)		
<b>36. Tempo</b>	<b>Fast</b>	<b>Excitement</b> , action or fast-moving things (e.g. a chase scene)
	<b>Slow</b>	<b>Contemplation</b> , rest or slow-moving things (e.g. a funeral procession)
<b>37. Melody</b>	<b>Ascending</b>	Upward movement, or a feeling of <b>hope</b> (e.g. climbing a mountain)
	<b>Descending</b>	Downward movement, or feeling of <b>despair</b> (e.g. movement down a hill)
	<b>Large Leaps</b>	<b>Distorted</b> or grotesque things (e.g. a monster)
<b>39. Harmony</b>	<b>Major</b>	Happiness, <b>optimism</b> , success
	<b>Minor</b>	Sadness, <b>seriousness</b> (e.g. a character learns of a loved one's death)
	<b>Dissonant</b>	<b>Scariness</b> , pain, mental anguish (e.g. a murderer appears)
<b>40. Rhythm &amp; Metre</b>	<b>Strong sense of pulse</b>	<b>Purposefulness</b> , action (e.g. preparations for a battle)
	<b>Dance-like rhythms</b>	<b>Playfulness</b> , dancing, partying (e.g. a medieval feast)
	<b>Irregular rhythms</b>	Excitement, <b>unpredictability</b> (e.g. a fast-moving fight)
	<b>Rhythmic ostinato</b>	<b>Menace</b> , tension (e.g. the countdown to an invasion)
<b>41. Dynamics</b>	<b>Loud</b>	<b>Surprise</b> , power, large things (e.g. a vast panorama)
	<b>Soft</b>	<b>Gentleness</b> , weakness, intimacy, small things (e.g. a new-born lamb)
	<b>Crescendo / Diminuendo</b>	Objects or events getting <b>closer</b> / objects getting <b>further away</b>