

# Music for Film

AS/A Level Edexcel

Set Work Analysis

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# Teacher's Introduction

## What is included and how to use this resource:

- Edexcel 2016 specification information
- Analysis of the set works
- Revision summary, comparisons and practice questions

Firstly we wish to thank the composer Rachel Portman for her assistance and support in creating this resource. Rachel supplied original scores, studio recordings and first-hand information.

To study and analyse music from the movies prescribed by Edexcel 'Music for Film' history and development of music within the twentieth century from 1933<sup>1</sup> to 2000 (appendix 4 in published specification). The Edexcel 2016 specification expects students to appraising skills through the study of music across a variety of styles and genres' comprehensive scrutiny of the history of film music as a genre. Instead, Edexcel develops development of skills by choosing specific repertoire within the six areas of study understanding of 'musical elements, context and language'<sup>3</sup> through (the use of) vocabulary specific to the area of study and genre.

## AS Level Music

Paper	Length	% Exam	Marks	Content	
Component 3	90 minutes	40%	80	Six areas of study and application of knowledge to unfamiliar works	Two • •

## A Level

Paper	Length	% Exam	Marks	Content	
Component 3	120 minutes	40%	100	Six areas of study and application of knowledge to unfamiliar works	Two • •

This resource contains a critical analysis of the three main set works for Music for A Level. For AS students will study two films and for A Level a further one film, respectively. The entire films do not need to be studied. A careful analysis of prescribed scenes undertaken and placed in the appropriate time and place musically. Analysis will be to recognise composition techniques in context and strategies employed by the composer for music for film. A Level questions will be more difficult melody correction and longer.

**Critical listening** is where an analyst can pick out key techniques and describe a piece of music or drama by careful focus, noticing and review.

Engaging with the prescribed works, using aural perception skills and analysing the music will achieve (the necessary) critical judgements required to achieve top marks. This will generate further understanding of composition traditions, genres and styles for the exam.

<sup>1</sup> N.B. the Edexcel specification has an error on this date. In the specification it states 1935.

<sup>2</sup> Edexcel specification, 2016

<sup>3</sup> Edexcel specification, 2016

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### Musical contexts – what is expected

A thorough examination of the set works and suggested wider listening, plus any you may wish to use, will develop knowledge and understanding of musical contexts. The specification is covered in a different resource. The specification states: 'Unfamiliar stylistic characteristics to the set works.'

Students will need to explore the musical elements and their interdependence, not only across all the set works studied. It is important to have a clear understanding of how to locate the score's intention by use of the combined elements.<sup>4</sup>

As with most movies, the effect of purpose and intention of the set works is quite clear for this area of study: film music has a clear purpose to reinforce the action, drama etc. We need to study the effect of the music on the audience combined with time and place. A conundrum: which is more important to study – the film or the music score alone?

Teachers will be expected to develop students' ability to apply critical listening to unfamiliar to show how the elements of music are mutually dependent on one another and of complex ways to create effective soundtracks.

To study the film music separately without the screen action in this context would be difficult and identification of specific musical technique, but it is of primary importance to the film. Here, an analysis of each prescribed work (two for AS Level, one for A Level) is sufficient to identify key thematic material and *leitmotifs*.

### The specification and set works

There are only two prescribed film set works for AS Level. The three main prescribed works (two for AS Level, one for A Level) feature composers who are clearly different from one another across the spectrum of film industry composition style, technique and approach within the twentieth century. One is famous as a serious concert artist outside the movie industry, one is a lead singer of a rock band, and one is a theatre composer and music producer. Each composer has a very different composition style with an individual approach to creating film music such an exciting breadth of style and genre.

**Please note: in the AS and A Level exams, the extracts in transcription questions will not be taken from set works or wider listening pieces. For this resource, for practice and to encourage familiarity, the extracts to be taken from the set works.**



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<sup>4</sup> Edexcel specification, 2016

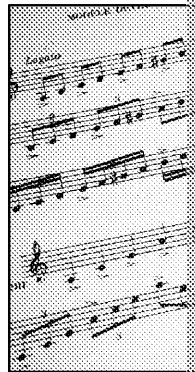
# Student Introduction

## Musical Language – What is Expected

**Notation skills:** Students will need to be able to apply a range of practical knowledge and understanding of music vocabulary and notation skills appropriate to context.

### What you need to know:

- Pinpoint aurally what is happening in the music
- Notate what you hear accurately
- Synthesise material from ear to pen
- Use music vocabulary
- Understand the conventions of staff notation
- Develop skills in aural perception while under time constraint pressure



Students will need to know chord patterns and types of chords as well as how cadences work and how they are linked to one another via the circle of 5<sup>th</sup>s, and understand how sonata form works. Students will need to be able to notate complex rhythmic devices such as syncopation and this under pressure in exam conditions.

### Helpful hints and advice:

- **Reaction points:** experience and confidence are useful aids here; think of driving or car mechanics and how they use skills to react to what is happening immediately responding to it practically. The expert does this with ease.
- **Score reading:** as much as possible while listening to the audio, make use of both hearing and seeing.
- **Playing an instrument:** if students have completed any graded examinations, then voice, aural perception skills are covered in a practical performing grade, the better the aural perception.
- **Transfer aural perception:** when targeting melody correction or transcription, try to aurally visualise the melody on the instrument learned. This can make it easier and more accessible.
- **Ensemble:** playing music within an ensemble such as an orchestra, band or choir provides one of the best ways to apply practical aural perception skills. A warning: if you play in a group without using notation, you may find it difficult connecting score information to aural knowledge.

### Vocabulary

Students will need to respond to music using appropriate musical vocabulary in their writing. Notation above in that one needs to immediately recognise the correct terminology and apply it at the right time under pressure. Music vocabulary is a different language to other subjects. Musicians need to be fluent in understanding and using appropriate vocabulary. Students should be able to write about music perceptively and practise comparison and contrasting of the styles of different composers, the effectiveness of the music and evaluate the music score. In doing so, students should be able to write about film music using the correct and appropriate music vocabulary.

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## Have You Got the Music?

Complete film scores are very hard to find, except in the specific libraries where the film studio itself (this also requires seeking permission to reproduce it). Musically studied on the screen, and as a soundtrack. The essential resource to have at your disposal is the DVD of the movie itself. The complete soundtrack for all three films is available and the prescribed are accessible.

The music cues for *Psycho*, *Batman Returns* and *The Duchess* can be found on YouTube and soundtrack clips. In 2016 on **amazon.co.uk** the least expensive DVDs for *Batman Returns* are approximately £3, whereas the DVD for *Psycho* is a little more expensive at £6.

## Timings

DVD scene chapters will refer to sections of music with timings identified for each scene. These timings should enable accurate pinpoint location when listening to the music online. In writing (2015) Amazon is selling DVDs of the prescribed works for approximately £3.

## The Elements of Music and Film Repertoire

In order to study music for film and gain a sound understanding of the conventions of the prescribed works, students will need to briefly look at how the elements of music are used by composers.

The relationship between the elements of music combined with the on-screen action, characters and the soundscape is what makes film music so effective and powerful.

To understand genre, style and traditions, students will analyse the key musical elements. When doing so extend musical vocabulary and notation skills. Edexcel will test students in terms of those seven elements:

1. Organisation of pitch (melodically and harmonically)
2. Tonality
3. Structure (organising of musical material)
4. Sonority
5. Texture
6. Tempo, metre and rhythm (how music is organised in time)
7. Dynamics (use of dynamics)

### Organisation of pitch (melodically and harmonically)



*'There's such a lot of world to see'*  
– Audrey Hepburn, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*

Sometimes the melody can permeate the entirety of a film score. Henry Mancini's 'Moon River' returns throughout the film as a note motif. Danny Elfman and Bernard Herrmann use similar motifs.

The organisation of pitch is critical in film music. If a melodic motif ascends or descends, it can uplift or depress the listener. When we listen to the opening credits of *Star Wars* it uplifts our mood and releases endorphins. This is deliberate as the first three pitches of the main theme are the first three pitches of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, last movement. The composer is using music for the screen. However, one is absolute music, which means music written for music's sake; the other is for the screen.

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We observe similar melodic patterns in *Psycho*, *Batman Returns* and *The Duchess*. In the Fifth Symphony, Beethoven wants the audience to feel euphoric and excited; Beethoven's cinema was but he created a feeling, a stirring-up of emotional triumph with music. *Batman* uses the 5<sup>th</sup> to great effect as a way to illustrate the superhero.

### Beethoven – Symphony No. 5 Finale



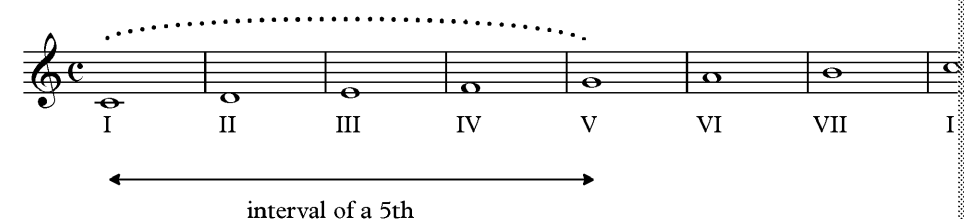
Both themes have the similar pattern of a rising pitch in the melody that creates a sense of triumph. *The Duchess* use this technique to great effect, but this works both ways – music can also feel suppressed and sad, for example sections of Bernard Herrmann's score for *Psycho*.

Harmonically the rising and falling of pitch as chords has an identical effect on the listener. Devices such as pedal, *ostinato*, modulation and chromaticism to create specific moods are clearly in the third movement of his Fifth Symphony preparing listeners for the battle.

A good example of altering pitch as harmonic change in film music repertoire is the *Goodwin's 633 Squadron*: in bar 9, after an eight-bar introduction, there is a famous chord of F major. By bar 21 the harmony changes to the submediant, chord VI, of F major, which deliberately turns into a secondary dominant and falls onto chord G in bar 25 which is the tonic. What happens is the harmony has risen by a tone from F–G within the film score, which creates a sense of elation and heroism.

Film composers have instinctively used this simple technique of pitch direction for decades. It has gone a step further. Ascending music needs to rise by an interval. The following pattern shows the tested relationship of tones and semitones, which form the major scale:

### The Major Scale (C)



Music which rises makes the listener feel emotionally elevated and 'happy'; we notice the relationship between the tonic and the dominant. This is an interval of a 5<sup>th</sup> and is the most important in fact it is the distance between notes that makes a cadence. The history of music is full of composers using the 5<sup>th</sup> to demonstrate heroism. Operatic heroes (often a tenor) would feature the use of the 5<sup>th</sup> more. The technique is a **perfect 5<sup>th</sup>**. For centuries the 5<sup>th</sup> has been widely accepted to be a 'perfect sound'.

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Look at the two music examples above the scale: both use the powerful interval of a fifth. In the first example, the theme starts on C and the third note is G, the 5<sup>th</sup> above the tonic. The *Star Wars* theme starts on C and the third note is G, the 5<sup>th</sup> above the tonic. The *Star Wars* theme starts on C and the third note is G, the 5<sup>th</sup> above the tonic. Herrmann, Elfman and Portman would have been acutely aware of the power of the 5<sup>th</sup>.

### Tonality

Tonality is crucial for a film composer to set the initial mood or atmosphere of a scene. Music in a major key is generally 'happy' and music that is in a minor key is 'sad'. The 'major-minor' device for changes in mood and atmosphere. In simple terms the change from major to minor is a convenient musical way to travel from an atmosphere of safety to one of tension. The villain walking in through the swinging doors of a bar in a western.

At AS and A Level standard it is necessary to dig a lot deeper than this, and an understanding of the relationships between key signatures used is paramount in creating an overall structure. This is why film set works use conventional and non-conventional tonality.

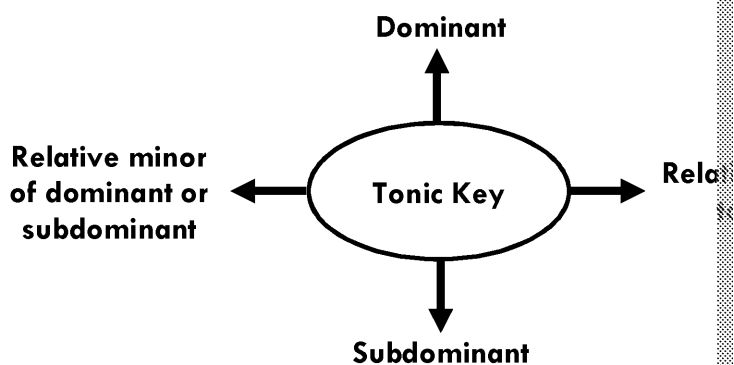
### Western classical tradition modulation structure

When music changes key this is called a modulation. The film set works all make use of modulation to create the desired effect.

Film composers do not need to apply Western classical traditions to their music. What is important is what 'works' in that particular scene for that individual film composer to satisfy the director. The dissonance used by Herrmann is a good example of this.

However, as stated in the specification under Content: Knowledge and Understanding, students would need to be aware of complex and remote key relationships to use modulation effectively. For example, if a film composer moves from C major to C# major, students will need to understand **modulation of a semitone from the tonic key to an unrelated key**.

**Modulation:** the process of changing from one key to another. The initial key and composers can change to any key desired. The most common modulations are from the tonic, including the subdominant, dominant and relative major/minor.



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## Structure (Organising of Musical Material)

The main structural designs from Western classical music, jazz and popular music can be seen in *Psycho*, *Batman Returns* and *The Duchess* all make use of the conventions below. However, *Psycho* uses a simple structure to separate thematic material plus fugal writing in the finale of *Psycho*. Elfmán uses a more complex manner plus rondo form by returning to the main theme, such as the 'Penguin March'.

Form	Design	Example
Binary	A–B	Baroque music
Ternary	A–B–A	Minuet
Rondo	A–B–A–C–A	C17th
Sonata form	Exposition/development/recapitulation	Symphony
Fugue/canon	Subject and episodes	Mass
Theme and variations	A repeated and developed	Song
32-bar song form	A–A–B–A	Pop
12-bar blues	Chords I, IV and V, dominant 7 <sup>th</sup> s and added chords	Blues
Verse/chorus	Similar to binary and variations	Pop

Music without a structure can sound weak and disorientating. Music for film sometimes uses the recognised structures above; however, it is more likely film composers are tied to the screenplay, making traditional balanced form and structure difficult to apply, so often using through-composed works such as Wagner's music dramas (*The Ring*) where Wagner's music is tied to the action on the stage, i.e. continuously developed musical themes, and one such device known as **leitmotif** which features prominently in this section.

**Leitmotif:** a recurrent theme throughout a musical or literary composition, associated with a person, time, object, idea or situation, e.g. the 'Darth Vader March'.

*Leitmotif* is used a great deal in the set works as a unifying structural tool.

## Sonority

The timbre effects of instruments plus the countless combinations of the number of instruments used make sonority a very exciting element to study in film music.

To fully understand the possibilities of sonority, students will need to know a variety of techniques (such as *pizzicato*, harmonics, flutter-tonguing) and unusual or rare world instruments. Examples of instrumental techniques, such as the electronic instruments in *Batman Returns* and the techniques of *Psycho*.

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**Tempo, metre and rhythm (how music is organised in time)**

Rhythms can alter our heart rate and change brain function, switching on areas in

The concept of rhythm is critical in all music. Film scores use rhythms to access laughter, fun and danger or excitement.

'Music with a strong beat stimulates the brain and ultimately causes brainwaves rhythm, research has shown. Slow beats encourage the slow brainwaves that are meditative states. Faster beats may encourage more alert and concentrated thinking.'  
*Emily Saarman Science writer: Stanford News Service.*

Students will need to know time signatures including simple, triple and compound note values and tempo markings is essential as is the understanding of syncopated rhythms. *Batman Returns* uses some complex polyrhythms which will make more knowledge of basic time signatures.

**Texture**

Monophonic, homophonic and polyphonic. Students need to understand the concepts of unison and orchestration. The prescribed works all make use of a variety of textures.

**Dynamics (use of dynamics)**

*Forte* and *piano*. It was in the early eighteenth century with composers such as Haydn that the use of dynamic markings and expression was discovered. Listen to any movement of a symphony and hear repeated passages or phrases note for note but with a contrasting dynamic.

For years film composers had to use dynamics very carefully where certain instruments were heard more prominently in the final mix. Film composers use *crescendo* and *diminuendo* perhaps more than any other expressive marking to make the music 'voice'.

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<sup>5</sup> *Emily Saarman Science writer: Stanford News Service*

# Psycho: Contextual Inform

1960, Paramount Pictures – Herrmann

*Film composers don't just come up with a nice tune or a memorable hook... their musical abilities entirely at the service of the story... it's the one that speaks to an audience: what's going to happen next. They understand about character mood and when they bring those elements to cinema they create the thing that is unimaginable before the music was there.*

*No matter what their background, their age, or even the style of music, they find the right notes at the right time to speak to every single one of us.*

– Neil Brand<sup>6</sup>

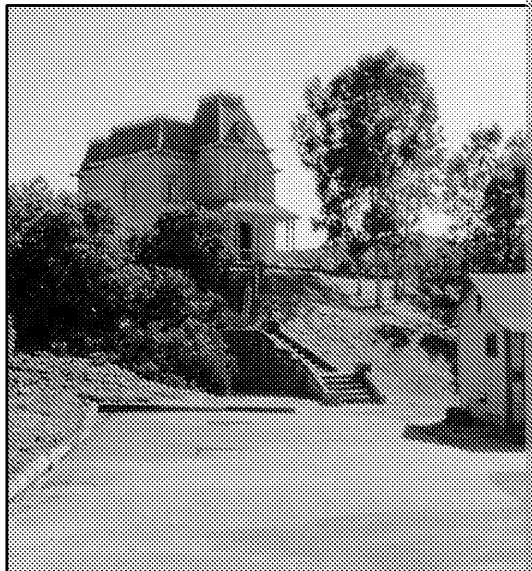
Music for film has different key roles; these roles are the foundation stones to film

- Creating a mood or atmosphere
- Creating a sense of time and place
- Reinforcing characterisation (*leitmotif*)
- Adding to the on-screen 'action'

There are five main types of film soundtrack: soundtracks of musical films, albums of video-game soundtracks, albums containing both music and dialogue from the film. **Edexcel set works are all film scores.**

*'It's not like my mother is a maniac or a raving thing. She just goes a little mad sometimes. We all go a little mad sometimes. Haven't you?'*

– Norman Bates, *Psycho*, 1960



*The Bates Motel Set at University of*

At the beginning of the twentieth century, synchronised sound that was played at the same time as the film was not until 1927 that the first movie had sound and dialogue in *The Jazz Singer*. This was made possible by the **audion amplifier tube**. From that year onwards films with dialogue, known as 'talkies', and the Golden Age of cinema was born.

<sup>6</sup> *Sound of Cinema: New Frontiers*, BBC

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## The Golden Age

Technically the Golden Age occurred between the years 1927 and 1963. Sometimes referred to as 'Hollywood Style', the underlying principle behind this style of cinema is that the camera never direct focus onto themselves. This is known as '**continuity editing**' or '**invisible editing**'. The editors smoothed out the sections which were not continuous, essentially a series of short shots. In the production process Hollywood editors and technicians were able to use a process called 'jump cuts' where scenes were joined together creating logical coherence, giving the viewer a smooth experience.

*Psycho* (1960) belongs to the waning years of the Golden Age.

**Continuity editing:** the predominant style of film editing during the post-production process. The producers and engineers smoothed over inherent discontinuity of the editing process to establish a logical coherence between shots, thus creating a smooth running picture.

The 1940s and 1950s saw composers developing their art form and becoming even greater masters and experts. One such composer who broke many barriers was Bernard Herrmann, who used many pioneering and unusual composition techniques in films such as *Citizen Kane* (1941), *The Day The Earth Stood Still* (1951) and notable film scores in collaboration with director Alfred Hitchcock such as *Vertigo* (1958), *North by Northwest* (1959) and our set work – *Psycho* (1960). Herrmann was a master of creating tension and suspense in his scores and he specialised in using music to portray the psychological development and emotional feelings of the characters on-screen.

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## Background of *Psycho*, Films Post-Second World War Technological Advances

Music for the screen changed after the Second World War due to a variety of social and technological influences. The 1940s through to the early 1960s are still regarded as being part of the 'Golden Age' of cinema. During this time the films were new, fashionable and innovative, representing a different era, but we still categorise them as part of the classic Golden Age. Most American films of this time were governed by the **Motion Picture Production Code** (1930–1968), which determined acceptable viewing by public audiences in the USA. The 1940s and 1950s sees some great movies including *The Big Sleep* (1946), *High Noon* (1952), *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955), *Forbidden Planet* (1956) and *12 Angry Men* (1957).

The 1950s were an exciting time: a generation of 'baby boomers' and economic stability. More women were in employment and the number of college students increased throughout Europe and doubled in America. The mass production of televisions had an impact on social life. 1.5 million TV sets were sold in America compared to 1950. Indeed, it was due to the increase of televisions and the consequent decline in cinema attendance that the **Motion Picture Production Code** was dissolving and losing influence. *Psycho* showed violence and sexuality, and Hitchcock brazenly violated the code of censors. His famous 'slasher' film with its iconic shower scene music. The post-war younger generation we see the 1950s today. It was during this time rock 'n' roll emerged, and bebop with Dizzy Gillespie 'Groovin' High' (1945) and 'Cubana Be Cubana Bop' (1947), and as early examples. In visual art, 'abstract impressionism' was becoming popular. Music was undoubtedly very exciting in music and the arts.

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## Technology

Movie studios used wartime technological advances to produce a better experience, such as 'CinemaScope', which enabled widescreen through the use of the anamorphic lens, but bought and developed by 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox in 1952. Composers for the screen experimented more with the resources they had to hand. In Hitchcock's *Spellbound* (1942) to great effect by Miklos Rozsa in his score to illustrate the sweet romantic gesture of Ingrid Bergman as well as the scary sounds throughout the film. Bernard Herrmann's *The Earth Stood Still* (1951) and was keen to use electronic instruments and effects in *The Birds* (1963).

**Theremin:** originally known as the etherphone, it was invented by Leon Theremin. It was meant to serve as a motion tracker. It comprises two antennae, one for pitch and one for volume. The signals are then amplified and sent to a loudspeaker. Used as an electronic instrument, one of the best examples of its use is in the Beach Boys' 'Good Vibrations'.

In *Psycho* it is significant to note the simple technology: the film is in black and white and has a small string orchestra. This is because Paramount were not happy about the film exceeding his normal budget. There was not enough money to use a theremin or electronic instruments. Hitchcock financed the film himself and was content to shoot it in black and white to be as bloody and horrific as if it were in colour. Bernard Herrmann refused to accept a jazz music score, but he did not have the budget to use a full symphonic orchestra. He accepted a jazz score but Herrmann decided the smaller string orchestra would complement the film.



**Activity task:** How would the orchestration, score and music be different if Herrmann had agreed to write for a jazz orchestra for *Psycho*?

Like many composers, Herrmann used old ideas from previous works if the mood of the project required it. However, Herrmann often bristled at the suggestion he reuse old ideas. He had a prickly, moody, sometimes standoffish temperament and it was an unwelcome surprise in disagreement with him. The score for *Psycho* leans strongly on a 1935 work: *Symphony for String Orchestra*.

## Biography of Bernard Herrmann – 1911–1975 Work

Bernard Herrmann was an American composer born into a middle-class Jewish family. He learned to play the violin at an early age and grew up in an interesting musical climate. His styles were emerging from the deep-rooted late Romantic traditions. Herrmann studied at the University alongside Percy Grainger and by 1921 had set up his own orchestra based in New York. Herrmann was appointed by the CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System) as a conductor. For CBS mainly arranging and composing music for a radio series, he became senior conductor of the Symphony Orchestra, receiving many awards for 'unusual programming'.<sup>7</sup>

In the late 1930s Herrmann met Orson Welles and worked alongside him, composing radio plays including *Dracula*, *Heart of Darkness* (1938), *The Thirty Nine Steps* (1938), for which the thematic scoring of the sci-fi docu-drama ultimately gained him recognition in Hollywood. It was in this partnership with Welles that Herrmann received his only Oscar nomination (1941), for which he gained the Best Score of a Dramatic Picture.

Herrmann is most famously known for his collaboration with director Alfred Hitchcock. His film scores with Hitchcock are *North by Northwest* (1959), *Vertigo* (1958) and *Psycho* (1960).

*Bernard Herrmann seemed the perfect musical expression of Hitchcock's vision.*

<sup>7</sup> Steve Vertlieb, 2002

<sup>8</sup> Steve Vertlieb, 2002

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Herrmann composed music for the Hitchcock films which are widely recognised as some of the greatest musical ventures of his career. Herrmann's musical style was the perfect ingredient to reel in the audience for Hitchcock's films.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Alfred Hitchcock gradually developed his superb sense of direction and art direction and was universally celebrated for his mastery of visual 'stylism'.

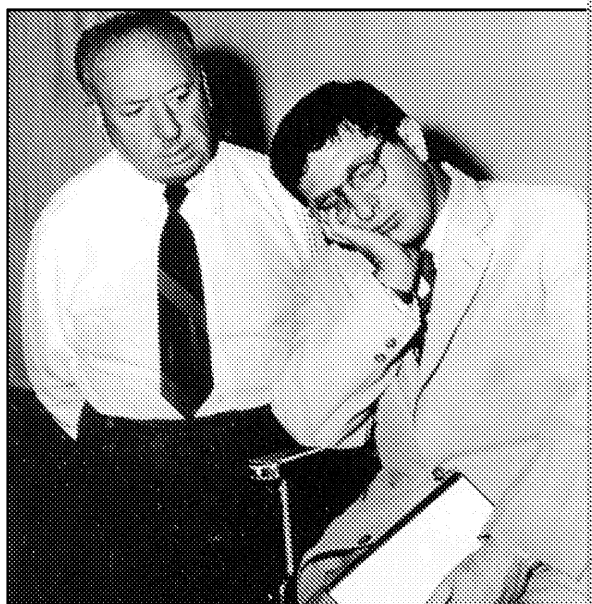
*Hitchcock could convey in a single pan of the lens a situation a writer could not describe.*

Hitchcock was delighted with Herrmann's style, and his lyrical score for *The Trouble with Harry* received with great admiration and enthusiasm by the director. The movie is one of the best examples of their partnership and this early collaboration was a landmark in Hitchcock's career. His relationship with Herrmann as depressive, dark characters prone to explosions of terrible rage, and in each other's company they were trusting.

It is very difficult to categorically define Bernard Herrmann's style. Herrmann style is a Romantic composer and there is certainly a depth of emotion and feeling in his music.

*As a composer I might class myself as a neo-Romantic, inasmuch as I have a highly personal and emotional form of expression. I like to write music as poetry, art and nature. I do not care for purely decorative music. Although I use modern idioms, I abhor music which attempts nothing more than the illusion of modernity. In using modern techniques, I have tried at all times to subjugate them to human feeling.<sup>11</sup>*

In this quote we can see that Herrmann has described his music as neo-Romantic. He was influenced by Romantic composers Max Steiner and Erich Korngold. We can observe a continuity in Herrmann's music. Some have suggested that he is a twentieth-century Modernist. He was keen to develop the lyrical approach to character and scene enhancement, not the more dramatic approach of the earlier films of the Golden Age. Herrmann uses *leitmotif* in a new way (there are many examples throughout his scores, notably in *Vertigo* 1958 and *Psycho* 1960).



Hitchcock and Herrmann

<sup>9</sup> Steve Vertlieb, 2002

<sup>10</sup> Steve Vertlieb, 2002

<sup>11</sup> Herrmann quoted by Edward Johnson, 1977

<sup>12</sup> Bill Wrobel, 2008

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# Critical Listener – Bernard Herrmann

## Features 1930s–1960

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Stylistic feature	
<b>Homophonic</b> – Herrmann preferred to base a melody over blocked chords.	<i>Psycho</i> credited
Simple and consistent use of metre and rhythm.	<i>Psycho</i>
<b>Minor chords</b> with an added major 7 <sup>th</sup> commonly used in Herrmann's scores.	<i>Psycho</i>
Sustained <b>chordal accompaniment</b> – Herrmann's long, drawn-out, slow-moving chords, often with a very slow harmonic rhythm.	'Toys'
<b>Monophonic melody</b> lines – unaccompanied lyrical lines, sometimes presenting non-melodic lines, all alone.	<i>Vertigo</i>
Strong <b>tonality</b> – frequent use of tertiary (stacked 3 <sup>rds</sup> ) minor and major triads, especially leaning towards minor key signatures with half-diminished 7 <sup>ths</sup> , although Herrmann usually steered clear of using key signatures.	<i>Psycho</i>
<b>Quartal harmony</b> (G/C/F) chords built up in 4 <sup>ths</sup> instead of tertiary harmony – used as contrast. Also the tritone – diminished 5 <sup>ths</sup> : <i>Psycho</i> 'Prelude' and 'The Knife' 1960.	<i>Psycho</i>
Cascading chord clusters. Two diminished chords semitone apart. The <b>arpeggiando</b> especially in the harps to create mystery and suspense.	Beginning triads atonal
<b>Non-diatonic</b> melodic treatment – to create a sense of harmonic ambiguity.	<i>Psycho</i> scene
<b>Chromatic</b> movement – to sustain chords and create a sense of dramatic emotional beauty – similar to Wagner's treatment of the Tristan chord.	<i>Psycho</i> scene
<b>Parallel motion</b> – 7 <sup>ths</sup> and 3 <sup>rds</sup> : another technique creating a sense of tonal ambiguity where the music does not seem to have a tonal 'anchor'.	<i>Psycho</i>
Creative experimentation – exploring with <b>bitonality</b> , <b>atonal</b> music and free chromaticism – although he never experimented with serialism (12-tone row).	<i>Psycho</i> scene
<b>Cell format</b> – repeating musical ideas and phrases in sequences, usually four- or eight-bar phrases creating rhythmic <i>ostinatos</i> – but not repetitively minimalist in style.	<i>Psycho</i>
<b>Orchestration</b> – colourful use of instruments such as cup-muted trumpets, stopped horns, <i>divisi</i> double-stopped strings and unusual instrumental timbre combinations including 'chalmereau' clarinet register.	<i>Psycho</i> strings

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Influences: One can hear influences of Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Debussy and others. The endless circles of 3<sup>rd</sup>s, major and minor, interspersed with shuddering dissonance. If tonality had been used before, the tension is very much Herrmann.<sup>13</sup>

*Most directors didn't have a clue about music*

– Bernard Herrmann 1960

(Herrmann blithely ignored directors' instructions – like Hitchcock's suggestion to have no score and no music in the shower scene.)<sup>14</sup>

In the music of *Psycho*, Herrmann adopts a style known as serialism, a technique used by Arnold Schoenberg. Herrmann does not follow serialism as mathematically as Schoenberg. He adapts, develops and rearranges fragments of melody within the score. Herrmann's use of serialism would be a good way to illustrate the internal psychology of the main characters.

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<sup>13</sup> Alex Ross, 1996

<sup>14</sup> Mini Biography by Michael Brooke [michael@everyman.demon.co.uk](mailto:michael@everyman.demon.co.uk)

# Psycho Analysis

## The Score

String orchestra

- 1<sup>st</sup> violins
- 2<sup>nd</sup> violins
- Violas
- Cellos
- Double basses

Herrmann was restricted by having a smaller budget for the orchestra and so he opted for a preferential full symphonic orchestra, plus dismissing the initial request for a jazz orchestra only. Herrmann believed the mono 'family' of instruments would lend

Point of interest: The string orchestra plays *con sordini* – a technique in which the strings are placed on top of the bridge. This technique is used throughout the entire film score, notably in the shower scene. The American composer and conductor Fred Steiner (1923–2011) noted that Herrmann's use of the string section gave the film composer a wider range of instrumental special effects than any other orchestral family group.<sup>15</sup>

Herrmann once wrote that '*film music must apply what an actor cannot say... and convey what the actor cannot show*'.

## Recording the Score

One urban myth suggests that Herrmann used electronic bird effects in the shower scene. He did not use any electronic means to create the screeching effects; instead he used intricate and clever use of microphones which were moved closer to the instruments to capture the sounds.

## The Plot

*Psycho* has two stories that unfold: one is of a young woman's murder, the other is of a psychopathic murderer whose crimes are uncovered.

The story is of Marion Crane, a real-estate secretary in Phoenix, Arizona who steals a large sum of money from her job so that she and her boyfriend Sam can afford to get married. Marion plans to drive to California to meet him and give him the money. When she leaves town, her boss sees her and she becomes increasingly nervous and unsettled, even trading her car for a different one to avoid detection.

Taking a wrong turn, she ends up at the Bates motel and meets the xenophobic proprietor Norman Bates. Norman tells her of his life living with his mentally ill mother Norma, and of his interest in taxidermy. Marion decides to go back to Phoenix and return the money, but Norman has been spying on her through a peephole and when Marion takes a shower a woman appears in the bathroom and murders her with a butcher's knife. Seconds later Norman appears in the room, believing his mother to have been the murderer. He hides Marion's body and the money, in a swamp.

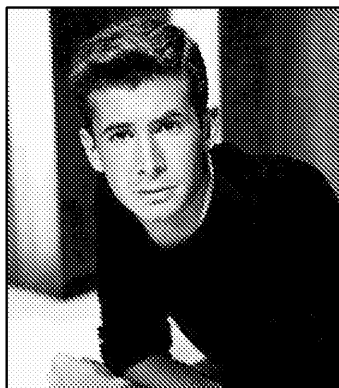
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<sup>15</sup> Paper on the *Psycho* score as a special research project for the University of Southern California

<sup>16</sup> Eddi Fiegel, 2006



Anthony Perkins starred  
as Norman Bates

Marion's story is linked to the second plot of the a loving son trying to protect the discovery of his mother's murderer and his mother is dead. A week after Marion is concerned for her whereabouts and a private detective investigates the Bates motel where he is murdered by the local sheriff who informs them that Norman Bates. They investigate the motel and house, finding the body of a woman, and Norman Bates attempts to murder Lila and a wig. Sam restrains him and he is arrested. In the audience learns of Norman's psychosis and the fact that he and her lover 10 years ago, and out of guilt and jealousy personality, treating the relationship as if she were murdered two girls before Marion.

The first story, including the murder of Marion, is background material and is necessary for the understanding of Norman Bates.

The initial story from Robert Bloch's book *Psycho* (1959) was changed in the film. A few scenes of the film telling Marion's story, as he wanted the audience to have more sympathy for her than the main character Norman. In doing so, the screenplay is extended by 45 minutes. It is with Herrmann's music score that the film achieves substantial emphasis with the first story. Out of 40 musical cues, 25 are played during this opening 45 minutes, which means the audience has heard over two-thirds of the music before the second story begins.

*Hitchcock only finishes a picture 60%. I have to finish it for him.*

— Bernard Herrmann<sup>17</sup>

## Cue: The Prelude

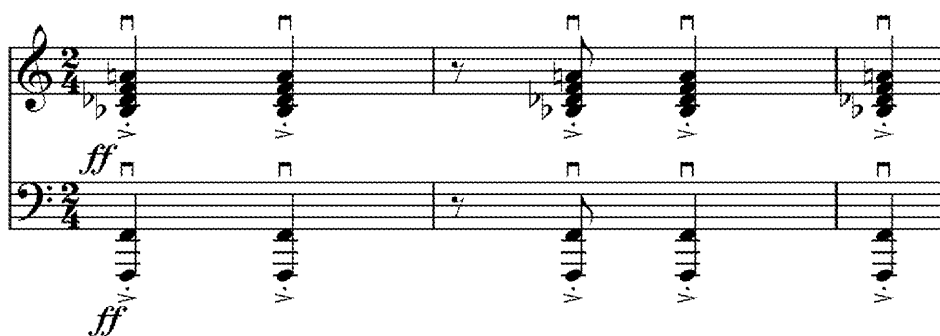
(Opening credits of DVD chapter 1, 0:00–1:51)

The music of the opening main titles hurtles the listener straight into tense, abrupt and immediately suggests the tone of the film: violence and discomfort. What is interesting is that violent or shocking happens in the first few scenes of the film. Indeed, the viewer is warned that something is about to happen before anything thrilling occurs.<sup>18</sup>

The first musical material presented is an accented and syncopated discordant motif, which is transformed throughout the film and becomes the famous stab chords in the shower scene.

**Psycho 'Prelude' bars 1–3 0:00–0:03 Motif A**

**allegro**



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<sup>17</sup> Smith, Steven C. *A Heart at Fire's Center: The Life and Music of Bernard Herrmann*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

<sup>18</sup> Transformation of 'The Psycho Theme' in Bernard's Herrmann's Music for *Psycho*, Stephen Husarik.

Herrmann gives away much of his musical intention with these opening bars. We hear the Bernard Herrmann trademark **minor major 7<sup>th</sup> chord** (here on B $\flat$ ) where there is then two major 3<sup>rd</sup>s above: B $\flat$ –D $\flat$ –F–A. This chord is sometimes referred to as the **tritone** and adds more tension to the chord by having the 5<sup>th</sup> of the triad in the bass, making it dissonant. If the basses played the root note (B $\flat$ ) the chord would sound more secure, which is what the listener feels.

**Motif:** motifs are recurring structures, contrasts or literary devices that help to develop the text's major themes. In music a motif could be a melody, a chord sequence or a rhythmic pattern.

With the repeated down-bows, **ff** dynamics and dissonant chords, Herrmann is preparing the way to use in the shower scene later on: syncopated discords. Hitchcock and Herrmann's music game straight away. Music lingers subconsciously in our minds and the director knows this. Imagine the extra impact the shower scene has on us when the *'Psycho'* theme returns to the mind for an hour, only to resurface late in the horrific murder scene.

The music of the prelude is more tonal than later in the film. In fact, the whole film's music is.



**Activity task:** Try playing the opening chords on a piano, guitar or keyboard to hear the clashing effect.

Following the stabbing 'Hitchcock chords', Herrmann presents a series of driving chords. Incidentally, John Williams paraphrased this for the famous *Jaws* motif.

**Psycho Prelude** bars 3–5 0:02–0:04 Motif B



This motif is chromatic – C $\sharp$  to D with a B $\flat$  in the bass – suggesting the major–minor chords.

The prelude is further built up with a series of pulsating rhythmic motifs that give a sense of tension. Herrmann uses a third rhythmic motif in bar 11 to add a layered effect to the music above (motif B).

**Psycho 'Prelude'** bars 11–14 0:09–0:13 Motif C



The triplet semiquavers are played very fast and the chromaticism continues with a sense of urgency. The F and E dissonance is clearly heard in the first and last notes of the group. The sequence of chords is B $\flat$ –D $\flat$ –F–A, B $\flat$ –D $\flat$ –F–A, B $\flat$ –D $\flat$ –F–A, B $\flat$ –D $\flat$ –F–A, B $\flat$ –D $\flat$ –F–A.

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quaver idea with the chromatic and dissonant tonality maintained. The three extracts of motifs A, B and C and form the music for the opening of the prelude. The following graph shows which motif is used between bars 1 and 28.

Bars	Timings	
1–3	0:00	
3–4	0:03	
5–8	0:04	
9–10	0:08	B
11–14	0:09	
15–16	0:13	
17–20	0:15	
21–24	0:19	
25–27	0:23	A (first)
27–28	0:24	
29–30	0:28	Second
31–34	0:29	C
35–36	0:32	B



**Activity task:** Discussion. Why do you think Herrmann uses layered opening credits?

NB: At bar 21 (0:19) Herrmann uses motif A ‘Hitchcock’ chords similar to the opening rhythm. On the screen we hear this with the title of the film ‘Psycho’ which flickers with the music.

At bar 37 of the prelude Herrmann includes a melodic idea. This 12-bar tune is also on E $\flat$  minor and is often referred to as the ‘*Psycho* theme’. The theme rises for one and a half bars heading for the tonic note, but as it is about to land on E $\flat$  the semitone and the melody follows the similar pattern of the initial four bars (37–40). The last four bars of the *Psycho* theme use an operatic technique, known as ‘the sigh’. The harmony combined with the sonority of the strings gives this a beautifully haunting ‘Hitchcock’ chord at the end of this extract and the effective *pizzicato* in lower strings.

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**Psycho Prelude ‘Psycho Theme’** bars 37–48 0:33–0:44 (sigh motif in brackets)  
The **sigh motif** is an inverted and augmented version of motif B. It is a technique



however, it is also a technique used often in opera to represent longing, disappointment, false hope, e.g. 'Ah Belinda' from *Dido and Aeneas* by Purcell. The sigh motif often appears in melodic themes and melodies. Herrmann used this two-note sigh motif in a lot of his music, e.g. *Day The Earth Stood Still* and *North by Northwest*.

The *Psycho* theme returns throughout the prelude and the film, but it is significant that the score does not develop this melody in any way and the melodic material is quickly put to one side in favour of the more and pulsating rhythmic motifs A–C to come through.

The next section (bars 49–77) continues with the pulsating chords and driving rhythmic patterns, including the repeat of the material of bars 1–37. The most noticeable difference is the extended rhythmic values (half and dotted rhythms) and more use of the second half of the C motif. Herrmann makes the music more intense and keeps the listeners on the edge of their seat.

At bar 77 (1:10) Herrmann repeats the *Psycho* theme in the same key and with the same technique Herrmann uses to develop the melody is to score it higher in the string pitch makes it sound different, almost as if it had modulated. Herrmann does this in the music score.

At bar 89 (1:22) Herrmann returns to the syncopated stabbing chords and we can see a clear formula, almost like a binary-form mix of rhythm followed by melody. After the first two measures Herrmann does something interesting: he scores motifs B and C in the lower strings and throws in some rests, which we do not expect. Listen out for the string players when they play, which gives the piece an extra rhythmic effect. NB: The slapping effect is only an instruction, only a side effect of the rhythmic and percussive playing. At bar 97 (1:30) we have a (two minims) under the busy rhythmic energy of motifs A and C. The notes are an augmentation, and the cellos start low on the C string moving up to a high position.

At bar 103 (1:33) we hear the A motif in its dotted form accompanied by offbeats again in the lower strings, which punches through the ensemble like rockets. The

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more rendition of the *Psycho* theme melody, however this time scored for the cello. Herrmann scores the melody on B $\flat$  above middle C which is quite high up in the cello's range. The interesting sonority similar to the bassoon's opening melody in Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*.

The prelude ends with repeated C motifs rising in pitch with an answering phrase on D. D is completely unrelated to the tonal structure of the prelude.

## Cue: 'The City'

(DVD chapter 2, 1:53–2:51)

The opening film sequence in *Psycho* after the opening credits is a slow pan across a city skyline as if placed on top of a skyscraper. There is no dialogue for the first minute, only screen cues (location, date, time). The camera pans slowly right and moves down. Hitchcock's methods were to use the camera to affect the emotions of the audience. The singular role in creating the lazy atmosphere in contrast to the harsh, prickly prelude. The melody is descending and so Herrmann mirrors this in his music score:

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Cue: 'The City' bars 1–2 1:53–2:04

Diminished Half-diminished

In C major

VII°7 I

**Half-diminished:** This is a 7<sup>th</sup> chord, also known as a minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord. It is based on the root note, minor 3<sup>rd</sup>, diminished 5<sup>th</sup> and minor 7<sup>th</sup>. The symbol is VII°7.

Herrmann uses a descending pattern of eight notes and this motif returns through transformation. The falling direction of the music directly follows the camera and although in a superficial way.

**Mickey-Mousing:** a film technique that synchronises the film score music with the onscreen characters. Originally a term used in early Disney animated films where the music was used to emphasise the actions of the onscreen characters. Imagine any *Tom and Jerry* cartoon and think of the 'Mousing'.

The falling notes are often described as a 'fate' theme – where the descending notes suggest a fate. The tonality is diminished and half-diminished alternating chords in various chords heading to resolve on Eb, which does not climax, again suggesting limited resolution to the *Psycho* theme heard in the prelude (above). The melody in the prelude also uses this motif and it is no coincidence the melody is eight notes long just like the 'City' cue. Herrmann uses the melodic and harmonic shape of the *Psycho* theme and used it in a different context. The 'sigh' motif. Herrmann uses this after the repeat of the melody in his *Psycho* theme. The cue follows exactly the same pattern and uses the sigh motif once more, followed by two bars in ascending retrograde.

Cue: 'The City' bars 3–5 2:04–2:20

The sigh motif

*mf* *p* *mp*

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Herrmann has taken the previous theme from the opening credits, augmented the harmonic rhythm, reduced the dynamics to *piano* and slowed the tempo. It still is a prelude but transformed into a dream-like, lazy motif. Subconsciously the listener feels the tragedy, as it was presented during the opening minutes as a musical and unsubtle theme *is going to happen...* and later in the film if the listener hears the theme in different contexts, the connections to tragedy regardless of the complex and subtle transformations. The shower later in the film. In the 'City' cue she is in bed with her lover and safely, deliberately playing the psychological card in this scene by disguising the *Psycho* theme.

The music from the 'City' cue is heard five more times in the film with subtle transformations. It is a feature in any of the set-work scenes except this one.



**Activity task:** Compare this cue with George Fenton, *Blue Planet* and see how they are composed for completely different purposes. Why do they sound so different? What are the composers trying to achieve?

The 'City' cue is 16 bars long and all of the musical material has been transcribed. Here is a table breakdown of the complete cue:

Bar	Material
1–2	Descending <i>Psycho</i> theme
3	Sigh motif
4–5	Retrograde ascending <i>Psycho</i> theme
6	Sigh motif up 8 <sup>ve</sup>
7–8	Repeat of bars 1–2
9	Sigh motif down 8 <sup>ve</sup>
10–11	Repeat bars 4–5
12	Sigh motif up 8 <sup>ve</sup>
13–14	Repeat bars 1–2
15	Sigh motif as bar 3
16	Sigh motif held first chord only

Chord breakdown: 'The City' has 32 half-diminished chords, 14 diminished, 3 minor, and 1 major. The cue is not completely tonal; however, more than 90% of the score uses half-diminished chords, which gives the cue the dreamy but slightly tense atmosphere.

## Cue: 'Marion'

(DVD Chapter 2 4:25)

This cue sounds like a slow movement from a Mahler symphony due to lush Romanticism. Marion's theme represents her inner thoughts of worry while simultaneously reflecting the theme of fate and chance – Marion ends up taking the wrong turn by chance to the Bates motel during the shower scene. The music sounds sad and pensive, reflecting her inner thoughts. The music starts near the end of a small argument between Marion and Sam. The music is a 'respectable' without hiding from public view. Sam agrees and accepts Marion's fate where the music starts.

The opening music is three slow string parts overlapping contrapuntally: 1<sup>st</sup> violin, 2<sup>nd</sup> violin, and cello. Chromaticism generates an elusive tonality, similar to the Tristan motif used by Wagner in *Tristan und Isolde* where the music falls by **sequence** and suspends the resolution of the movement in the accompaniment. Herrmann copies Wagner's harmonic ambiguity and tension: uncertainty, trepidation and tragedy. In the 'Marion' cue, when the 2<sup>nd</sup> violin moves in response and wriggle away from the resolved harmonic chord, keeping the music falling. The sequence below continues for eight bars.

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Cue: 'Marion' bars 1–3 DVD 4:25 Track 0:00

**lento**

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

*p*

*p*

*p*

Diminished  
D/F/A $\flat$

Herrmann cleverly includes the diminished chords taken from the *Psycho* fate in the film. The sequence pattern continues for eight bars, the extract above shows violas in mid range. Notice the sonority of the violas after the bottom of their range and sounding deep like cellos. Herrmann could have included the cellos, but he deliberately chose the rich timbre of the violas playing on the bottom C string.

Bar 9 sees the entry of the cellos and basses with a feeling of warmth and resonance. There is a pause between bar 8 and 9 for some dialogue, but in the track there is no pause. The music has a colour and atmosphere; in the film Marion and Sam are in an embrace and wish to stay in time in the cue we have some uplifting ascending movement in the inner strings and a warm atmosphere.

Cue: 'Marion' bars 9–12 DVD 5:46 Track 0:00

**lento**

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

*mp*

*mp*

*mp*

*p*

*p*

*mf*

*mf*

The 1<sup>st</sup> violins continue the melodic rhythm from bars 1–8 but, instead of the second measure of bars 8–9. This gives the music more harmonic stability. Notice the ascending 2<sup>nd</sup> violin line, which adds colour (i.e. making bar 9 a G<sup>6</sup> chord and bar 10 a 9<sup>th</sup> chord with the 3<sup>rd</sup> omitted). The 2<sup>nd</sup> violins play a C dotted minim, which is the 7<sup>th</sup> of the chord and for resolution. The chromaticism and added a rich bass G to D anchor resembling an imperfect cadence. The open 5<sup>th</sup> chord in bars 10 and 12: there is a D root and the 5<sup>th</sup>, A, but no 3<sup>rd</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup>. The strings sound slightly hollow and unresolved, perhaps mirroring the unresolved nature of Marion. The 2<sup>nd</sup> violins play a C dotted minim, which is the 7<sup>th</sup> of the chord and for resolution.

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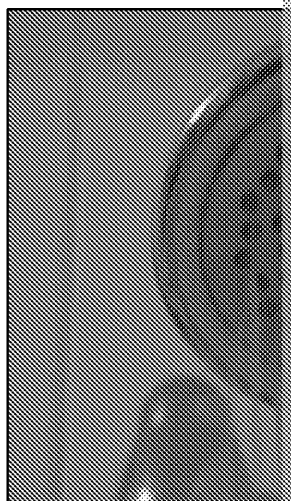
Bars 13–16 are a repeat of bars 1–4 but re-orchestrated with the cellos and basses. The timbre is lower and richer than the opening because the cellos take the chromatic doubling of parts in the higher strings. The harmony, however, is identical to the

The final bar (17) is interesting because Herrmann holds the semibreves in all parts. The characteristic G minor / major 7<sup>th</sup> chord: G, B $\flat$ , D, F $\sharp$ . This chord is another example of playing with the psychology of the audience; the chord is suggesting bad omens

## Cue: ‘The Murder’ (shower scene)

(DVD chapter 2, 1:53–2:51)

The murder of Marion Crane marks the tragic end of the first story to unfold in the film. Hitchcock is killing off his leading lady with over an hour of film to go. This was a big shock to audiences, as the main character usually survives. The famous murder shower scene is at 0:45 minutes in the film. It is at 0:26 minutes Marion takes the ill-fated wrong turn into the Bates Motel and meets the subject and main character of the second half of the film: Norman Bates. Hitchcock overlaps the two stories and therefore Herrmann overlaps the musical themes of the characters while Marion is checking into the motel and given supper by Norman. It is during the subsequent conversations between the two main characters that viewers are made aware of Norman’s odd, chilling character and intense demeanour, in particular his relationship with his mother. This figure is subtly producing a three-note rhythmic motif representing Norman. This figure *leitmotif* is changing.



If you watch the 10–15 minutes leading up to the shower scene, knowing full well that you can see Hitchcock’s clear signs that he is psychotic: the choosing of the room key, the response to putting his mother into an institution, the argument at the window of the motel, all presented in an upright man with piercing eyes and very neat hair. Hitchcock is clear with his film direction, something seldom seen in films – he is slowly switching the focus of close attention to the flaw both Marion and Norman share: that they are both hiding. This represents this transformation musically in the score.

The musical themes presented while Marion is in her motel room are taken from ‘The City’ which is almost the same as cue: ‘The Window’ with an altered chord sequence while in the ‘Parlour’ while Marion is eating. The slow theme of eight falling notes reminds us of the music shows us how closely composer and director were collaborating: Hitchcock’s visual contrasts, both visual and musical.

Contrast	
The house is Gothic	The motel is modern
The house is high on a hill	The motel is in a valley
The house is private	The motel is public
The house is out of control	The motel is controlled
The house is dead	The motel is alive
High strings	Low strings

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<sup>19</sup> Hitchcock’s Symphony: ‘PSYCHO’ A Shot-by-Shot Commentary posted 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2010 by Wael K.

The murder scene starts without music. There is no dialogue. Hitchcock uses diegetic noises very cleverly: the sound of the flushing toilet (incidentally the first toilet flush in cinema), the shower curtain rail, the ripping open of the plastic soap packet and the running water which Hitchcock uses deliberately as a 'white-noise' soundscape. The water static hiss of an untuned analogue TV channel, a sound not too familiar in our digital age, has been used in many horror films, including one of the most famous horror scenes in film. Marion (Janet Leigh) utters the famous line 'They're heeere' while gazing into the shower.

**Diegetic music:** any music that originates from within the film space – characters can hear it. The opposite is **non-diegetic** (which is more common), when the music is not part of the screen action and the actors cannot hear it. When Luke Skywalker blows the Force, is the orchestra? Answer: in the recording studio = non-diegetic.



**Activity task:** Discussion. Watch the 35 seconds before the murder scene. How does the diegetic soundscape reinforce the music cue entry? Consider dynamics, silence, sound layering, tempo and texture?

In the murder scene the sound of the flowing water as a diegetic soundscape continues as non-diegetic (Herrmann) music score begins, or rather the stabbing begins. Hitchcock uses this time by using a substantial number of different camera angle shots, including the water coming out of the showerhead with the camera directly underneath, as if the diegetic soundscape provides a peaceful balance to the scene, reflecting Marion's relaxed state. This is using a technique called diegetic sound, which is sound both the characters and the audience can hear. Non-diegetic sound is only heard by the audience and is often an orchestral score.

The lack of music at the beginning of the shower scene mirrors the naked Marion's vulnerable aspect of the main character's vulnerability and exposure to the attack.

When the curtain is pulled back, the famous 'slasher' music begins. Technically the music is more as the cue itself.

What happens during the next minute is arguably cinema's most famous scene ever. It took a week to produce! Hitchcock used no fewer than 78 camera angles and there were 37 takes. Tippi Hedren, who plays Marion, had to wear a swimming costume for a week. The shower scene is a masterpiece of music and sound effects. Stabbing a casaba melon created the sound of the knife hitting the skin. The viewer does not see the knife enter the skin, nor see any blood. It is in our imagination that we are convinced we see something that is not there.

The music shocks the viewer as much as the violent ripping back of the curtain and the music starts at exactly the same moment as the curtain being pulled across. Technically the music is more as the cue itself.

**Hit point:** an exact point during a cue when music or sound effects match the action.

The 'slasher' theme is another example of thematic transformation; Herrmann scores the 'Psycho motif' in top-range upper strings, starting on E $\flat$ , with the 2<sup>nd</sup> violins playing the melody in the strings, with the exception of the basses, cascading down with chord **tone clusters**. Here the 'Psycho theme' has changed almost beyond recognition, as it is grotesquely distorted. Herrmann changed the metre to triple time. The eight-note 'Psycho theme' has been changed to a four-note motif = 8 bars. The choice of notes is deliberate: The E $\flat$  and E $\natural$  represent the tonic notes in 'The Prelude' and 'The City' cues earlier. The music descends in pitch but rises chromatically.

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<sup>20</sup> Alexandra Heller-Nicholas, *Found Footage Horror Films: Fear and the Appearance of Reality* (McFarland, 2015), p. 10.

**molto forzando e feroce**

The musical score is for the 'The Murder' (shower scene) from the film Psycho. It covers bars 1 to 8. The instruments are Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The time signature is 3/2. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The tempo/mood is 'molto forzando e feroce'. The dynamics are marked 'ff' (fortissimo). The score is written in a high register, with many notes above the staff lines, indicated by an 8va direction. The score includes various musical notations such as stems, beams, and accidentals.

The most striking aspect of this theme is the writing at top range and the atonal writing is almost off the fingerboard. Notice the 8<sup>va</sup> direction above the score; they are played an octave higher than written and three octaves above middle C, almost at the bridge with a stretch. The violas enter in bar 3 also at the top of their range – usually plays in the alto clef. The cellos enter at bar 6 in the tenor clef, which is strange range music for the cello. The reason for changing clefs or including 8<sup>va</sup> direction is to help musicians to read. Without the changes there would be too many ledger lines to

The high range is terrifying when played **ff** and with constant down-bows. This is when the strings take their mutes off. Down-bows are stronger than up-bows. Herrmann uses idiomatic string writing in an unusual style. He is getting the most out of the instrument. He placed the microphones as close as possible to the strings, giving the recording an intense quality. The audience can feel the sharpness of the butcher's knife through the piercing chords. The new dissonant semitone entry – E<sub>b</sub> against E<sub>b</sub>, G<sub>b</sub> against F<sub>b</sub>.

Musically, Herrmann and Hitchcock are telling us it is Norman Bates murdering Mary. He already suspected him, but Hitchcock has thrown the audience off the scent with the fact that we do not know yet that his mother is dead and it is in fact his psychosis. The music is a distortion of the tonic notes of the *Psycho* theme have been transformed into the blade itself. The music is a distortion of the madness; the *Psycho* theme has been distorted to show his insanity.

Two more facts of interest are worth noting before analysing the next section. First, the use of stabbing chords in music is not new but goes back to the eighteenth century. In Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni* (Act I scene I Don Giovanni, Leporello and the Commendatore) the swordplay in the fast semiquaver scalar passages in violins and cellos. Second, the music is not synchronised with the on-screen action. It is often a mistake to assume the music

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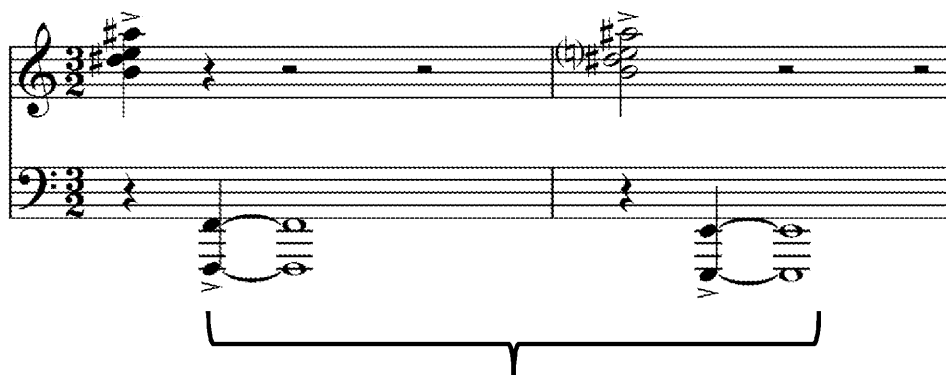


down-bow chord. This was not an oversight by director or composer; it is another sense of insanity, chaos and complete discomfort by the displacement of the

The cue is in two parts: the opening eight bars are repeated with minor alteration in direction to add a slight *glissando* to the high notes, which you can hear from bar

The second half of the cue is from bars 17–37 which transforms the sigh motif heard in the 'City' cues. It is another grotesque transformation far removed from its original form. The theme ending is in retrograde and the tonality is atonal. The double basses enter much richer due to the lower timbre and longer-duration notes.

**Cue: The Murder (shower scene)** bars 17–18 DVD 45:44. Track 0:24 (harmony)



Sigh motif in atonal retrograde

The sigh motif continues to bar 37 (the end) with the cellos and basses playing the upper strings alternating *pizzicato* and *arco* chords. The music continues to descend as augmentation further increases to coincide with Marion as she slowly falls down the shower curtain. The descending music also represents the blood draining through the rhythm of the violins' bottom G string *pizzicato*, slowing down and augmented, is her heartbeat stopping. The final held chord is F# against C# in the cellos and basses (*diabolus in musica*), while the violins hold the same interval a semitone higher as the Devil's chord. Every aspect of the final 20 bars is to illustrate Marion dying.

When Marion dies, so does the music. Herrmann has connected the music so that both exit as one. Norman's knife and Marion's heartbeat was the music. The film returns to the sonic white-noise soundscape: the shower water continues to run, almost like an instrument, and there is a thump of Marion's body as the blood runs out.

The murder of Marion Crane shifts the emphasis of character to Norman Bates and is achieved by the use of themes, including the sigh motif part of the *Psycho* theme. The motif is still intact, and as such becomes the only part of the theme that remains. Norman deteriorates further into insanity and madness. We hear the sigh motif

Hitchcock initially instructed Herrmann not to compose any music for this scene, but he then changed his mind and experimented with it in his next film *The Birds* which has no conventional score. Herrmann composed the music for the shower scene anyway and Hitchcock changed his mind

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<sup>21</sup> Rebello, Stephen: *Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of Psycho* St Martins Pr (Trade), 1999

## Cue: 'The Toys'

After Marion Crane's murder, the *Psycho* theme disappears from the film with only briefly returning. New music replaces old as if the second part of the film is a different world. The shower scene is more dissonant and disjointed to reflect Norman Bates's psychiatric deterioration further into madness. New themes include Norman cleaning up the blood from the Marion's car. The music is like a ticking clock. Then Herrmann scores a mother/murder theme, tense and discordant, like a knot difficult to untie.

Herrmann scores some new atonal music taken from his *Sinfonietta* for String Orchestra. 'The Madhouse' theme. It is comprised of three notes (e.g.) and is used by Herrmann in the film *Taxi Driver* (1975).

'The Toys' cue occurs near the end of the film and there has been some development. The investigator by the name of Arbogast finds his way to the Bates motel only to find the murder victim of the film. While searching the ominous house on the hill, we see a knife attack Arbogast at the top of the stairs with the same dissonant music accompanying it. As sister Lila and Sam follow up his lead and turn up at the motel to rent a cabin in order to stay, Lila distracts Norman, Lila uses the distraction to look for Norman's mother and search for clues leading up to Toys are dissonant, tense and terrifyingly haunting.

As Lila enters a child's room in the house filled with toys such as dolls, teddy bear, a record player with a record sitting in it, Beethoven's *Eroica* symphony, Hitchcock is linking the note 'Madhouse' motif associated with Norman earlier: the record label states 'Symphony No. 3'. The tonic note of the *Psycho* motif is E $\flat$ ; the first note of 'The Murder' shower scene is E $\flat$ . This is a clever psychological undercurrents.

'The Toys' music is a variation of earlier music heard as Lila searches previous rooms.

**Cue: 'The Toys'** bars 1–4 DVD 1:34:04 Track 0:00

**molto tranquillo**

Viola

Violoncello

Contrabass

*pizz.*

*p*

*mf*

*pp*

The cellos and basses provide a soft tonic note on E. The cellos are *pizzicato* like a ticking clock, divided and the top part alternates between E $\flat$  and E $\natural$ , creating dissonant tension that you can feel it. When the violas enter in bar 3 they play a dissonant clashing F $\sharp$  and G $\sharp$  and continues as a pedal note throughout the cue – the initial E $\flat$  pedal tonic in the cue, like the initial Marion storyline replaced by the Norman story and with dissonant chromatic cluster chord.

At bar 5 the 1<sup>st</sup> violins enter *divisi* where they play the notes of F major 7<sup>th</sup> chord (EGBD) in the next bar. The lower strings are moving upwards chromatically, the upper strings downwards chromatically. Two old motifs are echoed in this cue: motif B and the prelude.



**Activity task:** Describe the chord used at the beginning of 'The Toys'.

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**Cue: 'The Toys'** bars 5–9 DVD 1:34:14 Track 0:12

Herrmann overlaps the upper strings so in bar 6 we hear F major 7<sup>th</sup> superimposed on the D minor 7<sup>th</sup> and then the 1<sup>st</sup> violins fall to D minor 7<sup>th</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> violins fall to D minor 9<sup>th</sup> in bar 9. The harmony is now a D minor 9<sup>th</sup> chord (the final bar in the example above) alternating the tonality in a nineteenth-century style with the discordant violas and cellos underneath. This symbolises a lost mother/son relationship: the past in the nine upper strings, the present in the atonal music of the lower strings.

This pattern continues for the second half (the next 13 bars) of the cue, all the while the strings are descending chromatically and overlapping with the *crescendo* extensions holding the harmony.

The final bar is the cellos and basses holding the E while the violas hold (*fermata*) F as the camera switches back to Sam talking to Norman in the office.

## Cue: 'The Cellar'

As Lila descends towards the cellar in an attempt to evade Norman, who is rushing to find her, the music is serving the plot tension in this cue. The narrative is drawing to a close as Norman's mother sitting in a chair, but when the old lady is lightly tapped on the head, the music shifts to a sense of panic which Herrmann suitably scores:

The music is serving the plot tension in this cue. The narrative is drawing to a close as Norman has realised Lila is in the house, Lila realizes she is being hunted and a sense of panic which Herrmann suitably scores:

The first 2 bars are all sting parts in unison with a held trill followed by the unharmonious strings when Norman hits Sam over the head.

**Cue: 'The Cellar'** bars 1–2 DVD 1:35:36. Track 0:00

The following 32 bars is a frantic virtuosic semiquaver passage including a lot of arpeggiated chords, often with the lower strings answered by the upper strings. The tense prelude, with the diminished and half-diminished chords replaced by a more active harmonic language, made even more fervent by increased tempo and the intense bowing of the strings.

Lila hiding and Norman running is a good example of 'Mickey-Mousing' where the 'scurrying' or rushing with a technique called *tremolo*.

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**Cue: 'The Cellar'** bars 3–4 DVD 1:35:40 Track 0:04 Lower strings



**Tremolo:** From the word 'trembling', by rapidly moving the bow as fast as possible, a shimmering effect is created where a note sounds very fast and intense or 'shimmering'.

The tempo is fast semiquaver scales and the pitch begins to rise with more and more contrary motion and accents. The harmony is atonal with much use of semitonal augmented leaps. The final bars of the *tremolo* section (bars 30–32) wind down as the solo travels down through the order of strings from high to low, ending with the solo.

The music at bar 33 to the end of the cue as Lila enters the lowest cellar room is a holds an enharmonic augmented chord and creates a sense of poise with the care through the string parts. This chord holds the breath just before the moment when who the murderer is.

**Cue: 'The Cellar'** final chord DVD 1:37:58



## Cue: 'Discovery'

Right after the 'Cellar' cue stops the music of 'Discovery' starts. Norman, who is in clothes, enters the cellar and attacks Lila. It is the climax of the film and Herrmann from the shower scene. The stabbing knife chords bear such importance for this summarises previous events (murders) in the film and locks Norman into a course from. The most distorted version of the 'Psycho theme' is played for the last time the main character. Lila survives because Norman is subdued by Sam and restrained.

The first section of 'Discovery' is an exact replica of the murder shower scene, but the stabbing chords phrase is halved to eight bars, followed by the grotesque transformation is the same as bars 17–37 of the shower scene. In effect there are 29 bars instead of the 'slasher' music because the fight between Sam and Norman is quite short, and the embalmed face of Mrs Bates (with the light swinging adding more panic effect). Herrmann scores is very similar to that of the scherzo from Sinfonietta (1935), but the theme by incorporating the 'Psycho theme' in the frantic, crazed, fast string work.

Herrmann transposes the music up a semitone to E minor, which disguises the first 'theme' to the point that it is hardly recognisable in the chromatic blurring.

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Follow the first note of **every two bars** and you will see the 'Psycho theme' shape time up a semitone. The highest note of every scale phrase is the important tension is mirrored in the highest notes.

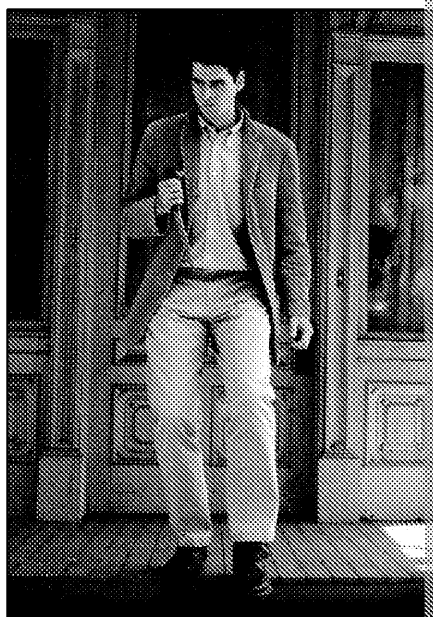
**Cue: 'Discovery'** bars 30–39 DVD 1:38:12 Track 0:00<sup>22</sup>

**allegro con ferore**

Notice how Herrmann adds chromatic dissonance by scoring consecutive major 7th intervals, reflecting the madness and psychosis of Norman Bates while held by Sam. The music itself has Norman's secret exposed. The music stops abruptly in this short cue and the scene ends with everything is explained by the expert psychiatrist.

*I hope they are watching,  
they'll see, they'll see and  
they'll know and they'll  
say... why, she wouldn't  
even harm a fly.*

– Mrs Bates, Finale



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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vA14Q8l6Sik>



Go to [zzed.uk/6752](https://zzed.uk/6752)

## Cue: 'Finale'

The final cue of music in the film is the scary voiceover of Norman's mother as he is in his cell. It is mostly gentle, yet a truly haunting piece of music.

Herrmann scores a contrapuntal motif using a polyphonic texture. The violas play a motif built from crotchets only. This gives the feeling of stillness or emptiness. Norman is dead, but his mother lives on within him. The atonal finale reinforces the madness of his mother. Norman is purely evil as he smiles straight at the camera while a fly crawls over his face.

The music is similar to the mother/Norman knot theme heard after Marion's murder. When Norman is clearing up the bathroom and where Lila is exploring the house on the stairs, the violas start an atonal melodic shape with the 1<sup>st</sup> violins joining in the last beat of the cue.

**Cue: 'Finale'** bars 1–11 DVD 1:42:42 Track 0:00<sup>23</sup>

**adagio e mesto**

The violas and violins intertwine like a knot and never rest on a tonal centre or clear cadence. The 1<sup>st</sup> violin leaps in both parts, especially the 1<sup>st</sup> violin leap to very high range in bar 9. The 2<sup>nd</sup> violins stop in bar 9 (the violas stop) and the harmony is much 'crunchier' as the 2<sup>nd</sup>s move up chromatically towards the violins' top note. The uncomfortable dissonance gets worse as Norman's mother blames Norman. The music reflects the insanity.

The soft contrapuntal music continues for another 10 bars with the 1<sup>st</sup> violins, 2<sup>nd</sup> violins, and cellos/basses around each other. By bar 21 the cellos startle us with a **ff** accented chord taken from the murder shower scene, but this time with the cellos and basses starting the chord and the violins answering the chord (a reversal of the murder scene). The cellos and basses play a

**Cue: 'Finale'** bars 1–11 DVD 1:43:46 Track 1:25

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<sup>23</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p\\_n-Yht18q8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_n-Yht18q8)

# Batman Returns: Contextual Inf

Warner Bros, 1992 – Elfman



*Batman. The thorn in both our sides. The fly in our ointment.*

– Catwoman (Michelle Pfeiffer) 1992

## Late Twentieth Century (*Batman Returns*)

In the 1970s the full orchestral symphonic score swept back to centre stage. Darrin had not established himself as a film composer yet; he would have grown up with the twentieth century. Elfman recalls watching *The Day The Earth Stood Still* (1951) in the sixties and being swept away by the lavish symphonic score by Bernard Herrmann. Elfman continued to create more successful scores with *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (1977), *Back* (1980) and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), bringing the symphonic score well into the modern traditional composers such as James Horner, Hans Zimmer, Howard Shore and John Williams the symphonic trend years later.

## Tim Burton, director

In the 1980s film composers changed the industry once more and significantly used technology to create scores with the advanced development of the **synthesiser**. Again the number of performers could be reduced and a film composer could create a full film score independently without a full orchestra. In *Blade Runner* (1982), Vangelis demonstrates his ability to successfully produce a score using synths and technology as a composing tool. These developments continued right the way through the 1980s and 1990s.

**Synthesiser:** an electronic instrument which combines simple waveforms to create more complex sounds – often played as a keyboard. The sounds can be manipulated and edited to artificially recreate sounds of acoustic instruments as well as famous synthetic sounds such as the 'saw wave'.

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# Critical Listener – Danny Elfman Features 1970s–Present

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Stylistic feature	Used in
Combines <b>symphonic orchestral sounds</b> with MIDI, sequenced and <b>digital sounds</b> .	Cue 'Circus'
Rhythmic cells and <b>rhythmic patterns</b> .	The 'Penguin' theme
<b>Cell format</b> – repeating musical ideas and phrases in sequences, usually four- or eight-bar phrases creating rhythmic <i>ostinatos</i> .	Cue 'Birth of a Penguin'
Favouritism towards brass and percussion in film scores, including heavy use of tuned percussion such as glockenspiel and timpani and using the piano more as a percussive instrument.	The 'Bat' theme
<b>7<sup>th</sup> chords</b> , especially minor 7 <sup>th</sup> chords.	The 'Penguin' theme
Strong <b>tonality</b> – frequent use of augmented minor and major triads, especially leaning towards minor key signatures.	'Bat' theme transformation
<b>Use of different styles and unusual orchestral instruments</b> such as the church organ.	'Birth of a Penguin'
<b>Augmented and diminished chords</b> creating a haunting Gothic sound.	Opening credits
<b>Non-diatonic</b> melodic treatment – to create a sense of harmonic ambiguity.	Variations of the 'Penguin' parts I and II
<b>Chromatic</b> movement – to create a sense of comic movement by changing harmonies with no warning.	The 'Bat' theme plus thematic transformations
<b>The use of vocals as a timbral instrument:</b> combined into symphonic orchestral textures Elfman likes to include SSA female voice choirs often singing 'ooohs', no lyrics.	The 'Penguin' <i>leitmotif</i>
<b>Creative experimentation</b> – exploring with <b>bitonality</b> , <b>atonal</b> music and free chromaticism – although he never experimented with serialism (12-tone row).	Cue 'The Circus' and 'The Circus'
<b>Orchestration</b> – colourful <b>choice</b> of instruments where instruments are often kept separate from each other for clarity and Elfman achieves full and complex orchestral sounds from a small selection of instruments.	'Bat' theme = brass 'Penguin' theme = full orchestra 'Catwoman' theme = strings 'The Circus' theme = woodwinds

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## Background

### The score

Elfman's score for *Batman Returns* is an astonishing and powerful enterprise. The film was a blockbuster hit and Warner Bros were keen to make *Batman Returns* for a massive financial ( *Batman* made \$251m and *Batman Returns* \$162m).

*Batman Returns* is a different tone compared to the first *Batman* film. The director fully explores the themes from the first film. Listeners may expect Elfman's score to be a repeated or re-orchestrated version of the original *Batman* film three years earlier. However, Elfman simply refers back to his first *Batman* score and produces material and details. Audiences are used to a re-treated score exporting the same themes, moods and atmospheres. Elfman composed a completely new score with new themes and material. Elfman keeps the themes, makes it larger than life and adds complexities to it, while the characters of the film are new. The characters have new themes, helping the listener identify with them.<sup>26</sup> The composer uses a similar pattern in the *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* films, where the main themes are repeated and are included to add an extra dimension to the new films and carry the audience along. Elfman uses his music score to help us understand the director Tim Burton's themes: nonconformity, a freakish dark hero and satirical observations on society.

### Instrumentation

Full symphonic film orchestra, with extras:

- Full strings
- 2 flutes / picc.
- 2 oboes
- 2 clarinets including bass clarinet
- 2 bassoons and contrabassoon
- 3 trumpets
- 4 horns
- 3 trombones
- Tuba
- Harps x2
- Piano
- Electric organ / synthesiser
- Miscellaneous percussion including bass drum, timpani, bass drum, bells, xylophone, snare drum, bongo drums, sleigh bells, tam tam, tubular bells, Chinese temple blocks
- Choir (female chorus for The Penguin)

### Themes<sup>27</sup>

Elfman composes three main themes for the sequel. Elfman overlaps the themes so that they encroach on one another, or adds layers on top, making the themes spread throughout the film. Elfman applies a great deal of force and overstated music in the fanfare to get us up and take notice of the score, and as a final ingredient he makes the Batman, Penguin and Cat themes variations of one another. To perhaps understand this more clearly it is beneficial to look at the characters and their dual animal identity: bat, penguin and cat. Elfman has linked the characters by animals and Elfman joins them together musically.

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<sup>26</sup> Steve McDonald. 'AllMusic' – All Media Network, 2015

<sup>27</sup> Kandel. 'efilmcritic', 2006

### Leitmotif

Elfman used operatic techniques in his work. Each character has a theme (*leitmotif*) and harsh dissonances for The Penguin and unusual effects for Catwoman. This mainly influenced by Wagner's use of *leitmotif* in his Ring Cycle operas, including *Die Walküre*. A continuous musical link that binds scenes, plots, characters, objects and narrative. Nineteenth century operas were based on a series of arias, recitatives and choruses. Composers of the Golden Age such as Korngold commonly used this technique. It acts as a link between the main characters as a weaving binding musical thread.

**Leitmotif:** a recurrent theme throughout a musical or literary composition, associated with a person, time, object, idea or situation, e.g. the 'Darth Vader March'.

There is one main character in *Batman Returns* who does not have a *leitmotif*: Mr. Shreck, a businessman played enigmatically by Christopher Walken. Shreck has a great deal of influence, at least inadvertently creating Catwoman. Shreck's motives and character are not fully explored by Burton and Elfman has also deliberately steered away from expending melodic motifs to reflect his actions. It is arguable that Shreck has no *leitmotif* due to his normality and how he deals with him, or indeed Alfred the butler, musically. Perhaps Elfman only composed motifs for the fantasy characters of the film.

### The plot

*Batman Returns* is a dark story with strong messages of discontent in society and an abandoned child thrown into sewers by his parents (the Cobblepots), Danny DeVito Jr. escapes from a zoo penguins, becomes the leader of the Red Triangle circus gang and in the end, The Red Triangle gang cause a riot, which is dealt with by Batman, and kidnap and kill Shreck (Christopher Walken), whom the Penguin blackmails to help him become Mayor. Shreck goes to his office and tries to murder his secretary Selina (Michelle Pfeiffer) when she is thrown out of the window but her fall is broken. Selina lands in an alley where she is attacked and wounded. Selina suffers a breakdown and becomes Catwoman.

Shreck appoints The Penguin as Mayor, who along with Catwoman plots to kill Batman. Batman develops a romantic attraction to Bruce Wayne. After a series of attempts to kill Batman, The Penguin attempts to murder all of Gotham's firstborn children by throwing them from the top of the city. Batman saves the children and prevents the city being destroyed.

The final confrontation sees Batman defeat The Penguin while revealing his true identity. Selina reveals herself as Selina. Catwoman kills Shreck but disappears in the explosion. Batman is seen watching Catwoman watching Bruce Wayne from afar.

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# Batman Returns Analysis

## 'Birth of a Penguin' Part 1

Elfman opens the music score with a typically Gothic atmospheric 'Bat' theme to the screen logo, but the rest of the cue is dominated by the 'Penguin' motif. The opening montage illustrating the circumstances surrounding The Penguin's birth and the of his parents' absolving responsibility. It is difficult to gauge the time span of the of music reflects arguably one week of real time.<sup>28</sup> There are sections of music with screen action, notably the bat logo, the child's cage, drinking up cocktails with a 'Christmas' – the only on-screen dialogue in the cue.

The Penguin is represented by choral material reflecting childhood and innocence accompanied by church organ, very similar to the theme used in *Edward Scissorhands* on in between *Batman* and *Batman Returns*. We can also hear *Sleepy Hollow* tra

The childlike theme is distorted to represent The Penguin's warped birth and def monster and has never had the opportunity to be good, as his parents abandoned park bridge into the sewers as a result of their inability to care, love or cope with subtly chilling theme portraying the evil character with depth and blamelessness villain as a result of his parents' actions.

The movie opens with a low rumbling organ B♭ minor chord followed by the famo serves to permeate the film. Elfman has to include the theme as the Batman logo the Warner Bros logo. The viewer is plunged into a chilling prologue...



**Activity task:** Identify the intervals between the lowest and highest melody.

**Cue: 'Birth of a Penguin'** bars 2–5 DVD 0:00:01 Track 0:00 (Birth of a Penguin p

adagio



The 'Bat' theme is the same as the theme presented in the first film, although Elf throughout the feature. Musically it is a striking *leitmotif*. The low-range brass in contrabassoon give it a dark, Gothic atmosphere. The D♭ in the second bar of the key (B♭ minor) and the most powerful flavour is the held G♭ above the B♭ pedal, w an augmented 5<sup>th</sup> / diminished 6<sup>th</sup> above the B♭ which surprises the listener as the B♭ minor scale. The unusual leap to the G♭ is often referred to as forming part of to the interval built upon four whole tones, which breaks the convention of the ( semitone–tone–tone, respectively. The chromatic augmentation gives the chord dissonance and dark character. We can see many examples of this interval in the In the *Batman* theme the augmentation resolves onto the F♯ which is a perfect 5 semitone creates a powerful resolution to the tonic but Elfman deliberately leav

<sup>28</sup> One must consider the size of the infant as several months old but this is a fantasy picture, and th

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it sound neither major nor minor, or in Batman's case neither good nor bad perhaps Dark Knight. Elfman creates a sense of ambiguity in the harmony to reflect the ambiguity of the character.

*With the Batman theme I just looked for something that had the component of being mysterious, that could be dark, that could also get fun, and can also have a dark side to it.*

— Danny Elfman<sup>29</sup>

After the three-bar 'Bat' theme, Elfman presents the 'Penguin' theme sung melodically.

**Cue: 'Birth of a Penguin'** bars 6–7 DVD 0:00:12 Track 0:12 (Birth of a Penguin piece)



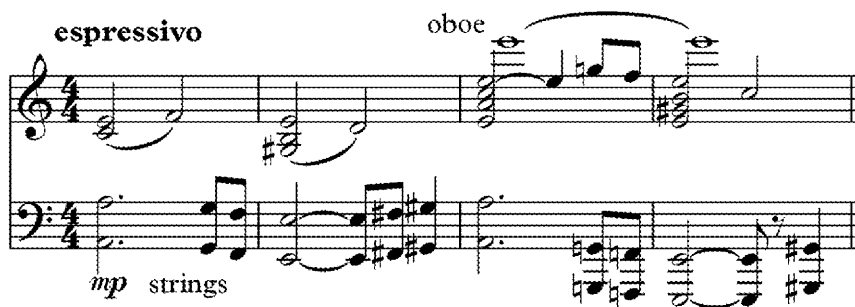
The 'Penguin' theme is chromatic yet rhythmically balanced and even with a clear melody. Elfman presents the theme above (theme A) many times throughout the film but Theme A is the 'Penguin' theme in its most simple form. Elfman always transforms the character's mood and the theme's alterations always suit The Penguin's actions in many different guises: female chorus, full orchestra, or frequently solo church organ. The 'Penguin' theme and the 'Bat' theme is the descending semitone between the last movement of the melody.<sup>30</sup>

The first cue is essentially an analysis of how many variations we hear of the 'Penguin' theme. We can hear augmentation and diminution being exercised throughout, other times in a more orchestrated version of the simple seven-note motif. There are four variations of the theme each one illustrated below.



**Activity task:** Listen to some of Elfman's score to *Edward Scissorhands* and identify features to this cue linking instrumental forces used.

**Cue: 'Birth of a Penguin'** bars 10–14 DVD 0:00:26 Track 0:26 (Birth of a Penguin piece)



Elfman orchestrates the theme expressively with the string section playing an augmented chromatic melody. A high oboe *obbligato* adds sentimentality to the scene where the Penguin is celebrating Christmas with his infant by the decorated tree. Perhaps Elfman here is using the oboe to represent the Penguin's inner child. The next variation of the theme presents a playful rhythmic rendition of the simple motif, subtly changing the structure of the melody by making it more diatonic. The melody is now in a more playful, rhythmic style.

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<sup>29</sup> Danny Elfman, 'Nocturnal Overtures', Beyond Batman: Documentary Gallery, *Batman*, 2-Disc Special Edition Home Video, 2005)

<sup>30</sup> 'Adventures in Weird Sound: An Interview with Danny Elfman' by Joyce J. Jorgenson: <http://www.bluntinsight.com>

which is an orchestral instrument not used to playing melodic material; it is an oboe or bassoon.

**Cue: 'Birth of a Penguin'** bars 26–30 DVD 0:01:02 Track 1:02 (Birth of a Penguin)

**moderato**



When the chorus returns in the cue, Elfman changes the 'lyrics' from 'ooohs' to 'la' for a rhythmic effect and makes the music more exciting and oddly joyful. The choir can be heard at the same time Elfman includes quaver scalar runs, often in 3<sup>rd</sup>s.

**Cue: 'Birth of a Penguin'** bars 35–39 DVD 0:01:22 Track 1:22 (Birth of a Penguin)

**allegro moderato**



**Cue: 'Birth of a Penguin'** bars 30–31 DVD 0:01:44 Track 1:44 (Birth of a Penguin)

**moderato**



This is almost identical to theme A; however, Elfman uses this theme as another moving fractionally away from chromaticism and embracing the minor chord melody, arguably the main 'Penguin' theme that permeates the film score.



**Activity task:** Sing or play the triadic cue above in small groups.

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## Thematic Structure of 'Birth of a Penguin' (Part 1)

Bar number	Theme	Orchestration and
1	Intro	Church organ
2	'Bat' theme B $\flat$ minor	French horns and lower brass, cont
6	'Penguin' theme A simple form (example above) tonic F minor – melody on C	Female chorus accompanied by orch The choir sing 'ooohs'.
8	'Penguin' theme repeat	Church organ accompanied by full o brass motif.
10	'Penguin' theme B augmented A minor	Strings only with cello countermelo Sensitive and beautiful.
14	'Penguin' theme B repeat	Solo church organ with decoration cello countermelody as a left-hand
18	'Penguin' theme A re-harmonised first bar of theme G minor	Mainly strings, but listen out for the descending bass clarinet at the bott glockenspiel in top range.
22	'Penguin' theme B – augmented C minor	Full orchestra, brass melody. Swell <i>tremolo</i> strings.
26	'Penguin' theme C – playful Back to C minor	Full orchestra. New melody played changed to dance-like crotchet–qua triplets in celesta and harp quaver c make it sound childlike and playful.
30	'Penguin' theme A – modified augmentation G minor dominant of C	One note per bar for two-and-a-half alteration: seven-note theme modifi Timpani accent every bar and the lo synth sine wave sound effect. (This terrorising the pet cat. There is a ch warmth to outdoor snow bar 30.)
35	'Penguin' theme D Modulation to D minor	Chorus and full orchestra return, tak the playful bass clarinet motif but re giving the music more energy and pe  Elfman starts to alter the melody so representing the Cobblepots' motive for countermelodies in the brass us
41	Cameo Christmas theme F $\sharp$ major	Orchestra reduction in dynamics. Co the 'Penguin' theme C to sound like of 'We Three Kings'. Listen for the Cobblepots say 'Merry Christmas'.)
43	'Penguin' theme E – modified A G minor	Chorus return to 'ooohs'. An altera is raised by a tone from the second stabs.
47	'Penguin' theme E – augmented C minor	Chorus sings at beginning of every l bass instruments.
53	Hint of 'Bat' theme F minor to unexpected D major 7 <sup>th</sup> chord	Ascends up to a major chord and a harmony fanfare. Notice the <i>rallent</i> and stop at the bridge.
55	'Penguin' theme A first bar repeated Resolving to C minor allowing the melody to return and start on C C minor / A major 7 <sup>th</sup>	Celesta repeats the first bar of them like a child's music box) accompanie harmony alternates between minor
59	Final repeat of theme A Finishing on a dark D minor chord – sealing fate	Low-range doubled harps with sync eerie effect, which is musically opp Tubular bells accent the bars creati hear the infant shriek in the water.

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## 'Batman Returns' Cue Main Theme ('Birth of a Penguin')

The second music cue in the film is a continuation of the prologue 'Birth of a Penguin'. It flows seamlessly into the main theme, which is one of the most exhilarating pieces of music ever. It is a richly scored treat because Elfman makes use of exciting and innovative composition, orchestration, instrumentation, tone colours and timbral nuances.

It is an unorthodox opening for title credits as it features the combined themes of the on-screen action. We hear sustained chords played by the orchestra including a dark, Gothic feel right from the start.<sup>31</sup>

There are many themes to explore in this cue, which are illustrated in the chart below separately to allow a full analysis of the points of interest.

### 'Bat' theme used as a modulation

The opening bars of the main theme give us a sense of excitement and nervous tension as Batman appears on the screen. Elfman achieves an electric atmosphere with scurrying orchestral patterns over a D minor pedal. At bar 9 we hear the 'Bat' theme but it starts in D minor. Elfman uses the melody to force the modulation to B♭ major. By holding the augmented second as a pivot note and the orchestra suddenly jumps to B♭ major in bar 11. Although the 'Bat' theme is not two-dimensional and pushes the harmony further by presenting the lower brass with its minor 3<sup>rd</sup> (D♭). Ultimately Elfman has given us a heroic major theme but the listener is presented with a triumphant hero but immediately changes the harmonic effect portrays the hero as a dark ambiguous character.

**Cue: Main Theme and 'Birth of a Penguin'** bars 8–13 DVD 0:02:35 Track 0:14 (8)

Modulation from D minor to B♭ major



**Activity task:** Discussion. How successful is the choice of instrumentation? Do horns work well for Batman? Celeste and female chorus for Penguin?

Later in the cue (bars 22/23) we hear the 'Bat' theme extended by one note. Elfman further unexpected semitone to an E♭. This allows the bass to rise up a tone to C major triad. Elfman is in fact using a clever music composition technique known as the Neapolitan 6<sup>th</sup>. The common use for a Neapolitan 6<sup>th</sup> is in a minor key where the composer wants to avoid the augmented B♭ minor chord ('Bat' theme) as a Neapolitan 6<sup>th</sup> built on the flattened 2<sup>nd</sup> of C, not B♭ minor. By doing so he is preparing the chromatic transformation to a

<sup>31</sup> Craig Lysy. Movie Music UK, 2011.

**Neapolitan 6<sup>th</sup>:** a technique developed in the seventeenth-century Neapolitan composers lower the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree of the scale for the supertonic triad in a minor key. This allows composers to produce contrasting unexpected major chords in a minor key.

The 'Penguin' theme re-emerges in the main theme as the action on the screen is floating further and further down into the sewers. For 40 bars the main theme is in F major yet Elfman reflects the descending pram by modulating the 'Bat' theme down the scale to F minor – a subtle musical representation of the falling pram, like a Moses basket.

The 'Penguin' theme is altered to portray the tragic situation. The female chorus paraphrasing the 'sigh motif' used by Bernard Herrmann in *Psycho*.

**Cue: Main Theme and 'Birth of a Penguin'** bars 54–57 DVD 0:03:51 Track 1:34  
Penguin theme F




Notice the chromatic flavour of the theme above. It does not move by step chromatic pattern is a descending semitone, which could have been influenced by Herrmann's 'sigh motif' in *Psycho*. What this achieves is a feeling of pity for the pram falling further into the underground waterways; Elfman makes us feel sorry for The Penguin. The difference between the theme above and the 'Bat' theme: the augmented 5<sup>th</sup> / diminished 6<sup>th</sup> (first and last bar of example). The 'Bat' theme is built upon an augmented 5<sup>th</sup>.

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## Thematic Structure of Main Theme and 'Birth of a P

Bar number	Theme and harmony	Orchestration and
1	Hint of 'Penguin' theme D minor pedal – continuation from prologue	Fast string slurred patterns of triple arpeggios. (You can hear Herrmann Violin harmonics play the semitone arguably taken from the 'Bat' theme)
5	Repeat of bars 1–4	Horns repeat violin melody with brass woodwind and brass. Listen out for trombone. Elfman gives us some r pram's journey into the sewers.
9	The 'Bat' theme Dm–B♭	Horns start the 'Bat' melody on D as key (2 <sup>nd</sup> horn sustaining the D).
11	The 'Bat' theme B♭m	Brass 'Bat' theme entries overlap 5 <sup>th</sup> resolves, other times Elfman has sextuplets frantically scurrying about
22	The 'Bat' theme extended	The five-note 'Bat' theme is extended resolves down further to an E. This creating a cadential modulation.
24	The 'Bat' theme B♭m	Diminished 'Bat' themes (brass) play Exciting triplet bass rhythm: <b>allegro</b> 
29	'Bat' theme modulated to A♭ minor	The 'Bat' theme augmented note is upwards to the leading note of G to
33	'Bat' theme descending down to F♯ minor, F minor and E♭ minor	Theme is in canon with the church
41	The 'Penguin' theme C minor combined with the 'Bat' theme	Chromatic violin semitone motif takes (Almost like the sigh motif seen in
47	'Penguin' theme F and 'Bat' theme (diminished 'Bat' themes appear and Elfman sustains them)	The female chorus competes with rhythm continues but the dynamic repeats diminished 7 <sup>th</sup> chords.
51	The 'Penguin' theme F♯ minor	Return of the celesta and a reduction fast scalar patterns and arpeggios in way for the chorus to shine with a theme. The triplets turn to quaver relaxed and lilting. Listen out for t
62	'Bat' theme and 'Penguin' theme combined A♭ minor	The 'Bat' theme is combined with chorus. They are entwined musical sounding like they are crying in bar
79	'Bat' theme returns C♯ minor	Full orchestration with harp <i>glissando</i> <i>Diminuendo</i> .
84	'Penguin' theme B minor	Sustained open chords based on B and alternates between major and it altogether. Listen out for the bo quaver rhythm. Also listen out for church organ and the muted brass
96	Outro	The final bars of this cue are of interest to use 'flutter-tongue' technique and sounds Chinese with the tam tam c

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## Cue: 'Rise and Fall from Grace'

(Cue: 'Rise and Fall from Grace' part 1 DVD 0:46:40 Track 0:00)

'Rise and Fall from Grace' is two separate compositions and different film cues.

'Rise and Fall from Grace' part 1 is first heard as Shreck visits The Penguin to try to get the Mayor. It is a playful cue and light-hearted with a strong comic influence. The main purposes: comedy (henchmen and the fish treat), the evil monstrosity of The Penguin, the scheming greedy plans of Max Shreck who does not own any *leitmotif* but has a plan and is the mastermind behind the whole plan.

- Bars 1–8: Playful *pizzicato* intro in common time by the strings developing into a variation of theme A. The violins are playing high-range dissonant chromatic scale starting on dominant note G, then tease us chromatically with an A $\flat$ , then down to an F $\sharp$  dominant.
- Bars 9–16: 'Penguin' theme A (augmented to minims) in C minor played by the strings with the dissonance maintained above. Harps stammer at the end of the phrase with a tremolo making the theme sound a little disjointed.
- Bars 17–21: A sensitive variation of 'Penguin' theme B, still in C minor, with a waltz-like pulse between treble and bass. The high oboe countermelody tugs at our hearts out of a 'Penguin' scene. The music reflects a clever camera angle where The Penguin perhaps Elfman wishes us to empathise with Max Shreck who pities The Penguin.
- Bars 22–28: The 'Circus' theme and 'Penguin' theme combined as the camera shows the clown-like looking henchmen of The Penguin. Elfman chooses triple time with the first 'Penguin' theme played by a synthesiser sine wave sound effect. The choice of a fairground atmosphere and the circus theme is often represented by choices of harmonic characteristics.
- Bars 29–41: The 'Penguin' theme A again with rhythmic variations as Elfman uses unexpected rests between the exchanges between harp, celesta and bass clarinet here as Max Shreck persuades The Penguin with a fresh raw gutted fish treat and a touch of dark humour.
- Bars 42–48: Penguin theme C – the playful variation performed by solo bassoon with syncopated rhythms where the clarinet seems to be playing in triple time but the metre is of a pattern of 3 against 2. Also notice the tendency for F $\sharp$ s while mainly in C minor with F $\sharp$  the dominant.
- Bars 49–53: A charming new variation of the 'Penguin' theme, which we have not heard before. Still in C minor, the cellos take the first two notes of theme A and generate a warm mood as the upper strings play on every beat with cascading celesta quaver patterns making a playful melody. On-screen The Penguin is very content as he has eaten a fish treat.

**Cue: 'Rise and Fall from Grace' part 1** bars 49–53 DVD 0:47:50 Track 1:24 'Penguin' theme C

**allegro**



- Bars 54–58: A final build-up to a short fanfare as The Penguin is applauded.

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## Catwoman

The 'Rise and Fall from Grace' theme is repeated later in the film with more influence. The theme is very similar to the 'Penguin' and 'Batman' themes:

### The 'Catwoman' theme



Similar to the 'Circus' theme, the treatment of orchestration is where Elfman applies. The melodic and harmonic features are too alike. The 'Catwoman' theme is characterized by upper strings with harsh discord *glissandi* and sustained cluster chords.

'Rise and Fall from Grace' part 2 maintains the suspenseful dance between the 'Penguin' and 'Batman' including the 'Bat' theme as Bruce Wayne and Alfred try to stop the Penguin's scheme. The score builds up tension with *tremolo* strings, more flute flutter-tongues and horns mark the climax of the plot. Rhythmic muted horns and percussion with strings accompany the battle between Batman and the Penguin. The gathered crowd become agitated and with the introduction of arpeggios we hear The Penguin's 'fall from grace' and a painful reminder of his rejection. The scene ends with the female chorus returning to serenade the Penguin back to his sewer lair.

## 'Batman vs The Circus'

The Red Triangle Band is the ensemble of henchmen who do The Penguin's dirty work. They are the type characters and their main musical theme is duly called 'The Circus'. Thematically it is more harmonically distinguishable than the 'Bat', 'Penguin' or 'Cat' themes but Elfman uses a variety of timbres with fascinating instruments and instrumental techniques, giving the theme a unique sound.

It is important to note that the 'Circus' theme does not have the emotional depth of the other themes and the theme is seen more of a 'backing track' instead of reflecting the narrative of the villains. The reason for this is deliberate, as Elfman is aware the circus henchmen are characters with shallow wisdom and understanding.

The circus carnival-style motif flows throughout the film whenever the henchmen are involved in fight/action scenes. The music responds directly to the on-screen action and this is often referred to as 'Mickey-Mousing', e.g. Batman crashing two clown heads together accompanied by a drum. This is also known as a **hit point** (see glossary).

The music score is like a fight itself – Batman and the circus trying to come out on top. The score is pulling back and forth between themes and a great deal of layering ensues – just like the *Story* where the music is the real conflict.

Key musical devices used in 'Circus' theme: permeated significantly throughout the score.

- Fast tempo
- Atonality, bitonality and whole-tone scale
- Syncopation
- Effects and use of synthesiser
- EWQLSO Gold XP package to produce synthesiser samples to mock-up score

The music starts before the end of the previous scene where Shreck persuades Tim Burton to direct. The 'Bat' theme is presented at the beginning of the cue, but The Penguin's plan to take over Gotham is cut to an atmosphere of a warped carnival circus theme where clowns are blowing balloons. The cue demonstrates many similarities to the title sequence of *The Simpsons*, perhaps intentionally. And if you compare the two tracks you can hear paraphrased rhythms and effects.

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**Activity task:** Listen to the 'Batman vs The Circus' cue. Identify instances of synth-based or sampled.

<sup>32</sup> Craig Lysy. Movie Music UK, 2011.

## Thematic Structure of 'Batman vs The Circus'

**Cue: 'Batman vs The Circus'** DVD 0:51:20 Track 0:00–2:35 – please note the times soundtrack. Soundtrack 0:52 (box 6 below) = DVD 0:51:53 (poodle with hand gre

Timings	Theme and harmony	Instrumentation and
0:00	'Bat' theme build-up	Full orchestra with church organ and opening of <i>Batman</i> 1989)
0:20	'Bat' theme chord change	Ascending harmony
0:25	'Penguin' theme	Entry of the chorus and brief inverted
0:31	'Circus' theme – dissonant dance patterns centred on F	Muted brass and syncopated. Playful warped polka dance. Elfman uses low Penguin's walk.
0:42	'Circus' theme	Syncopated feature replaced by tense Muted trumpets and lower wind / bass violin stabs at the end of this section <i>Psycho</i> shower scene. Action is centre accepting the job as mayor and says 'I
0:52	'Circus' theme – dance More atonal	Frenetic xylophone and piano 'pointing' the xylophone, followed by timpani and ensues with horn <i>glissandi</i> and brass semiquaver horn motifs referencing the 'sigh').
1:15	'Circus' theme continued	Harp <i>glissandi</i> with brass diminished very unusual synth effect played on the steam train whistle.
1:22	'Bat' theme 'Mickey-Mousing'	During the fight scene and chaos, Batman with musical accompaniment. This is the cue.
1:26	'Circus' theme	Return to the crazy clown dance with trills. Listen out for how Elfman pushes further by instructing the players to 'create an intense effect.
1:30	'Bat' theme	A short passage where the 'Bat' theme and piano are continuing with the circus are merely accompanying.
1:37	'Circus' theme	Elfman throws in as many extreme in accents, <i>glissando</i> , slides, paradiddle. Elfman is making the music more intense increasing. Listen out for the warped
1:45	'Penguin' theme (E)	Disguised among the circus mayhem diminution, i.e. played to fit the fast and deliberately scores the 'Penguin' theme effect on the synthesiser to stand out
1:48	'Bat' theme	The 'Bat' theme again emerges on brass
1:51	'Circus' theme	Whenever Batman deals with one issue troop of clowns causing mayhem. The clown dance. Listen out for the wood and the Chinese temple blocks.
2:02	'Bat' theme 'Circus theme' equal  'Circus' theme dominates	A pedal in the bass gives this passage building up tension in an already tense tambourine and fast scalar passages with <i>Simpsons</i> .

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2:13	'Bat' theme (enters on pedal note)	Sustained long brass notes pitted against woodwinds playing and semiquavers. The 'Bat' theme enters and hangs on the tritone, or indeed perfect 5 <sup>th</sup> by the 'Circus' theme –
2:18	'Penguin' theme	Listen out for the unfamiliar percussion playing the 'Penguin' theme. It sounds very piano. Again Elfman scores this theme out among the circus mayhem.
2:21	'Bat' theme	Elfman scores the first three notes of the 'Bat' theme brazenly interrupted by the 'Circus' theme. Listen out for the horn <i>gliss.</i> at top of staff.
2:28	'Circus' theme	<i>Diminuendo</i> and reduced orchestration as brass and piano exchanging with muted drums. Ends with a final <i>crescendo</i> and <i>ff</i> percussion end on the tonic and is left unresolved.

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# *The Duchess*: Contextual Info

Pathé Distribution and Studio Canal, 2008 – Rachel Portman

## Beginning of the Twenty-first Century

At the turn of the century, film composers had lots of technology and a plethora of choices from when creating a film score. Film producers also had a wealth of composers to choose from for their movies. Rachel Portman is an example of a composer who uses new technology to create innovative music for *The Duchess*, which is set 250 years ago but addresses issues that we can empathise with.

At the turn of the twenty-first century the film industry saw yet more risky new ideas as it was developing an appetite for new horizons. Worldwide communications were evolving, and with the developing computer technology at a lightning pace and with the invention of the digital camera, a range of film subjects from all over the globe. Some films continued the giant blockbuster tradition, such as *Gladiator* (2000) and *Lord of the Rings* (2001), where huge sets and extras allowed the new CGI technology made characters such as Gollum not only possible but also more believable. On the other way and explored different avenues, such as *Cast Away* (2000) which focused on a man on a desert island, in which the music has to help the audience understand his loneliness. John Williams wrote a minimalist score for which he won a Grammy in 2002. It was in the 2000s that the popularity of film music grew, with *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) using ethnic instruments to create a new sound, Dun, supporting advanced visual effects. *Amélie* (2001) incorporates stereotypical French music, explores the themes of loneliness and love, and the main character, played by Audrey Tautou, is a small details of human behaviour. The composer Yann Tiersen created music which was perfectly synchronised with the on-screen action; for example, when Amélie is hurrying around Paris, a light waltz music is played by an accordion often with flowing quaver accompaniment.

*The most memorable theme appears in Amélie when she begins to fall in love.*

– David Ventura<sup>33</sup>

Similarly, Rachel Portman's score for *The Duchess* illustrates an innovative way of using music to enhance the on-screen action of the film and add depth to the emotion and narrative currents. The use of popular melodies combined with a minimalist approach to weave the score into the film. One can see similarities between Portman, Silvestri and Tiersen in writing music to enhance emotions.

### Biography of composer

Rachel Portman, OBE, is an English composer, born in Surrey, England 1960, who started composing music at a young age during school. It was while studying music at Oxford that Portman discovered her passion for writing music for films. Her first composing work included writing music for the film *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit* (1989), a novel by Jeanette Winterson, was made into a television miniseries and was an early project for Portman in producing music for the screen. She has since been successful and wrote the music for hundreds of films and television programmes including *Cider House Rules* (1999), *Chocolat* (2000), *Mona Lisa Smile* (2003), *The Manchurian Candidate* (2004), *The Twist* by Roman Polanski (2005) and *The Lake House* (2006). Portman has written and composed choral music for the BBC Proms 1997. Portman is the first female film composer to win the Academy Award for her music score *Emma* (1996), and was nominated for best score in 1997. Note Portman writes most of her music for independent films and not huge multi-million dollar blockbusters.

<sup>33</sup> Ventura Film Music in Focus, Rhinegold, 2010

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Portman is often described as a composer with a distinctive style. One aspect of her work, which permeates the majority of her work, is the elegantly sweet string melodic material. Portman writes music by hand and manuscript without relying on technological music notation software or orchestration software; this is an old-fashioned approach in writing music for the screen, with strict time and synchronicity; however, the musical result is uncomplicated and unostentatious. If you listen to any Portman score the melodic design will present both subtlety and clarity. Directors and producers have commissioned Portman's work because of the significant need for music that the screen can absorb. Portman has also produced some darker material with some of her light romantic typecast. *Oliver Twist* captures some dark subject matter, and Anthony Hopkins drama *The Human Stain* (2003) where Portman maintained the same melodic style as the music but with a richly tragic effect.

*Melodies are hard to write, but they're so worth writing... they have a way of making a film that I find intriguing.*

– Rachel Portman, An Interview with Projector and Orchestra 2003<sup>34</sup>

Portman combines beautiful melodies with uncomplicated, somewhat gentle, music. It may be said Portman is a neoclassical minimalist. Arguably her scores are similar across her career, and sound stylistically alike, with recurring character and flavour synonymous with her style. Portman's music is instantly recognisable and her scores have a particular musical quality. It is exactly the type of music film-makers want to use, and furthermore few composers can do it as well as Portman does so well. Her airy, dreamy melodies seem simple and effortless, but creating such a very difficult atmosphere to conjure.

**Minimalist:** a composer who uses simple ideas and gestures to create music. Minimalist techniques include repeated patterns of notes, loops, metamorphosis and developed in America in the 1960s.

Portman often favours solo instruments to act as symbolic executors of melodic material. The timbral *leitmotif* to support characterisation. *The Duchess* features a solo cello throughout the new film score for *Never Let Me Go* (2010), which also stars Keira Knightley, featuring a cello thread and weaves throughout the film score; the tragic cello part reflects the score's powerful example of Portman using careful and sensitive orchestration to create a moving music score.

**Neoclassicism:** a twentieth-century movement where composers sought to revive features of the eighteenth-century Baroque and Classical eras in order to create a new century innovative music with clarity, balance and order, reacting against the formlessness of much modern music.

Film composers in the twenty-first century have used a century of experience to create music that enhance the movie experience. Perhaps we have come full circle to the Golden Age of Hollywood.

<sup>34</sup> Tim Grieving website Projector and Orchestra, Exploring Film Music On and Off the Screen Interview with Rachel Portman, 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2003: <http://projectorandorchestra.com/rachel-portman/>

<sup>35</sup> Please note Rachel Portman's 2005 score for *Oliver Twist* is dark and edgy with harsh, dissonant music contrasting stylistic music in generic comparison.

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## Background of Set Work

### The plot

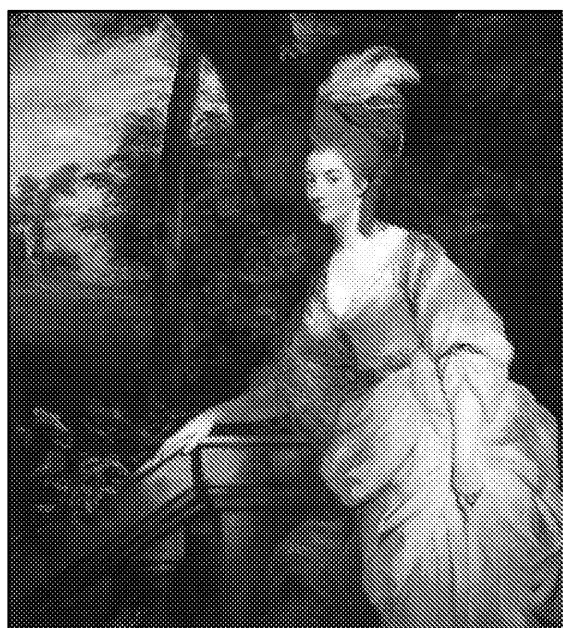
A period drama based on the life of the popular Duchess Georgiana Cavendish 1757–1806 (Keira Knightley) and how life presented her with challenging situations forcing her to make impossibly difficult decisions and highlighting negative issues and cruelty. Georgiana is married to the Fifth Duke of Devonshire (Ralph Fiennes) who is a cold and selfish man and has many affairs including with Georgiana's best friend Lady Bess Foster (Hayley Atwell), whom he invites to live with them in order to produce a male heir. Georgiana develops strong feelings for a young politician called Charles Grey but this enrages the Duke, who rapes Georgiana, which leads to the birth of a son. Georgiana continues her relationship with Charles and has a secret daughter with him, but is intimidated by the Duke who threatens to ruin Charles's career and forbids Georgiana from seeing her children again. Georgiana stops seeing her true love Charles for the sake of the children, and she is also forced to give her illegitimate daughter to Charles's family. Later in life Georgiana allows the Duke and her best friend to marry, which they do after her death.



*Ralph Fiennes*

The film illustrates Georgiana's life from a young girl to a woman with children a decade later. The issues raised through the film include cruelty, sexism in society and friendship. Everything seems to settle into place in a positive way, and the character, who suffers yet rises above her situation, is pleased with everything.

*The Duchess* is a sexually provocative film and preaches themes including adult fear, adultery, marital rape, polyamory, and a happy ending.



*Portrait of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire by Joshua Reynolds c. 1775*

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### Instrumentation

Portman uses traditional symphonic instruments with purity honouring the Classical orchestra. The orchestra is used to portray an eighteenth-century period drama and Portman re-designs in several ways, one of which is the small 'Classical'-sized orchestra which Mozart or Beethoven. Indeed, there are pieces of music by Beethoven and Mozart in the film. It is clear to see Portman has looked back to the music of the time setting for neoclassical composers, it is the innovative or unorthodox use of such instruments in modern-day 'freshness', and Portman adds some twenty-first-century character to the orchestra.

The use of piano in *The Duchess* is not traditional, as Classical composers would have used the orchestra as a solo instrument in the performance of a piano concerto. Portman uses the piano as an accompanying, timbral effect and solo instrument throughout the score-making it more than a solo instrument. This can also apply to the harp. Whereas for flute and harp, Classical composers never used the harp as a standard accompaniment to add texture and depth to the orchestral sonority. The harp was a regular member of the orchestras of the nineteenth century and consequently into the twentieth century.

The omission of certain wind instruments adds a question mark. A normal Classical orchestra would have oboes. Portman decided she could make do without the full section. The brass section of the orchestra is supported by timpani, which was common in the eighteenth-century orchestra.

### Instrumental specifics

Members from the City of Prague Philharmonic Orchestra

- Strings (12 1<sup>st</sup> violins, 10 2<sup>nd</sup> violins, 8 violas, 6 cellos, 3 double basses)
- Flute
- Clarinet
- Bassoon
- 3 horns
- Trumpet
- 2 trombones
- Piano
- Harp
- Timpani and percussion
- Cimbalom (Hungarian dulcimer – NB: does not feature in prescribed tracks)

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# The Duchess Analysis

## Cue: *The Duchess* Main Title

(DVD 0:05:23)

From the opening bars of the first music cue, the audience is presented with a story as Georgiana walks out on to the balcony of Althorp Estate having learned she is in Devonshire. The music reflects the grandeur of the manor house and significance serves as the backdrop for the wedding sequence with no dialogue. In the space of several weeks of story have passed. Music can fulfil this role better than any art form.

The cue is in five sections:

Bars	Timings	Theme	Instruments
1–16	0:00	A + B + AB	Strings and harp (introduction)
17–26	0:35	B	Solo cello with full orchestra
27–34	0:55	B	Repeat of previous section
35–41	1:11	A + B	Strings two-bar theme A, then B
42–45	1:24	B	Solo cello repeat previous section

The cue starts in D major and the strings are playing *legato* with an elegant and by the 1<sup>st</sup> violin melody, which enters after a long D semibreve *crescendo*. The score melody is played by the soloist and the 1<sup>st</sup> violins where the soloist is doubling the opening melody.

**Cue: *The Duchess* Main Title** bars 1–5, soundtrack 0:00 – 0:11 DVD 0:05:23, Theme A



The violas emphasise the momentum with a crotchet/minim/crotchet movement, providing a simple tonic–dominant accompaniment in dotted minims; however, the dominant presents an unexpected C<sub>♯</sub> illustrated in the violin melody above (bar 4). This alteration immediately adds a modern flavour. What sounds like a typical tonic/dominant progression becomes complicated. The ear expects to hear the strong C<sub>♯</sub> leading note in the dominant, but it progresses powerfully and naturally to the tonic note of D. By omitting the # the melody with the harmony centred on the tonic and the minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord of the relative minor, creating a Classical chord progression. Perhaps Portman is immediately showing us how the Duchess Georgiana does not easily conform to traditional eighteenth-century female expectations.

The opening bars also features the harp, which is playing the fastest rhythm with violin quavers.

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**Cue: *The Duchess* Main Title** bars 1–5, soundtrack 0:00–0:11

$\text{♩} = 112$

Harp *mp*

Hp. *mf*

The harp has a soft and gentle sonority, which is usually typecast for dreamy sequences in the film industry. Here the harp is used percussively to drive the pulse forward, creating momentum. This musical technique has been used before: George Frederick Handel uses semiquaver arpeggios in the opening section of his famous anthem *Zadok The Priest* for King George II. When the majority of the orchestra is playing longer-valued notes, Handel provides innovative excitement and zest in the upper strings. Apparently, longer notes to gratify the Church's brief of producing music with regal and stateful grandeur. Handel was a superstar and could not resist including the fast arpeggios and satisfyingly emerging at the time. As a musical genius Handel appeased both the clergy and the laity. In *The Duchess* Portman achieves a strikingly similar musical effect.

At bar 6 the music repeats the same harmonic treatment of the four-bar phrase. In the next time the melody rises in pitch, is labelled theme B and features prominently in the rest of the introduction.

**Cue: *The Duchess* Main Title** bars 6–9, soundtrack 0:11–0:19 Theme B

Violin 1 *f*

During the second melodic phrase (above) the dynamics gradually increase. By bar 9 the texture with the 2<sup>nd</sup> violins playing out the quaver patterns observed in the harp and the *divisi* strings sound where the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> violins are both divided to produce a rich and more depth and prominence in the accompanying quaver movement. Notice that Portman deliberately seeks to use the lower range of the cello C string (in bar 9 the low D).

The third section from bars 10–16 repeats theme A and B up an octave and the first violin for two bars but marked quieter dynamics (fl. *mp*, vl. *mf*). Portman divides this third section: we hear theme A for two bars and then theme B for four bars (0:19–0:32) which is equally divided, but Portman uses augmentation to extend the note values of the first violin a double bar marked at the end of bar 14.

The *crescendo* reaches a climax at bar 12 and there is a *diminuendo* to the end of the introduction. The first violin plays a graceful arpeggio (bar 15) with the added instruction: 'start left-hand notes with a typical and idiomatic of the instrument and concludes the introduction. The double bar in the piece at bar 15 with low D semibreves. Incidentally bar 13 sounds like a few seconds as the quaver movement is momentarily suspended and what sounds like a general augmentation: a held semibreve A in bar 13, a held semibreve G in bar 14 and then a double bar an introduction bar before the next melodic phrase. In fact, there is another double bar at bar 16 marking the new section.

The second section of the piece begins at bar 17 with the beautiful solo cello playing the

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**Cue: The Duchess Main Title** bars 17–25, soundtrack 0:35–0:55 Theme B Augment

The harmony during these bars is fairly straightforward with a strong tonal centre. Chords alternate in a similar fashion to the opening introduction where Portman here the tonic pedal is sustained. Portman uses an  $A\text{m}^7$  chord with the 7<sup>th</sup> note  $G$  more like a suspended chord on  $D$ . Plus the  $C\flat$  of the  $A\text{m}^7$  chord makes the pedal itself. Portman is deliberately making the harmony sound fluid and free while using busy string parts around. The key held notes of the cello solo are the tonic  $D$ , dominant  $A$ , although the  $G$  is the flattened 7<sup>th</sup> note of  $A$  minor. The harmony reflects the direction transparent and pronounced.

The orchestra plays *tutti* at bar 17 with the full strings, harp, piano and timpani enter with the quaver pattern in bar 19. The timpani enter with a V–I, dominant to tonic anacrusis and first beat of every two bars, not dissimilar to Denis King's famous timpani in *Black Beauty* (1972). Here Portman scores the timpani *mf*, again using the kettle drum. The violas add depth to the ensemble with lilting minims supporting the harmony.

Portman adds a very subtle effect in the score, which can be overlooked on first listening: producing the exciting momentum of the cue: the cellos and basses are divided and (only) play syncopation:

**Cue: The Duchess Main Title** bars 17–19, soundtrack 0:35–0:38 cello syncopation

After eight bars (bar 25) the horns and bassoon start playing sustained chords, with depth. The cello's final held note ( $A$ ) in the phrase above allows the horns to emphasise both the major key and the strong dominant above the tonic. This interval has long been used to portray virtuous heroism and purity.

The exciting quaver movement heard in the 2<sup>nd</sup> violins in the introduction is now in the cellos and basses so as to not impede the high-range solo cello melody.

Portman takes the melodic direction from theme B heard in the introduction but further suspends the momentum and allows Bilousek to fully exploit the tonal potential of the tenor clef, which is widely used in cello writing when exploring the top range of the instrument. The required to read treble clef and Portman scores a lot of solo cello writing high in the range. Above was written in the standard cello bass clef it would be very difficult to read. The bar of the phrase above reaches top  $D$  on the cello, a 9<sup>th</sup> above middle  $C$  and is not

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Portman uses the cello for specific reasons, but consideration needs to be given to the violin or viola as the music is written at a range more suited for higher treble. Instrumental choice is a deliberate focus on a particular timbral sonority, which covers the extreme ranges of a particular instrument. Pavel Bilousek has to work hard on the fingerboard on the top A string. The music is virtuosic and challenging. If Portman had written the same pitch it would present a different sound quality, albeit a pleasant one.

Portman also deliberately chooses to write for a solo instrument for many reasons. The narrative relates to the one main character, Duchess Georgiana, and a solo melody represents her story. This is similar to John Williams's *Schindler's List* (1994) where the solo violin represents hope representing Oscar Schindler. Ennio Morricone uses the solo oboe to represent where it represents the main character Gabriel.

At bar 27 there is a repeat of the previous section with one subtle difference: the two bars.

**Cue: The Duchess Main Title** bars 27–34, soundtrack 0:55–1:11 Theme B reduced

Violoncello 

Vc. 



**Activity task:** Compare the melody above with the melody from

The reason for the two-bar cut is most likely for on-screen editing and timing to fit the scene.

As the cue progresses, Portman develops the accompaniment to become all the more complex. For example the cello quaver arpeggios at bar 33 and viola syncopated flourishes. The music stopping strengthens in intensity and the piano and harp increase the range of the texture.

The 'Duchess' cue ends with a brief two-bar full strings theme A entry cut short and returning halfway through the theme B phrase:

**Cue: The Duchess Main Title** bars 37–41, soundtrack 1:16–1:24 Theme B diminution

Violoncello 

The cello melody note lengths have been reduced to the point where it is now known as a 'diminution'. The values have been cut by a half or more.

The phrase above is repeated in bars 42–45 to finish on a held chord and *crescendo*.

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Note the increased use of manipulating note lengths throughout the cue, with the becoming shorter in phrase length as the piece progresses. This undoubtedly adds momentum and building excitement as the piece unravels. Another interesting aspect is anticipation. The human brain processes melodic material and the balance of phrase part of the musical enjoyment. If a melody is consequently changed, by cutting it off, this interrupts the anticipation and stimulates cognitive enjoyment of the music. The listener subconsciously 'on their toes' and generates the feeling of euphoria.

## Cue: 'Six Years Later'

(DVD 26 mins)

Buoyant! Bright! Florid 'Englishness'... The only film cue in *The Duchess* which reflects eighteenth-century period drama.

Bars	Timings	Harmony	Theme
1–4	0:00	D Major	Intro / <i>pizzicato</i>
5–20	0:05		Violin melody
21–30	0:21		Variation bridge with bassoon flourish
31–38	0:32		Violin melody (dynamic <i>forte</i> climax)
39–46	0:40		Variation bridge without bassoon
47	0:48		Intro <i>pizzicato</i> with chromatic augmentation
55–66	0:56		<i>Pizzicato</i> theme now <i>arco</i> with chromatic augmentation

The cue 'Six Years Later' is used to portray the passing of time. As the title suggests, the scene is set six years after the Duchess has given birth to a daughter, which disappoints her husband as he provides him with a male heir. The music is played during a coach trip through the screen credits, the audience learns that in these six years the Duchess has had another daughter. With the Duke's illegitimate daughter Charlotte, makes a total of three daughters. The comic timing is deliberate since the Duke's behaviour at having girls is appalling. He loves them all equally and is a great mother to them. Ralph Fiennes's facial expression creates a beautifully amusing scene. The music reflects the humour with bright and cheerful major tonality.

There are three main motifs in the cue 'Six Years Later':

Motif (i)

Motif (ii)

Motif (iii)

Portman is reusing thematic material from the 'Duchess' cue. Motifs (i) and (ii) are used in the 'Duchess' cue. Motif (ii) is on the second beat of the bar and with the fast waltz tempo sounds for

The cue begins with a four-bar intro in triple time based on motif (iii) above. The strings *pizzicato* and perform a playful waltz, with the cello bass providing the first beat and the strings playing the chord of D major on the second and third beats. With a lively tempo, the cue picks up the listener and whisks them away:

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**Cue: Six Years Later** bars 1–4, soundtrack 0:00–0:04

$\text{♩} = 170$

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

*mf leggiero*

The harp performs both the bass line and the second/third-beat chords. Notice and continues to play the first beat every four bars, keeping the music light.

The 1<sup>st</sup> violins introduce the lively melodic theme (motif (i)), which permeates the second motif six bars later:

**Cue: 'Six Years Later'** bars 5–18, soundtrack 0:04–0:19

<sup>5</sup> *La melodia sempre leggiero*

Violin 1

Violin 2

*mf*

Bring out

pizz.

arco

pizz.

arpeggiate into the beat

*mf*

<sup>12</sup> *div.*

*mf*

Bring out

pizz.

arco

pizz.

*div.*

*unis.*

arpeggiate into the beat



**Activity Task:** How many specific musical instructions can you find in the notes themselves, there are approximately 35 extra musical directions.

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The harmony of this cue is very simple. The key consistently maintains D major and the melody explores from the tonic key and the dominant chord of A. The cue focuses on a simple counter melody (also based on motif (i)), a waltz rhythm, and an obvious initial arpeggio. Portman, however, applies a meticulous approach to detail in this extract. The d

- Use of **staccato** and **slurs** to phrase the melody; notice the 2<sup>nd</sup> violins are not
- Use of **pizzicato** in 2<sup>nd</sup>s, alternating quickly between **pizz.** and **arco**
- Strict **divisi/unison** instructions in the 1<sup>st</sup> violins – placing careful, almost pedantic instructions on the staves for the performers when playing motif (ii)
- Extra dynamic instructions, not conventional use of **cresc.** and **hairpins**, but of **sfz** and **fz** on the *pizzicato* countermelody
- **Chromaticism** in the 2<sup>nd</sup> violin countermelody
- **Arpeggio** harp-like chord in bar 9 with precise instruction; incidentally the harp is not used at the very same moment

Portman makes the music sound easy and fresh, but the music is quite difficult to follow. If directions and expressive markings were missing from the score then the cue would be lost. This is a good example of how professional musical expression can significantly affect the audience. It improves musical effect, similarly to a novelist using competent grammar or an artist using competent technique before painting.

Portman subtly uses a favourite technique employed several times throughout the magic of the phrase above is hidden in the timing. Notice the 2<sup>nd</sup> violins entering top D for three beats. Now compare this with bars 13–14. The 2<sup>nd</sup> violins come in waiting. Portman has deliberately altered the shape and structure of the melody 'toes'. Portman also edits the melody along the way: bars 9–10 give a balance to the descending motif gives the melody symmetry; however, bars 9–10 are expected. Portman has pulled the rug from under our feet once more and returns to the magic pattern. This intentional structural inconsistency lends a distinctive humorous character to the phrase.

Portman adds further subtle harmonic interest by steering away from the C# leading note of the major. Look at the example above and take note of how many C#s there are in the phrase with all C#s as C#s. The absence of the leading note creates a subtle idiosyncrasy. It is powerfully major key tonality but whenever Portman approaches the dominant, he introduces a modal quality and an unorthodox harmonic progression.

In bars 10–11 the cellos play an A minor *pizzicato* arpeggio based on motif (i) with Portman to ‘Bring out’.

Bar 21 starts the new section as a transition bridge between the sections focusing on Portman keeps on mixing up the ideas by including the 2<sup>nd</sup> violin countermelody in answering phrase to the quaver pattern, the cellos responding in kind with their (bar 26). The harp and cellos continue to maintain the chordal accompaniment with A minor dominant in 2<sup>nd</sup> inversion; the E root note of the chord gives it a lighter touch.

At bar 27 Portman adds the bassoon, but not as an accompanying bass instrument soloist:

**Cue: 'Six Years Later'** bars 27–30, soundtrack 0:27–0:32 bassoon entry

27

Bassoon

*mf* *cresc.* *f*

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The double basses enjoy a solo moment and double the melody (*arco*), adding depth through at bar 29 with motif (ii) as it is written in a high range for the instrument right at the bottom of their range, which adds further humour to the piece.

Bar 31 returns to motif (i), the opening ascending crotchet melody with the 1<sup>st</sup> violin in major. This time Portman thickens the orchestral texture by scoring the 2<sup>nd</sup> violin with sustained 3<sup>rd</sup>s in bar 31 and the chromatic countermelody in bar 33. The stronger background soundscape for the carriages convoy arriving in the city of Bath with its architecture. All strings are marked *arco* at bar 31 with the exception of the double basses. The sudden change of character with the accompaniment in that not only are they exposed (*arco*) but Portman scores a quick quaver flourish on the first beat of bar 33 adding depth. Simultaneously there is a harp arpeggio and a general universal *for* adding excitement and intensity.

The next phrase starting at bar 39 is scored *mezzo forte* and has the orchestral texture. The climax has passed and Portman is returning to quieter and more relaxed dynamics. This dynamics is intentional as this is where the dialogue starts in the scene: 'It is always a holiday to request a few words of wisdom...' The section repeats bars 21–30, but with a bassoon / double bass solo flourish or dramatic *crescendo*. Instead, Portman cuts the time it was 10 bars with the extra bassoon interest) and reduces the instrumentation to be identical to the opening introduction.

The cue plays out from bar 47 to the end with the lively waltz *pizzicato* theme more expectation as Portman adds a gentle crescendo and changes the strings from *pizzicato* to *arco*. In the film scene it is where Georgiana addresses the court. The major triads are exposed or B $\flat$  every alternate two bars predominantly played by the violas and harp. An arpeggio is used to express wonder, excitement and humour throughout the history of film music. It expresses the audience's desire to see the fashionable Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire what she is going to say... The music cue ends precisely as she begins to speak.

**Cue: 'Six Years Later'** bars 59–end, soundtrack 1:01–1:12 ending

**Cue: 'Mistake of Your Life'**

(DVD 1:18:40)

Bars	Timings	Harmony	
1–18	0:00	Pedal on D dissonance	Intro (timpani beat)
19	0:53	G minor	Violin and solo cello
35	1:30	G minor	Piano solo sequence
43	1:48	G minor to D major	Violins repeat bar
60	2:20	G minor to E $\flat$ major	<i>Tutti</i> orchestra repeat
71	2:40	Pedal on D dissonance	<i>Tacet</i> timpani
73	2:48	G minor	Cello section solo

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The entire cue as a whole plays nears the end of the film, where the Duke has learned of Georgiana's love for Charles Grey and is threatening to ruin Mr Grey's life and prevent Georgiana from seeing her children again (see cue 'Never See Your Children Again'). The cue 'Mistake of Your Life' is a very passionate extract of music, as Georgiana deeply loves Charles Grey but also deeply loves her children. The music represents a choice Georgiana has to make: she has to sacrifice her love for either Charles or her children. The pain of this decision is mirrored in the score, but it is the essence and intensity of love, desire and yearning which Portman successfully portrays, musically blending harmony, melody and rhythm with careful orchestral sound timbres.

The music cue 'Mistake of Your Life' represents an initial depressing backdrop to the fact that Georgiana is trapped in an impossible and painful situation, yet the main theme of the cue represents her determination and resilience. Following on from a tense confrontation, Georgiana sends the Duke away (DVD 1:18:39), causing a distressing scene and resulting in further pain for Georgiana.

The cue starts with a pedal on the note D played by octave divided cellos and basses; the dynamic is *ppp*, a direction given by Portman to produce a particularly atmospheric effect. The rhythmic interest is in the timpani and *gran cassa*: the timpani play a powerful bass drum. Note the percussion is marked *pianissimo* suggesting the deliberate

**Cue: 'Mistake of Your Life' bars 1–6, soundtrack 0:00–0:17**

Timpani *pp*

Gran Cassa *pp*

The score shows the Timpani part in 3/4 time, starting with a half note D, followed by a quarter note E, a quarter note F, and a half note G. The Gran Cassa part is marked with a single half note D.

The cellos and violas sustain a slow moving chromatic pattern throughout the first

**Cue: 'Mistake of Your Life' bars 1–5, soundtrack 0:00–0:14**

$\text{♩} = 58$

Viola *ppp*

Violoncello *ppp* 1st desk

Double Bass *ppp*

The score shows the Viola, Violoncello (1st desk), and Double Bass parts in 3/4 time. All three parts play a slow-moving chromatic pattern, starting on a half note D and moving up by half steps: D, E, F, G.

Notice the basses stay on the pedal note D and it is only the 1<sup>st</sup> desk cellos and violas that move to E $\flat$ . This creates a haunting sense of fate and punishment by use of **dissonance**, which continues throughout the introduction.

At bar 9 there is a slight harmonic development: the violas and cellos play in 3<sup>rd</sup> position, moving the D, rising chromatically to G and E $\flat$  respectively. This continues over the pedal note D, which is maintained. The two-bar harmonic pattern continues until bar 15 where the harmonic pattern changes until the beginning of the next section at bar 19. Some sections of 'Mistake of Your Life' are

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optimism and Portman's use of major 3<sup>rd</sup>s is quite deliberate. Minor 3<sup>rd</sup>s may have a cheerful F# mirrors Georgiana's resolve and determination seen later on in the film. Bar 19 sees the entry of the first melodic theme in the cue:

**Cue: 'Mistake of Your Life' bars 19–26, soundtrack 0:53–1:12, first melody**



The first melody accompanies the scene where Georgiana is sitting alone battling from her children; the unopened letters from them on the chair symbolise the child she reflects her thoughts of them. Georgiana is fighting between the love of her children and her duty to her husband. This is a pivotal moment in the film (DVD 1:19:30).

Portman scores a gentle ascending melodic motif starting on the lowest note the instrument can play (an open string) and has a unique timbral quality for the instrument. Portman further enhances the timbre by using a *pianissimo* dynamic. Many violin concertos make use of the open string of the instrument. For a good example, listen to the first movement of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto No. 1, where the woodwind play the second subject over the soloist's held open G, at almost all recordings.

Portman also scores the melody above to be played by a solo cello, performed at a lower register (the cellist is reading tenor clef). The subtle combination of instrumental resources lets the melody stand out in the soundscape.

The melody rises by step to D, which is a perfect 5<sup>th</sup> above the opening. The interval gives the melody strength and weight, arguably suggesting a hint of optimism and hope. The melody repeats, this time the last two notes ascending up a 4<sup>th</sup> to F and G. This shape in the melody as the melody moves forward the harmony and melody are not so clear cut; the melody is set against a background of sustained G minor chords, which resolve in bars 21–22 to the dominant of D minor with no use of the strong sharpened leading note of F#. The harp moves in soft octaves, playing triads of G minor and D minor. Bar 23 returns to G minor and at bar 25 the harmony moves again to the dominant of D minor; however, this time the melody is firmly settled (see the example above) and does not conform naturally to a D minor triad, creating a suspension. This is a 7<sup>th</sup> note of the next phrase: at bar 27 the eight-bar phrase is repeated in sequence, and a touch louder with clarinets and bassoons adding depth at bar 31. The rising dynamics also give subtle attention to a glimmer of positivity.

Negative/dark atmosphere	Positive
Minor key(s)	Major 3 <sup>rd</sup> s during introduction
Dissonance heard in the introduction	Ascending melodic shape
Fateful timpani rhythm	Crescendo during modulation
<i>Pianissimo</i>	Perfect 5 <sup>th</sup> interval – first phrase

At bar 35 the piano solo enters. The change in the music is mirrored by Georgiana's decision and serves as a **hit point**. Portman prepares the solo entry by generating an ascending melodic progression. In bars 33–34 the melody is held on the note A above an E minor accompaniment. At bar 35, an unusual chromatic 'leading note' up to the piano's Bb facilitates the modulation. This is an unorthodox tertiary modulation from E minor to G minor with the note Bb, but it works a treat and is very effective. The standard, perfect cadence, orthodox modulation would have been too obvious a progression and would sound out of place. The 4<sup>th</sup>–G minor creates the desired effect.

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**Cue: 'Mistake of Your Life' bars 35–42, soundtrack 1:32–1:47, piano solo**



The beautiful piano solo contrasts with the opening string melody in several ways. As the opening string melody ascended as a rising sequence, the piano solo descends sequentially from G minor. Notice the powerful chord progression in bar 37 where the melody remains on G, while the bass line descends to E $\flat$ ; E $\flat$  provides a stark surprise after the lingering E minor tonality of bar 36. Harmonically the chord of E $\flat$  major is only one semitone away from G minor; the semitone is G to E $\flat$ . This subtle and beautiful progression has been deliberately explored. The unchanged melody in bar 37 creates a beautiful major 7<sup>th</sup> with the last D quaver of bar 36. The rhythm of the melody is also more active with much quaver movement, however, the violins and violas sustain held dotted-minim B $\flat$ s to accentuate the theme.

This theme represents inner strength within Georgiana and illustrates moments of courage to continue, for example DVD 53 minutes. The theme extends to Lady B's bravery and resists the Duke's instructions and accompanies Georgiana to the carriage (DVD 1:26:27).

Portman increases the use of instrumental forces during the piano solo by including the horns in bars 41–42 (the horns stop at bar 43 but the lower wind continues until bar 50) and a sustained swell and release chord of D minor with *cresc.* and *diminuendo* expressions.



**Activity Task:** Listen out for the inclusion of the woodwind and how this changes the texture of the music.

At bar 43 there is a return to the first melody heard at bar 19 and Portman returns the sequence scored earlier has now been altered and re-orchestrated to a 17-bar section. Georgiana engulfed with emotion as she reads the letters from her children and she has made her choice, sacrificing her own happiness and true love to be with him. The alterations are:

- 17-bar section – one added bar reinforcing the musical cadential effect at bar 44
- The 1<sup>st</sup> violin melody is now scored up an octave and starts *mp*
- Flute entry at bar 55 doubling the violin melody
- Increased quaver movement and momentum in piano, harp and cello section
- Contrary motion in the piano adding colour and depth
- Extra horns and brass with the introduction of two trombones for the first time
- Harmonic alteration: bars 57–59 have been melodically and harmonically altered to a D minor chord and set up a perfect V–I cadential progression to G minor in bar 60
- Notable crescendo: first time for *forte* in the cue and the climax of the music

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Bar 59 is the added extra bar and does not create an imbalance to the overall symmetry. Portman may have had to comply with strict screen synchronicity; however, the lingering extra bar reinforces and accentuates the climax of the cue: Portman scores a *cresc.* D major chord (F#, G, A – the G acting as a passing note). Indeed, the D major tonality started when

**Cue: 'Mistake of Your Life' bars 57–59, soundtrack 2:15–2:20**



Portman increases the melodic rhythm and uses passing notes to give it more drive in bar 60.

The full orchestra (without timpani) perform the rich piano solo melody at bar 60: the 1<sup>st</sup> violins, flute and high in the violas. The piano, harp and cellos provide the arpeggio patterns. The wind and basses sustain held dotted minims serving as background. To make the score sound even richer, Portman refers to string techniques used in **double-stopping**.

**Cue: 'Mistake of Your Life' bars 60–63, soundtrack 2:20–2:27**

The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> violin example above shows the upper string section divided; however, there is an instruction in the score from Portman directing the 2<sup>nds</sup> to divide the part. The example shows **double-stop** the notes (play them together on two strings – see glossary). Orchestral accompaniment in this way produces a rich, dense and sumptuous effect.

The harmonic and melodic pattern is identical to the piano solo (bar 35). The eighth chord, but this time the double basses stay on the 5<sup>th</sup> of the chord, the dominant, which destabilises the chord, giving a feeling of uncertainty as the basses sustain this note for several bars during the long *rallentando*. The quaver movement in piano, harp and cello has no pause marking in the score, bar 70 is in duple time and the *gran cassa* returns to triple time and the atmosphere of the introduction as the reality of the scene returns again. Note the absence of the timpani beats – perhaps Georgiana's heartbeat has been replaced by the sparse orchestration paves the way to the first melodic theme heard in bar 19. The choice of instrumentation again shows a very critical and careful choice of timbre.

The melody is repeated at pitch without ascending and the cue ends with a quiet melody in the strings. The cellos are near the bottom of their range, the basses have a bottom note that must have the mechanism to lower their lowest note E down a tone to D. This is a professional double bass player's task.

There are poignant moments throughout the film earlier where sections of 'Mistake of Your Life' the introduction of this cue accompanies the scene where Georgiana is desperate (DVD 47:40) having endured an emotionally painful scenario when finding her husband with her best friend and soulmate Lady Bess Foster, not discreetly but openly and

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At 49 minutes in the film there is a brief excerpt of the 'Mistake of Your Life' theme as Georgiana informs her supportive parent of the dire situation. Incidentally, the film has a Hitchcock-like soundscape: there is no music at first and the dialogue only starts as Georgiana's mother, played brilliantly by the actress Charlotte Rampling, pours tea. The sound of the china lid 'clink'. Perhaps a minor aural aspect, but as the tea pours into the teapot, we cannot see or place the sound at first because the camera comes slowly into focus, as if eavesdropping. The pouring tea possibly suggests a stream and the passing of time. In this way, it could represent the symbolic futility of the situation: water down a drain.

Georgiana's mother advises her to return to Devonshire House and maintain her position. This starts exactly after Countess Spencer says: 'You have no other option' (DVD 00:49).

The melodic theme from 'Mistake of Your Life' is used at poignant times earlier in the film. Georgiana watches the Duke express fatherly feelings while playing his violin (Lady Catherine DVD 52:30), when the Duke concedes the marriage arrangement is abhorrent to him (1:08:12 and 1:10:10).

## Cue: 'Never See Your Children Again'

This cue is another dark and tense track, which is surprising as Portman does not lean heavily on this material in her film score. On balance there is as much dispiriting and painful music in this cue as there is in the film.

'Never See Your Children Again' is an evocative, heart-rending cue with tragic undertones. Portman makes prominent use of the strings' lowest ranges and uses an altered theme from the film.

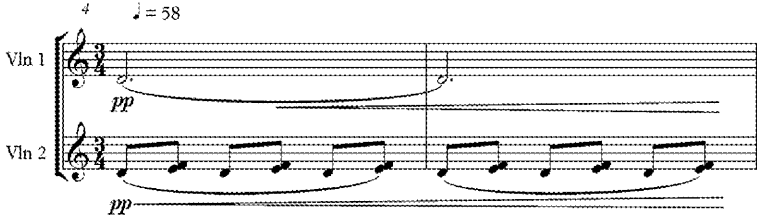


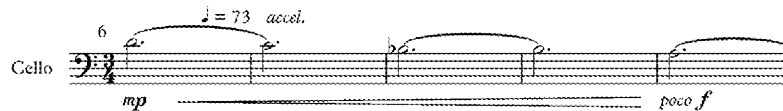
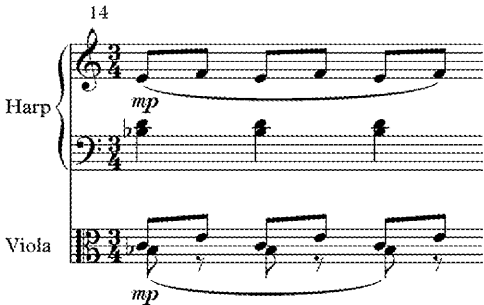
Portman uses dissonance cleverly in this cue. In bar 4 the 2<sup>nd</sup> violins play a quaver F and the 1<sup>st</sup> violins play a quaver G. The F and G are played together, causing a harsh semitone clash. The cue swells in dynamics as the strings enter but they do not double the 2<sup>nd</sup> violin dissonance. In fact, the violas play C and the cellos play F, which cease their dissonant clash by playing a simpler D to F pattern. Superimpose the strings and the dissonance returns. Portman maintains the semitone clashes without 'over-baking' the music. Perhaps this is a deliberate intention to prevent the music from becoming a derivative of the film. If dissonance is used too obtusely it can sabotage a scene, for example the murder of Lady Catherine using dissonance dextrously in order to create a delicate balance. Compare this to the music using hot chilli spices.



*William Cavendish, Fifth Duke of Devonshire by Pompeo Batoni, 1768*

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Bars / time	Musical device/effect
1 0:00	Introduction: <b>pedal</b> sustained on the <b>open string</b> note D No vibrato used, creating a cold string effect
4 0:11	<b>Dissonant quaver pattern</b> using clashing <b>minor 2<sup>nd</sup> intervals</b> 
6 0:17	<b>Slow ascending eight-bar melody</b> (variation from 'Mistake of Your Life')  Bb modal melody with clashing 2 <sup>nd</sup> s continued
	2 <sup>nd</sup> violins / violas expand quaver intervals. Note the E/F semitone. 
	Cellos play descending melody in <b>contrary motion</b> 
	Bars 10–13 sustain <b>ambiguous tonality</b> : hints of suspended D minor, A, and a cluster chord. The melody ends and holds a G, the bass note in the cluster. Notes D, E and F in accompaniment.
14 0:33	Subtle rhythmic change in accompaniment: harp and (inside desk) <b>divi</b> change to pulsating crotchets on Bb 

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16  
0:38

Repeated section (bar 6) but the melody is edited to a five-bar melody of eight bars: B♭ to C to held D. Use of **diminution**.

21  
0:56

*Diminuendo*

*Leitmotif* – ‘fate’ rhythm. The percussion symbolises the decision is Georgiana’s fate is sealed.

### Cue: ‘End Titles’

Bars	Timings	Theme	Inst
1–8	0:00	A + B	Strings and harp (introduction)
9–16	0:16	B	Solo cello with full orchestra (diminution), altered harp
17–24	0:33	B	Repeat of previous section
25–28	0:49	B	Cello theme B diminution
29–32	0:57	B	Cello theme B repeat with
33–40	1:05	B	Cello theme B extended (final phrase by another theme)
41–51	1:21	A	Full orchestra
51–54	1:41	B	Solo cello four-bar theme
55–61	1:48	B	Theme B repeat as coda

The music cue at the very end of the film is taken from the first cue ‘The Duchess’. Closer inspection reveals clever subtle development. The cue starts in the same eight bars it is identical to the ‘Duchess’ cue. Bar 9 is where the melodic and harmonic

**Cue: End Titles** bars 6–8, soundtrack 0:10–0:16 Theme B with cut

Violin 1

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The second four-bar phrase, known as theme B, is scored starting at bar 6 above but Portman cuts the last bar off, making it a shorter three-bar phrase and some unresolved. Perhaps this is observing some unresolved issues from the film; for the Duke and Georgiana are still living under the same roof as Georgiana at the end of the film, and the Duke remains devoted to Georgiana throughout the narrative. Harmonically, bar 8 above has the lower dominant, and when the next phrase begins the harmony has moved back onto the tonic (V–I) to D major. Cutting a bar does not detract from the strong dominant progression. Portman was well aware of this.

At bar 9 the cello solo starts. This means Portman has deleted the third phrase, with the 'Duchess' cue, again further destabilising the structure and musical expectations.

Pavel Bilousek's evocative solo cello playing performs the melody once more, by character Georgiana. The melody has some further embellishments and alterations in the next more bars:

**Cue: End Titles** bars 9–17, soundtrack 0:16–0:35 cello solo entry

Violoncello *espress.* *mf* 3

Vc. 5 3 (F major)



**Activity task:** Compare the reprise of the cello melody above with the 'Duchess' cue. Can you see the further cuts?

Portman's harmonisation of the melody above resonates throughout the film, and its influence illustrates and mirrors the initial narrative at the beginning. By the time many years have passed and a lot of story has unfolded; Georgiana is a different person so much, experienced pain, sorrow and loss and ultimately felt true love. Portman offers an alternative colour and atmosphere. Portman continues to use diminution of phrase lengths and note values of the melody. Look closely at the melody above; it has been deliberately cut from earlier cues, yet the melody still has an impact. Portman starts at bar 9 when the solo starts. The piano is doubling the harp arpeggios:

**Cue: End Titles** bars 9–13, soundtrack 0:16–0:27 piano part

*sempre legato*

*mp* *Red.* *sim.*

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Notice how the piano is used as a bass instrument with no material for the right hand. A point of interest is the use of the pedal: Portman has made a specific expressive instruction to the pianist to use the pedal across a full two bars. This would give a resonance that adds to the opening cello solo.

Bar 5 of the cello melody above (bar 13 of the extract) is harmonised in the orchestra. There are interesting points of note with this chord in this context. Firstly, this is the first time the cello is harmonised in this way. Secondly, the cello melody has remained unchanged, although the harmony has changed. This technique has been used throughout the Western classical tradition to develop harmonic interest and impact. For example, Elgar's cello concerto in E minor presents the first compound chord of a sustained tonic E bass, but later in the concerto the cello returns to the very same harmony and sustains an F# in the basses thus re-harmonising and destabilising the chord. F major has impact and without doubt sounds very beautiful. Choosing to harmonise the major 3<sup>rd</sup> note of a chord other than the 5<sup>th</sup> creates a completely different resonance.

Thirdly, F major is unrelated to the tonic key of D major in that the F# and C# accidentals are both cancelled out as naturals. To modulate to this chord requires some chromatic movement and resolution.

Lastly, Portman adds extra harmonic colour in the chords following on from the solo. In bars 15–16 Portman scores the accompaniment on G major with an added A which creates a subdominant plagal cadence progression, but the suggestion of the note A hints at a minor 7<sup>th</sup> chord setting up a dominant–tonic resolution for the next phrase starting in bar 17. This harmonic rhythm sound very fluid.

Portman also adds more string movement in the end credits. The basses are typically playing a steady eighth-note pattern; however, the violins, violas and cellos are all providing an 'inner strings' accompaniment.

**Inner strings:** a term used to describe the writing of string music where the inner strings share a conversational harmonic relationship in support of the 'outer parts' (the first violin, bass, better known as melody and bass). Observed in the string quartets of Beethoven and seen commonly in Romantic and modern works.

The inner strings are creating interest by using the following techniques and devices:

- Arpeggios
- Passing notes (slurred)
- *Divisi*
- String crossing

Bars 17–24 repeats bars 9–16. The example above illustrates how Portman decorates the cello with more quaver movement for the cello as the first bar of the following phrase (bar 17). Bars 17–18 include the horns playing in 3<sup>rd</sup>s (F# and A) for two bars only. Although this would give the beginning of the repeat phrase a fuller sound.

Portman scores all of the strings as *divisi* with the exception of the basses. The 1<sup>st</sup> violins are playing divided notes of a chordal or arpeggio-like accompaniment. The violas are playing an unusual scoring technique where there is a viola 1 part and a viola 2 part, and both have a flowing and crotchet arpeggio line, giving the piece momentum under the strings.

At bar 10 Portman gives a very specific instruction to the 2<sup>nd</sup> violins: the score shows that Portman has directed half of the 2<sup>nd</sup>s to slur the notes as written and the other half to play staccato. This illustrates that Portman was striving to achieve a particular string timbral effect.

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At bar 25 there is a four-bar phrase performed by the cello which is the second half of the first phrase.

**Cue: End Titles** bars 25–28, soundtrack 0:49–0:57 solo cello theme B with diminished accompaniment.



It is at this point Portman chooses to include the clarinet and bassoon sustaining the melody with a richer texture. The phrase is repeated but with the cello descending and subtle of accompaniment.

**Cue: End Titles** bars 29–32, soundtrack 0:57–1:05 solo cello theme B with melodic accompaniment.

At bars 31–32 the 2<sup>nd</sup> violins have a leap of a minor 7<sup>th</sup>, which stands out in the ensemble deliberately as a conversational device between the solo melody and the violins; at the end of the phrase another instrument takes centre stage briefly – similarly to people finishing a sentence another person begins to say something important. Interesting in this passage and the score instruction at bar 25 is *tutti violins 2*.

Bar 33 presents another repeat of the four-bar theme B phrase, but Portman turns it into three-bar phrases. This may be due to on-screen time parameters.

**Cue: End Titles** bars 33–40, soundtrack 1:05–1:20 solo cello theme B extended (continued)

Bars 33–35 is a shortened repeat of the phrase (theme B) and at bar 36 the next phrase is tied it on to the previous bar. The following four bars illustrate the use of augmented notes from bars 33–34 to crotchets in bar 38.

Bar 41 is the climax of the cue with full orchestra.

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**Cue: End Titles** bars 41–44, soundtrack 1:20–1:28 full orchestra

cue -----

Flute *f*

Clarinet in Bb *f*

Bassoon *f*

Horn in F *f*

Horn in F *f*

Trombone *f*

Violin 1 *f*

Violin 2 *f*

Viola *f*

Violoncello *f*

Double Bass *f*

The *forte* full orchestra section starting at bar 41 creates a rich and powerful atmosphere in several ways:

- Loud dynamics, the first time *forte* is marked.
- Extended range – much of the string writing is on the lower strings of the instruments. The violas play mostly on the bottom G and D strings deliberately in order to produce a deep sound. The violins are playing music in their top string (E string) range, consequently producing a bright sound.
- Contrary motion is used between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> violins.
- Portman combines two themes together: the violins and flute play a variation of theme A, which is rhythmically altered to repeat the F#–E; the example below shows the two variations.
- Portman includes an altered theme B in the violas and clarinet playing simultaneously, which is taken from the solo cello melody.

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**Cue: End Titles** bars 41–44, altered theme A compared to original theme A

altered theme A

original theme A

Portman has used the falling F#–E tone as a decoration for the original theme, but the prominent character for the extended theme.

The violas supported by clarinet play part of theme B which is the opening phrase of theme B.

**Cue: End Titles** bars 41–44 violas and clarinet compared to opening cello solo melody

violas / clarinet

cello solo

The viola/clarinet phrase has two effects: firstly it serves as an effective counterpoint to the flute, enriching the texture, and secondly it is based on the solo cello melody, which provides a sense of continuity and comfort, albeit subconsciously to most.

From bar 45 there is a *decrescendo* preparing the final return of the cello solo which is heard in the final scene.

The cello returns with a repeat of bars 25–28 (theme B), but Portman re-orchestrates it with a flowing accompaniment in the violins not heard previously. Below are the extracts of the cello solo.

**Cue: End Titles** bars 51–54, soundtrack 1:40–1:48 cello solo with violins

Violins

Violoncello

The final seven bars is similar to bars 33–40 in that we hear the cello theme repeated with some augmentation.

The full-score example of the last seven bars is provided below. Note the quaver piano giving momentum and forward motion. Then four bars from the end the violin enters with a melody of most of the interest, as the solo cello holds onto the final paused note G for three bars; interestingly the soloist finishes a bar earlier. Also note the cellos, having a crotchet movement at bar 58.

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Cue: End Titles bars 55–61, soundtrack 1:48–2:05 final phrase

cue -----

Bassoon *p*

Horn in F

Harp *meno mf*  
cue -----

Piano *meno mf*

Violin 1

Violin 2 *meno mf*

Viola *meno mf*

Cello solo

Violoncello *meno mf*

Double Bass *meno mf*

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Score for the following instruments:

- Bsn.
- Hn.
- Hp.
- Pno.
- Vln. 1
- Vln. 2
- Vla.
- Vc.
- Vc.
- Db.

The score is written for a full orchestra. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains the Bsn., Hn., Hp., and Pno. staves. The second system contains the Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., Vc., Vc., and Db. staves. The Vln. 1 and Vln. 2 parts are marked *mf*. The Bsn. part is marked *p*. The Hp. and Pno. parts are marked *p*. The Vla. and Vc. parts are marked *mf*. The Vc. and Db. parts are marked *p*.

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# Revision Summary

	<i>Psycho</i>	<i>Batman Returns</i>
<b>Date</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1992</b>
<b>Genre</b>	<b>Horror thriller</b>	<b>Science-fiction fantasy</b>
<b>Historical, social and cultural context</b>	Black and white (to save money and emphasise the Hitchcock effect)	Fantasy project realised by Tim Burton, encouraged by Warner Bros
<b>Purpose and intention; audience, time and place</b>	Self-financed Hitchcock project; adult movie  Time – present	Warner Bros-encouraged sequel; teenage film Time – fantasy dimension (present)
<b>Melody and Harmony</b>	Melody built on three- and eight-note patterns Chromatic  Harmony very dissonant	Melody built on the tritone and resolving/unresolving
<b>Tonality structure and form</b>	Atonal cluster chords (shower scene), elusive tonic note ( <i>Psycho</i> theme) <i>Leitmotif</i> Two main thematic sections of the film	Minor/major ambiguity (reflecting characters including Batman as a dark character) <i>Leitmotif</i>
<b>Sonority</b>	Strings only (superb string writing), real instruments Mutes used 90% of the time	Percussion dominance and toy instruments Samples and orchestral libraries
<b>Texture</b>	Largely homophonic except for final scenes	Layering ('The Circus')
<b>Tempo, metre and rhythm</b>	Cross-rhythms	Much use of augmentation/diminution of themes
<b>Dynamics</b>	Mostly soft except <i>Psycho</i> theme and murder scene where strings accented and microphones/reverb used intensely	Much use of swells <i>cresc.</i> and <i>dim.</i> Extremes <b><i>ff–pp</i></b> (just like <i>The Simpsons</i> )
<b>Musical devices and specific terminology</b>	Sigh motif (falling semitone in <i>Psycho</i> theme) Cluster chords Dissonance	Augmentation, diminution Sigh motif ('Penguin' theme) Augmented 5 <sup>th</sup>

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# Comparisons Between the Set

The three prescribed works demonstrate different approaches and style in film score. Herrmann's music score for *Psycho* presents a Golden Age genre combined with an expressionist use of tonality and instrumental techniques. Elfman shows the use of an unorthodox use of harmony and melodic design. Portman's style is also distinctive with Romantic string writing supported by light woodwind. She steers away from sameness with traditional score formats.

- Herrmann was influenced by late Romantic and modern composers.
- Elfman was influenced and inspired by Herrmann as a child.
- Portman was influenced by theatre productions and independent film projects rather than the blockbuster music style.

When comparing the three prescribed works it is essential to use the Elements of Music:


- Organisation of pitch (melodically and harmonically)
- Tonality
- Structure (organising of musical material)
- Sonority
- Texture
- Tempo, metre and rhythm (how music is organised in time)
- Dynamics (use of dynamics)











Identify strong melodic passages within each set work, one from each, and compare. Herrmann uses chromatic conjunct step movement in the *Psycho* prelude whereas Elfman uses conventional diatonic melodic design in *The Duchess* end titles. Portman uses a sign of her style in her melodies while adhering to diatonic harmonic structures, e.g. 'Birth of a Penguin'.

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Below is a table with some examples for each of the elements above showing similarities between the three prescribed works. Similarities between the works within each musical element are marked with the following symbol: 

Musical Element	<i>Psycho</i> Bernard Herrmann	<i>Batman Returns</i> Danny Elfman
<b>Organisation of pitch</b>	Conjunct scalar melodic patterns using dissonant intervals and resisting resolution (Prelude) 	Disjunct leaps and non-diatonic melodic intervals Chromatic chord use ('Birth of a Penguin' part 2) 
<b>Tonality</b>	Dissonant; chromatic harmonies and ambiguous tonic keys ('Toys') 	Elusive harmonies, often using polytonality ('Batman vs The Circus') 
<b>Sonority</b>	Limited resources; muted string section throughout except murder scene; superb use of strings ('The Murder')	Extensive orchestral resources used together alongside digital samples and synthesisers ('Rise and Fall from Grace' part 2) 
<b>Tempo, metre and rhythm</b>	Ostinato and rhythmic cells multi-layered and orchestrated (Prelude) 	Use of augmentation and diminution with melody and much use of syncopation – layered (Main theme, 'Birth of a Penguin' part 1) 
<b>Texture</b>	Mixed use of homophony and polyphony ('The Discovery' and 'The Finale')	Mainly homophonic throughout (typically 'Birth of a Penguin' part 2) 
<b>Dynamics</b>	Muted strings and mostly ' <i>sotto voce</i> ' and understated throughout with the exception of the prelude and murder scenes ('The City') 	Mostly <i>forte</i> with occasional contrasts in dynamics illustrating childlike innocence of The Penguin ('Birth of a Penguin' Part 1) 

## Comparison Tasks

- Choose one of the elements above and make independent notes on how they are used in the three prescribed works.
- Find an example of *leitmotif* for Marion, The Penguin and the Duchess and compare them.
- Find an example of syncopation in all three films.
- Identify a section of homophonic writing in each film and label the type of sound.
- Find an example of dissonance in all three films.
- Find an example of unusual or clever sonority in all three films.
- One student in the group could describe the music of a scene from a prescribed work. The rest of the group need to identify the prescribed work from the cue title or film. The rest of the group need to identify the prescribed work from the cue title or film.
- Locate a cue of your choice with the most extreme changes in dynamic contour.
- Find an example of unidiomatic instrumental writing in all three pieces.

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# Exam Information – AS Le

## The Exam – Component 3: Appraising

### AS – 90 minutes

The specification states component 3 will develop students' ability to listen to and appraise music across a variety of genres of music divided into six areas of study, each with two set works.

The distribution of Areas of Study in the exam is not set and there will not be all types of question for all Areas of Study.

Film music set works:

- ***Batman Returns* 1992 music by Danny Elfman**
- ***The Duchess* 2008 music by Rachel Portman**

The exam takes extracts from all areas of study.

### Section A – 4 questions (1–4) (45 marks)

The first part of the exam will contain familiar music from the set works and students' knowledge of the key elements and language of the music in relation to the music. There will be three questions based on extracts with audio and a skeleton score; as in previous exams, students will have control over the audio with individual headphones per candidate. Section A also includes a question on completing a melody or rhythm. This exercise is known as dictation and is the fourth question in Section A.

### Section B – 2 questions (5–6) (35 marks)

The second part of the exam will feature questions on both unfamiliar film music and live music. The exam board have labelled this part of the exam 'extended response' and it will feature two questions. Question 5 will be an essay question on an unfamiliar piece of music with audio provided. Question 6 will be an essay taken from a choice of three questions, each from a different area of study. There will be no audio for question 6 but a full score will be provided.

All questions must be answered in the exam, except number 6 which will contain a choice of three questions. Students must answer one. Remember, the distribution of Areas of Study in the exam is not set and there will not be all types of question for all Areas of Study.

### Types of question in the AS exam:

NB: there will not be all types of question for all Areas of Study, so there may not be choice, or extended-writing questions on film music.

#### Multiple-choice question

Example:

Put a cross in the box next to the statement that is true.

The opening two bars uses a rhythmic feature best described as:

- ☐ Dotted rhythm
- ☐ Syncopation
- ☐ Displacement
- ☐ *Ostinato*

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Before you play the extract, consider the technicalities of each rhythmic feature. syncopated, what would it sound like?

### Short open question

Example:

Describe how the composer uses the instruments to create a musical special effect.

To gain marks in this question, students must know how the instruments from the Knowledge of the prescribed works is paramount. Knowledge is juxtaposed with perceptive discernment. Furthermore, to relate the instrumental techniques with gain more marks as an extended answer. Edexcel are looking for development; more than one mark can be awarded according to exam marking criteria.

### Extended writing question

Example:

How is the choral section of bars 10–16 different from the instrumental introduction?

Extended writing questions suggest a short essay, but there are questions in section some extended writing. Not all areas of study need to be addressed. Students will question on whatever area of study is focused on. There is no structure in a question students will need to build their own structure by ensuring all of the elements are tonality, structure, sonority, texture, rhythm and dynamics. The use of keywords is crucial.

The exam marking criteria follow a 'levels' approach where the examiner will find to be placed in as a 'best fit' approach. The quality of the answer content is holistic rubric as an assessment objective. Top-level bands are looking for:

- explanation of elements and linking the elements of music to the appropriate using relevant works to justify points made
- musical terminology and vocabulary
- justification of musical links to the genre

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# Exam Information – A Level

Remember, at AS Level two set works are studied for each area of study but at A Level three (see the contents page). As with AS, the distribution of Areas of Study in the exam is not the same for all types of question for all Areas of Study.

## The Exam – Component 3: Appraising

### A Level – 2 hours

The main difference with A Level is that the length of the exam increases, and there is another set work in each area of study making a total of three set works × 6. The two set works at AS Level (music from *The Duchess* and *Batman Returns*) are included at A Level with the addition of *Psycho* (1960) music by Bernard Herrmann.

The assessment objective is similar: listen to and appraise music across a variety of genres of music divided into six areas of study. However, the expectation and assessment of work at A Level standard is advanced, as detailed in the summaries below.

The exam takes extracts from all areas of study (similar to AS).

### Section A – 4 questions (1–4) (50 marks)

The first part of the exam will contain familiar music from the set works, and students will need to use their aural perception plus the knowledge of the key elements and language of the music listened to in context, showing critical understanding across the genres and traditions. Questions will be based on extracts with audio and a skeleton score; as with the AS paper, students have control over the audio with individual headphones per candidate. There will be an exercise on completing a melody or rhythm. This exercise is known as dictation and is part of completing section A.

### Section B – 2 questions (5–6) (50 marks)

A Level requires more sophisticated judgements and connections between the music and the film. Students will need to perceive the more complex relationship between the musical elements and the film, using a more sophisticated vocabulary showing a greater understanding. The second part of the exam will focus on unfamiliar film music and the three set works. There will be essay-type questions. There will be two questions on AS. The first question will be an essay question on an unfamiliar piece of music with audio. The second question will be an essay taken from a choice of three questions, each with audio. There will be no audio for question 6 but a full score will be provided.

All questions must be answered in the exam, except number 6 which will contain a choice of three questions. Students must answer one. NB: there will not be all types of question for all Areas of Study.

Exam questions may ask how the music integrates with the screen, which musical elements are used, and how the music enhances the dialogue. Specific elements of the music such as **tonality** and **sonority** may be the focus of questions asked. This resource will explain the requirements of the specification to prepare candidates for the exam. Each film will be studied in detail, focusing on the characteristics and composition styles in the development of music for film and the extensive analysis and study.

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# Practice Exam Question

## Short Answer

### 1. *Psycho* (A Level)

Herrmann: *Psycho* 'The Finale' 0:00–0:47 bars 1–12

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p\\_n-Yht18q8&list=PLA46DDFC560D246](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_n-Yht18q8&list=PLA46DDFC560D246)

**adagio e mesto**

- Name the instrumental section playing the first two bars.
  - Violin
  - Viola
  - Cello
  - Double bass
- Describe the texture of bars 3–9.
- Identify the melodic interval of the first two notes of bar 1.
- Describe the tonality of this extract with reference to melodic material.

### 2. *Batman Returns* (AS and A Level)

Elfman: *Batman Returns* 'Birth of a Penguin' Part 1 0:00–0:43

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m-Ryz8v31bw&list=PL8107A023B1A89>

'Bat' theme 0:03–0:12

**adagio**

- The time signature for the opening of this piece is:
  - 4/4
  - 3/4
  - 3/8
  - 3/2

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- (b) What key is the opening section above? Name the scale used.
- (c) Compare the 'Penguin' theme melody 0:13–0:25 with the 'Bat' theme melody 0:26–0:34 in terms of tonality and instrumentation.

- (d) Name the melodic device employed by Elfman at 0:26–0:34 (score above).

### 3. *The Duchess* (AS and A Level)

Portman: 'Six Years Later' 0:04–0:27

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hjhpr4N5du0&index=10&list=PL2AC4C>

- (a) The instruments which play the melody of the extract above are:  
 A: Harps  
 B: Cellos  
 C: Violins  
 D: Violas
- (b) Describe the texture in bars 5–8.
- (c) Name the musical direction used in bars 1, 5, 13, 17 and 25.
- (d) Identify the instrumental effect used at the beginning of bar 17 in the extract and the instrument playing it.
- (e) Locate and identify the melodic interval at bar 25 beats 2–3.
- (f) Identify the rhythmic features used in this excerpt.

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## A Level Only – Extended Response

### 1. Portman: 'Never See Your Children Again'

DVD 1:16:00 Complete Soundtrack

Explain how Portman musically reflects tension in this cue. Refer to instruments used.

### 2. Elfman: *Batman Returns*

'Batman vs The Circus' DVD 0:51:53 Soundtrack 0:52

Explain how the use of melody and rhythm creates the atmosphere of a circus.

### 3. Herrmann: *Psycho*

'The Murder' shower scene DVD 45:21

Explain three ways in which Herrmann creates music suitably characteristic of the scene.

## Melodic Transcription

**Please note: in the AS and A Level exams, the extracts in transcription questions will not be taken from set works or wider listening pieces. resource, for practice and to encourage familiarity, the extracts to be taken from the set works.**

Helpful hint: Transcription questions are easier to answer if you can spot the pattern observed in the given notation.

### 1. *The Duchess*

Listen to solo cello melody (cue: *The Duchess* Main Title, bars 27–34 soundtrack). Complete the notation of bars 29–30.

27



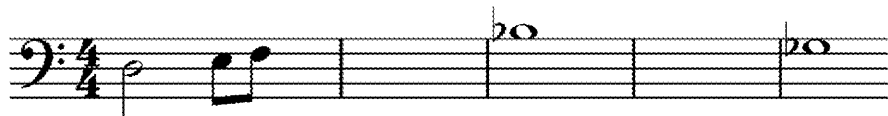
### 2. *Psycho*

Listen to the beginning of Marion's theme (cue: 'Marion', soundtrack 0:01–0:04). Complete the notation of bars 2–4.



### 3. *Batman Returns*

Listen to the beginning of the *Batman Returns* main theme (cue: Main Theme, bars 8–13 DVD 0:02:35, track 0:14 ('Birth of a Penguin' part 2)). Complete the notation of bars 9–10.



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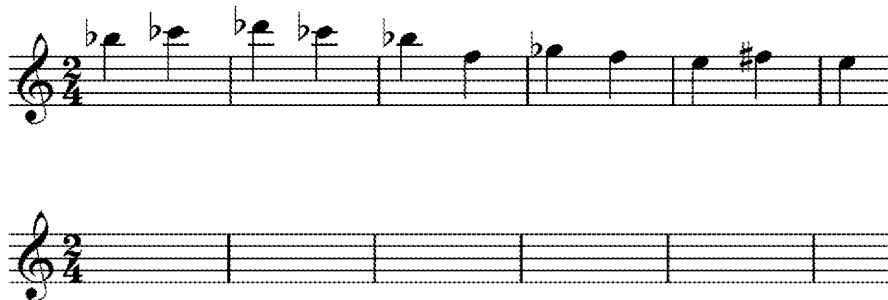
## 'Correct-the-Melody'-Type Question – AS Level

### 1. *Psycho*

Listen to the cue: *Psycho* Prelude 'Psycho Theme' bars 37–44 0:28–0:36  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyLD9bydXEk>

The extract below contains **three** errors.

Find the errors and write out the melody correctly on the stave below.



### 2. *The Duchess*

Listen to the piano solo cue: 'Mistake of Your Life' bars 35–42, soundtrack 1  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPic8TZNskc&index=2&list=PL2AC4CC0>

The extract below contains **three** errors in the right-hand part.

Find the errors and write out the melody correctly on the stave below.

The first system of music shows the original melody for The Duchess piano solo cue 'Mistake of Your Life' bars 35–42. The melody is written in 3/4 time on a treble clef staff. The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half). The second system is a blank 3/4 treble clef staff for the student to write the correct melody.

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## Long Answer – AS

1. Evaluate the use of sonority and instrumental technique in Bernard Herrmann's score. Relate your answer to other prescribed works or relevant wider listening.
2. Evaluate the use of tonality and texture in Portman's film score *The Duchess*. Relate your answer to other prescribed works or relevant listening.

## Long Answer – A Level

1. Evaluate the use of melody, harmony and tonality in Bernard Herrmann's score. Relate your answer to other prescribed works or relevant wider listening.
2. Evaluate the use of musical characterisation and *leitmotif* in Danny Elfman's score. Relate your answer to other prescribed works or relevant wider listening.
3. Evaluate Portman's use of melody, tonality and texture in the orchestral film score. Relate your answer to the sense of tension and pain. Link your answer to other prescribed works or relevant wider listening.

Sample answers for questions 2 and 3 are provided in the 'Sample Essay Answers' section.

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# Answers

## Short-answer Questions

### 1. *Psycho* (A Level)

- (a) viola
- (b) contrapuntal, polyphonic, fugal – 1 for each up to 2
- (c) aug 5<sup>th</sup> or dim 6<sup>th</sup>
- (d) atonal, bitonal, dissonance, viola, chromatic, melody with leaps, non-diatonic, suspensions

### 2. *Batman Returns* (AS and A Level)

- (a) 3/2
- (b) B minor / B minor harmonic
- (c) both minor key, 'Penguin' theme is chromatic, bat theme open 5<sup>th</sup> chord, both 'Penguin' theme moves in step, 'Bat' theme has a leap, 'Penguin' theme represented by low brass (1 mark for each up to 3)
- (d) augmentation, modulation

### 3. *The Duchess*

- (a) violins
- (b) homophonic texture
- (c) *staccato*
- (d) arpeggio played into the beat, harp
- (e) minor 3<sup>rd</sup>
- (f) triple time, *staccato*, if performed one in a bar offbeat melody bars 11, 15, 19,

## A Level Only – Extended Response

### 1. Portman: 'Never See Your Children Again'

If students identify a point then 1 mark can be awarded for each. A further point can be awarded for each point that is identified, described and develops an initial point. Points must be made for instrumental sonority and tonality. If students offer no development then only 1 mark for each.

Instrumental sonority: Held pedal D note (1) on the open string at the beginning of the cue. *Pianissimo* violins alternating quaver patterns (1). Swapping of pedal note from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> string (1). Doubling of melody in cellos (1). A quieter dynamic than violins when doubling melody (1). No vibrato in string playing (1). Percussion used very quietly at the end of the cue (1).

Tonality: No secure key (1). Modal scalar melody (1). Minor 2<sup>nds</sup> in 2<sup>nd</sup> violins (1). Dissonant progression D minor, Am<sup>7</sup>, cluster chord (1). Contrary descending melody in cellos (1). Chromatic movement in the bass line played by the cellos (1). Altered diminution and chord resolution (1).

### 2. Elfman: *Batman Returns*

If students identify a point then 1 mark can be awarded for each. A further point can be awarded for each point that is identified, described and develops an initial point. Points must be made for melody and rhythm and a mark for each exam parameter. If students offer no development then only 1 mark for each.

Melody: Disjunct melodic patterns (1). Non-diatonic (1). Limited thematic material is important to note (further explanation) that the 'Circus' theme **does not have** the character motifs and the theme is seen more of a '**backing track**' instead of reflecting the character of the villains (1). The reason for this is deliberate, as Elfman is aware the circus is a place of shallow wisdom and understanding (1). The circus carnival-style melody whenever the **henchmen are present, usually in fight/action scenes** (1). The music in this scene is a classic example of '**Mickey-Mousing**' (1), e.g. Batman crash accompanied by brass swell and cymbal crash (1). This is also known as a **hit point** (1).

Rhythm: Heavy use of **syncopation** (1) and exaggerated **offbeat accents** (1) emulating a circus walk. *Ostinato* (1). The music **score is like a fight** itself: Batman and the circus trying to win the fight. There is pulling back and forth between themes and a great deal of **layering** of themes (1).

Accept other reasonable responses.

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### 3. Herrmann: *Psycho*

If students identify a point then 1 mark can be awarded for each. A further point can be awarded for each point that identifies, explains and develops an initial point and a max of 4 marks is available similar to exam parameters. If a student identifies a point and develops it then only the first mark stands.

In the murder scene the sound of the flowing water (1) is a **diegetic soundscape (1)**. At first the soundscape provides a peaceful balance to the scene, reflecting Marion's lulling the viewer into a false sense of security. **Sound effects:** (1) stabbing a casaba knife entering flesh (1).

**Hit point:** (1) the music shocks the viewer as much as the violent ripping back of the 'slasher' theme: **grotesquely (1) dissonant (1)**.

An example of **thematic transformation (1)**: Herrmann scored the rhythm of the eight psychological scoring and the choice of notes is deliberate. The E $\flat$  and E $\sharp$  represent the heard in 'The Prelude' and 'The City' cues (1).

**Top-range** upper strings, (1) starting on E $\flat$ , (1) with the 2<sup>nd</sup> violins playing the discord. the exception of the basses, cascading down with **chord clusters (1)** following a pattern descends in pitch but rises **chromatically (1)** from E $\flat$  to G $\flat$ . Use of **microphones (1)** to

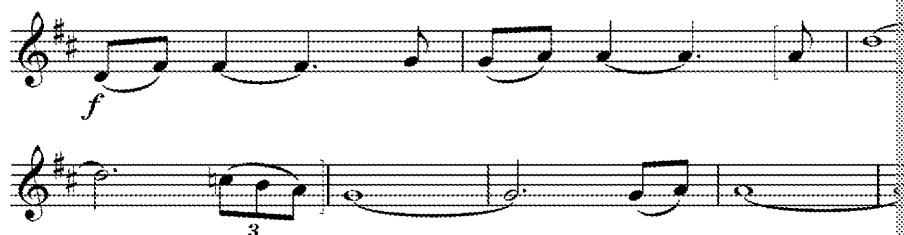
Accept other reasonable responses.

## Melodic Transcription

### 1. *The Duchess*

There are six pitches and six durations to complete:

27



- 0 0 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 1 1–2 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 2 3–4 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 3 5–7 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 4 7–8 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 5 9–10 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 6 11–12 pitches and/or note lengths correct

Award one mark for each accurately notated correction.

NB: Marks will be awarded only for correct responses at error points – ignore any incorrect responses.

### 2. *Psycho*

There are five pitches and five durations to complete:



- 0 0 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 1 1–2 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 2 3–4 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 3 5 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 4 6–7 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 5 8–9 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 6 10 pitches and/or note lengths correct

Award one mark for each accurately notated correction.

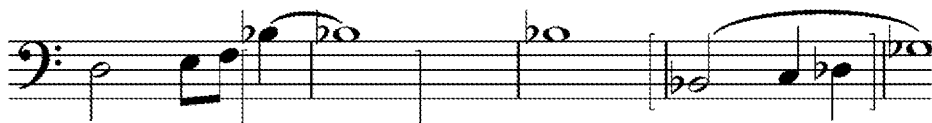
NB: Marks will be awarded only for correct responses at error points – ignore any incorrect responses.

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### 3. *Batman Returns*

There are five pitches and durations to complete:



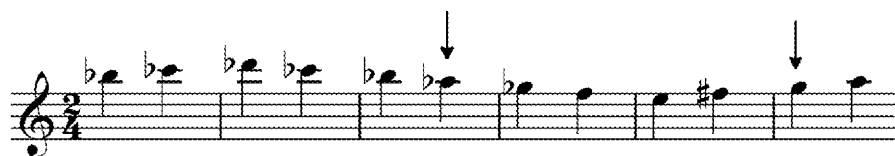
Award one mark for each accurately notated correction.

NB: Marks will be awarded only for correct responses at error points – ignore any incorrect responses.

- 0 0 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 1 1–2 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 2 3–4 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 3 5 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 4 6–7 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 5 8–9 pitches and/or note lengths correct
- 6 10 pitches and/or note lengths correct

## Correct the Melody – AS Level

### 1. *Psycho*



### 2. *The Duchess*



Award one mark for each accurately notated correction.

NB: Marks will be awarded only for correct responses at error points – ignore any incorrect responses.

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## Long Answer – AS

1. Evaluate the use of sonority and instrumental technique in Bernard Herrmann's score to *Psycho* to other prescribed works or relevant wider listening.

### Indicative Comment

AO3 (10) AO4 (10)

Herrmann – *Psycho*

In the exam candidates must show the ability to apply musical knowledge and combine it with critical judgements about the prescribed work and related music.

Instrumental technique and sonorities: idiomatic string instrumentation techniques

Sonority:

- Romantic orchestration with limited small orchestra (AO3)
- Strings only (AO3)
- String chords used often, making the score sound fuller (AO4)
- Viola melody unusual sonority – finale (AO4)
- String counterpoint – finale, prelude (AO3)
- *Glissando* ('The City'), dreamy atmosphere (AO4)

Instrumental technique:

- Use of string techniques such as double-stopping, *pizzicato*, harmonics and tremolos
- Use of range – murder scene, toys, cellar, *Psycho* theme (AO3)
- Mutes – 99% of the score is muted as effective underscoring – toys, cellar, finale, without mutes (AO4)
- Use of vibrato in the score (AO3)
- Theme largely based on string techniques and would not be as effective if played by other instruments (prelude and murder) (AO4)
- NB: Other valid points should be rewarded
- Links to instrumental techniques should be rewarded (AO4)

Reference could be made to other films with innovative and idiomatic use of instruments

- Herrmann *Vertigo* (strings including harps)
- John Barry *Goldfinger* or similar Bond scores
- Bernstein *The Magnificent Seven* (full orchestra)
- Morricone *The Mission* (harpsichord/panpipes) or *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly* (guitar)
- Thomas Newman *The Shawshank Redemption* (timbral contrasts)

### Marks

See Edexcel marking criteria in example materials.

2. Evaluate the use of tonality and texture in Portman's film score *The Duchess* to portman's answer to other prescribed works or relevant listening.

### Indicative Comment

AO3 (10) AO4 (10)

Students will have to demonstrate skills in analysis / evaluation / making judgements

Harmony:

- Portman consonant melodic development and diminution (AO3)
- Dissonance ('Mistake of Your Life' and 'Never See Your Children Again') (AO3)
- Modal tonality – *The Duchess* lack of raised leading notes (AO3)
- Use of major keys ('Six Years Later') (AO4)
- *Leitmotif* continued thematically and instrumentally (AO3)
- Thematic transformation – e.g. 'Mistake of Your Life' melody altered in 'Never See Your Children Again' theme taken from 'The Duchess Main Title' (AO3)
- Fate *leitmotif*, e.g. the heartbeat timpani (AO3)
- Humour – syncopated theme and modal 'Six Years Later' (waltz) (AO4)
- Poignant 'Mistake of Your Life' used as a love theme representing Georgiana's love for

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**Texture:**

- Careful instrumentation textural combinations and attention to detail ('Six Years') (AO3)
- Mainly homophonic melody on top of chords (AO3)
- 'Mistake of Your Life' linking the 'Never See Your Children Again' and 'The Duke' permeating the narrative (AO4)
- Instrumental textures – high-range cello solo (AO4)
- Tension and release (AO4)
- NB: Other valid points should be rewarded (AO4)

**Wider listening (AO4):**

- Yann Tiersen: *Amélie*
- Ennio Morricone: *The Mission* (solo themes)
- Dario Marinelli: *Atonement, Pride and Prejudice*
- Des'ree: 'Kissing You' from Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet*
- Alan Silvestri: *Castaway*
- Phillip Glass: *The Hours*
- Alexandra Desplat: *Coco Avant Chanel, Girl with the Pearl Earring*

**Marks**

See Edexcel marking criteria in example materials.

## Long Answer – A Level

1. Evaluate the use of melody, harmony and tonality in Bernard Herrmann's score for *The Silence of the Lambs* or prescribed works or relevant wider listening.

**Indicative Comment**

AO 3 (10) AO4 (20)

Students will have to demonstrate skills in analysis / evaluation / making judgements. A score that was designed to create tension and build suspense throughout. Focus on the use of dissonance and any effects that produce an eerie effect.

**Melody:**

- Dissonant (AO3)
- Chromatic (Prelude, 'The City', murder scene, 'Toys', 'Cellar') (AO4)
- Scalic conjunct (Prelude, 'The City', 'Discovery') (AO3)
- Percussive (Prelude) (AO4)
- Use of *ostinato* to develop melody (Prelude, 'Discovery', 'Toys') (AO4)
- Layered melodic design ('The Cellar') (AO4)
- Use of counterpoint (Finale) (AO4)
- Absence of melodic material (Prelude sections) (AO3)

**Harmony:**

- Effective harmony for horror/thriller (AO4)
- Chromatic chords
- Cluster chords (AO4)
- Alternating tonic chromatically to create eerie scene ('Toys' – cellos) (AO4)
- Use of semitones (murder scene) (AO4)
- Parallel chords (AO3)
- Added 7<sup>th</sup>s, 9<sup>th</sup>s, etc. (AO3)

**Tonality:**

- Dissonance (grotesque at times), polytonality, bitonality, atonality (AO3)
- Tonal ambiguity and avoiding an E♭ tonic anchor (prelude) (AO4)
- Links to New Directions music – modern art music, expressionism, atonality, post-tonality (AO4)

NB: Other valid points should be rewarded. (AO4)

Reference could be made to other films with a strong use of melody, harmony and tonality

- John Williams *Indiana Jones* series, *Star Wars*, *Jurassic Park* (melodic development)
- Arnold *The Bridge over the River Kwai* ('Colonel Bogey' march)
- Carpenter *Halloween* (harmonic development)

**Marks**

See Edexcel marking criteria in example materials.

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2. Evaluate the use of musical characterisation and *leitmotif* in Danny Elfman's score for *Batman Returns*. Link your answer to other prescribed works or relevant wider listening.

### Indicative comment

AO3 (10) AO4 (20)

Students will have to demonstrate skills in analysis / evaluation / making judgements  
Focus on musical characterisation linked to *leitmotif* and any form of musical characterisation.

Themes linked musically (AO4):

- 'Bat' theme harmony – open 5<sup>th</sup>, ambiguous major/minor, chromatic (AO4)
- 'Penguin' – chromatic also (AO3), ambiguous major/minor key (AO4)
- Comic 'Circus' theme (AO4)
- 'Catwoman' – chromatic and similar shape/inversion to 'Penguin' theme (AO4)

Tonality very similar themes (AO4):

- *Leitmotif* themes often separated through the use of instrumentation: (AO3)
- Batman: brass/fanfares (AO3)
- Penguin: female chorus hinting at child innocence plus celesta (AO4)
- Catwoman: strings imitating cat effects (AO3)
- 'Mickey-Mousing' themes within action scenes (AO3)
- No *leitmotif* for Max Shreck – justified? (AO4)
- Comparisons to *Psycho* use of *leitmotif*: use of numbers in *Psycho* – similar treatment

Reference could be made to other films with a strong use of *leitmotif*, such as:

- Williams: *Star Wars*
- Shore: *Lord of the Rings*
- Elfman: *Edward Scissorhands* (AO4)
- Horner: *Braveheart*, *Titanic*
- Rozsa: *An Uncertain Affair*

NB: Other valid points should be rewarded.

### Marks

See Edexcel marking criteria in example materials.

3. Evaluate Portman's use of melody, tonality and texture in the orchestral film score for *Requiem for a Dream*. Link your answer to other prescribed works or relevant wider listening.

### Indicative Comment

AO3 (10) AO4 (20)

Students will have to demonstrate skills in analysis / evaluation / making judgements  
Focus on use of elements.

Melody

- Modal unorthodox melodic design (AO4)
- Regular melodic adjustment (diminution) (AO4)
- Absence of melody ('Six Years Later' ending) (AO4)
- Augmentation/diminution linked to *Batman Returns* (AO4)

Tonality

- Dissonance – linked to *Psycho* / *Batman Returns* (AO4)
- Cluster chords ambiguous harmony (AO3)
- Insecure major/minor keys (AO3)
- Chromaticism (AO3)
- Transformation of themes in various cues/scenarios (AO4)
- Pedals (AO3)

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**Texture**

- Homophonic structures (AO4)
- Countermelody and contrary motion (AO4)
- Monophonic pedal introductions (AO4)
- Orchestration (AO4)
- Woodwind writing for colour (AO3)
- Ambiguity of instrumental sounds (AO4)
- Extremities and range of dynamics (AO4)

NB: Other valid points should be rewarded.

Reference could be made to other films with a strong use of melody, tonality and texture

- Herrmann: *Psycho*
- Shore: *The Silence of the Lambs*
- Desplat: *The Curious case Of Benjamin Button*
- Hans Zimmer: *The Holiday* ('Maestro')
- Raksin: *Laura*
- Rota: *The Godfather*
- Goldsmith: *Alien* (AO4)

**Marks**

See Edexcel marking criteria in example materials.

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# Sample Essay Answers

**Evaluate the use of tonality and texture in Portman's film score *The Duchess* to  
Relate your answer to other prescribed works or relevant listening.**

Characterisation is of paramount importance in the film industry, as it connects cast and main characters with the audience and in doing so connects with the plot, narrative and on-screen action. There are several ways to achieve this, through costume, camera lens, make-up to name a few. Musically, film composers use a variety of techniques through the use of themes per character via a technique known as leitmotif. Instruments, melody, harmony, rhythm, structures and textures, all of which can be used to characterise a character. Sometimes musical characterisation techniques are very unsubtle, as in *Star Wars Episode IV* where the texture and melody is full homophony with showcasing power and authority. What makes this particular example of *Vader's march* is in the major key (G, E♭, B♭), not minor as expected, and the instruction to the composer that the villain of the movie was in fact, *not* a villain. This illustrates the complexities often found in musical characterisation.

A leitmotif is a recurrent theme throughout a piece of music most commonly associated with a person, time, object, idea or situation. It is a technique not confined to film music, it was first used by the German composer Wagner to great effect in his operas and dramas in the late nineteenth century before cinema was invented. Portman uses this technique to great effect in *The Duchess*. Her use of tonality and texture gives a great sense of character the music is accompanying.

*The Duchess* is unlike some films in that the whole story focuses on one character, the Duchess, and as such the musical themes presented throughout the film are all related to her mood, emotional well-being and love interest. The Duchess, played by Saoirse Ronan, is introduced in the first scene as a suitable wife for the Duke (played by Riley Keating). The most striking aspects of her character are her playfulness (the betting on horse races at the mansion estate) and her beauty. It is the Duchess's beauty which features prominently throughout the whole film. Portman composes a beautiful melody in the solo cello in 'The Duchess Main Title' and this beautiful melody permeates the film. The Duke does not have a significant leitmotif. His actions cause Georgiana to suffer. Similarly, Charles Grey and Lady Bess do not have notable thematic motifs, their actions affect the Duchess's themes.

The Duchess is often represented by a solo instrument, mainly the cello, which is a technique used to portray the main character. It is no coincidence that the cello is one of the most beautiful orchestral instruments. Incidentally, Portman works within the range of its range.

The Duchess herself suffers great emotional pain during the film, and Georgiana is faced with impossible decisions. Portman scores the grand

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sombre rhythm at various times (e.g. 'Mistake of Your Life' – intro and 'Again' – ending, plus 'G is taken to the Country'). The funeral-march-'fate' motif for Georgiana to help the audience understand the difficulty during 'Mistake of Your Life' and 'Never See Your Children Again' thereby providing a consistency. In 'Mistake of Your Life' there is a piano solo which wrenches the heart in knots as Georgiana is deciding to sacrifice her love to see her children again. The two tracks follow on from one another.

Portman uses dissonance to great effect. In 'Mistake of Your Life' Portman uses the violas and cellos during the introduction, creating a harsh, tense texture. He has also got to consider representing Georgiana's strength and resilience. In bars later the minor 2<sup>nd</sup>s are harmonised – but in major 3<sup>rd</sup> intervals. This is within the main character. The melody in this cue is a rising theme and is notably more positive than descending, again demonstrating a clever use of music. Portman also uses a perfect 5<sup>th</sup> interval significantly within the melody, which suggests inner strength and purity, often used for heroic themes, and is used appropriately.

In 'Never See Your Children Again' Portman uses dissonance cleverly. He uses a quaver pattern where the notes E and F are played together, causing a dissonance. In bar 7 the violas enter but they do not double the 2<sup>nd</sup> violin dissonance. Instead, the E quavers and the 2<sup>nd</sup> violins cease their dissonant clash by playing a different melody. Superimpose the parts together and the dissonance returns. Portman uses this to create clashes without over-stressing the dissonant harshness. Perhaps this is to prevent the music from overbearing the on-screen tension. If dissonance can sabotage a scene, for example the murder scene in *Psycho*. Portman is careful in order to create a delicate balance.

Georgiana's playful personality is represented in 'Six Years Later' where she waltz as the party travel to Bath. Portman transforms the Main Title music to a faster tempo. It is during this scene we see the Duchess very happy and carefree. Musically Portman keeps the tonality securely in D major throughout the scene.

Portman's use of texture in *The Duchess* is very careful. In 'Six Years Later' the texture is unwavering throughout, but Portman applies very precise musical techniques and it is the use of techniques such as *divisi*, *staccato*, *pizzicato*, *counters* and *slurs* that create a buoyant texture appropriate for the context. In this cue Portman omits the melody, which creates an unusual texture. In 'Mistake of Your Life' Portman presents the melody in the upper strings, thus producing a dark texture; later the cellos double the melody, the same octave and at the end the cello section play the rising melody as a section to reproduce thematic material within different orchestral timbres and

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Portman also uses a cimbalom in the film score, which is a Hungarian dulcimer; although it does not feature in the prescribed tracks, it provides track 'G is taken to the Country' and other cues in the film. It creates percussive accompaniment.

Other composers have used ethnic instruments in film scores to add characterisation. Jerry Goldsmith used Tibetan horns and drums in the *Apes* (1968), illustrating the absurd action scene of apes cruelly mistreated in a roundup.

Howard Shore uses Nordic violins in *Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* to give the kingdom of Rohan, giving the atmosphere a very rugged, barren Scandinavian feel. Morricone uses an interesting textural combination of instruments in his scores. He uses harpsichords, oboes and indigenous South American singing conch shells. He uses music to juxtapose characters; as the cultures clash and mix so does the music. In *Gladiator* by Hans Zimmer there is the use of unusual instruments including the zamr which is similar to an early oboe. The score also uses the Spanish guitar to create a dream world.

Harmonically, Portman uses melodic development and shortened themes for characterisation where a theme is diminution, made shorter to fit a scene. The 'The Duchess Main Title' is 10 bars long, but as it is repeated it is edited to create a new melodic design, keeping the listener on their toes at all times. This editing also has an effect on the overall tonal structure. This editing of melodies continues throughout the whole film score, and by the time the end titles are performed the original melodic design has been transformed and reshaped.

Another interesting use of harmony to characterise the plot is the use of the 'The Duchess Main Titles' makes use of a theme in D major, but when the dominant chord of A there is no raised leading note. Omitting the sharp creates a dissonant effect and slightly insecure unbalanced tonality. Sometimes Portman leaves a chord suspended where resolution does not come and we are left wondering. In *Georgiana, the Duchess*.

**(AS Level) This essay is a middle-band 14/20 score due to the following points:**

- The essay develops links between the music, movie context and the main character.
- There is a range of musical examples and instruments identified. (AO3)
- The musical examples are fairly clearly used, reflecting the question well. (AO3)
- There is a good use of musical vocabulary. (AO4)
- More detailed examples of use of dissonance. (AO3)
- More detailed argument on production techniques, looking at the pros and cons.

To achieve a level 4 this essay should include more detail regarding linking the music to the plot, harmony and texture and produce a more controlled argument to embed more context.

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Evaluate the use of melody, harmony and tonality in Bernard Herrmann's score to other prescribed works or relevant wider listening.

Bernard Herrmann's score for *Psycho* was critically acclaimed to be one of the best for a film. Ironically, the composer was presented with imposed financial resources for a film budget when composing the music. Herrmann's instrumental resources were seriously reduced when he was forced to write for a small string orchestra or percussion. Previously in scores such as *Vertigo* and *North by Northwest* he wrote symphonic scores with lots of percussion, harps and brass.

As a result, the score for *Psycho* ended up a musical masterpiece due to his use of melody, harmony and tonality and a soundscape that successfully created a sense of duration.

The melody throughout the score is either frenetic and tense or relaxed and calm, mainly by the use of dissonance. The first example is 'The Prelude' at the beginning of the film. The *Psycho Prelude* Herrmann includes a melodic theme of 12 bars of a diatonic melodic theme based on E $\flat$  minor, each note an equal crotchet beat. This is used throughout the film as the 'Psycho Theme'. The theme rises for one-and-a-half bars heading for the tonic note, but as it is about to land (and thus tonality) rises by a semitone and the melody returns to the repeat after four bars (37–40) but this time in E minor. Herrmann is making the listener feel like he is throwing away the rules of conventional melodic writing and shocking the audience.

Another melodic device used in this cue is 'sigh motif'. This is heard in the 'Psycho Theme' and is a device stolen from opera: when a character is singing about something depressing the music will fall by a semitone, like a sigh.

The harmony of this extract is notable as it starts without melody as a few seconds in. Herrmann gives away much of his tonal intention with these opening bars. The iconic Bernard Herrmann trademark minor major 7<sup>th</sup> chord at the beginning (B $\flat$  where there is a minor 3<sup>rd</sup> above the root and then two major 3<sup>rd</sup>s) chord is sometimes referred to as the 'Hitchcock chord'. Herrmann adds to this by having the 5<sup>th</sup> of the triad in the bass, making it feel off balance. If the chord was in the root position the chord would sound more secure, which was not the intention at all: he wanted it to feel uncomfortable. In the final bars of the *Psycho* prelude, the ambiguity of the sonority of the muted strings gives this a beautifully haunting atmosphere. The 'Hitchcock' chord at the end of the prelude and the effective pizzicato in the strings.

Chromatic ideas are used throughout the score to create haunting melody. In the cue where there is a view across the city of Phoenix, Arizona. The camera is high up on top of a skyscraper. The camera pans slowly right and moves downwards. Hitchcock's methods were to use the camera to affect the emotions of the audience. The score plays a hefty singular role in creating the right lazy atmosphere in contrast to the visual.

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The key camera movement is descending and so Herrmann mirrors this in the music. The cue uses a descending pattern of eight notes, each note built up using typically diminished and half-diminished chords. This motif combines ambiguous harmony with a strong melody. The chromaticism is evident in the harmonic rhythm, i.e. chromatic movement between chords. The falling direction of the music directly follows the camera.

The falling notes are described as Marion's fate theme, giving us an early glimpse of her later. There is much use of harmonic inversions, making the sequence of the chords heading to resolve on E $\flat$ , which does not climax, suggesting something Herrmann is a master of.

Herrmann has deliberately taken the melodic and harmonic shape of the cue and used it in a different context such as the 'sigh' motif. The third bar of the 'City' cue follows the same pattern and uses the sigh motif again followed by the repeat of the opening motif in retrograde. This chromatic technique can also be seen in the score for 'The Usual Suspects' where the main solo unaccompanied saxophone theme is made up of wind instruments. The cue illustrates the Corleone family and represents the melancholic development of the story.

The cue 'Marion' is important because much of the music is used to show Marion's mind while she is driving and after she has stolen a large sum of money. The music is used to take a wrong turn and end up at the Bates Motel. The music uses motifs and gives it an ambiguous atmosphere and limited security. It is a clever use of motifs as the music falls by sequence but suspends any sense of resolution by moving the accompaniment; if the accompaniment were static the music would resolve. The musical 'pulling the rug from under your feet' technique creates more tension. Herrmann achieves this by including more diminished chords (again stolen from 'The Usual Suspects'). The harmony is very colourful; for example, bar 9 is a G $\flat$  chord and bar 10 is omitted. There is also much use of parallel 9 $^{\text{th}}$ s. In bar 10 and throughout the cue, the 9 $^{\text{th}}$  note of a chord or sometimes the 5 $^{\text{th}}$ , making the harmony sound hollow. When the music feels like it is about to resolve, Herrmann throws something in the way. In the violins play a C dotted minim near the end of the cue, which is the 7 $^{\text{th}}$  of the harmony from resolving.

It is the 'Murder' shower scene that presents fascinating use of melody, harmony and rhythm. The murder scene starts without music and there is no dialogue, and the sound effects are diegetic sounds such as the water running or soap packet opening. When the famous 'slasher' music begins and we hear cinema's most famous music cue. It is an eight-note motif and has been taken from the Psycho Prelude as a thematic transformation. Using augmentation, Herrmann scores the rhythm with the upper top-range violins, starting on E $\flat$ , with the 2 $^{\text{nd}}$  violins starting a bar later on a natural and the other string sections entering with the next note of the motif. The music is incredibly dissonant and painful cluster chord. The slasher theme lasts for the duration of the scene.

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representing one of the eight notes from the prelude theme. Harmonically, it is linked to the opening prelude and 'City' cues due to the deliberate choice and use of the same notes.

The melodic structure of the murder scene is distorted to the point where the melody is almost unrecognisable. The melody starts three octaves above middle C at the very top of the piano, creating a sense of tension. Musically Herrmann and Hitchcock are telling us it is Marion. The music suggests Norman because the tonic notes of the Psycho theme are transformed into the blade itself. The atonality represents Norman's mind which has been distorted to show his insanity.

It is often a mistake to assume the melodic or rhythmic structure of the music synchronises with the blade wounds on every down-bow chord. This was not the intention of the composer; it is another way the shower scene invokes the sense of insanity and discomfort by the displacement of the music to the knife.

The sigh motif is also used in the murder scene and continues to the end of the film. The piano is playing the falling two-note motif and the upper strings alternating pizzicato. The descending music represents the blood draining through the plughole. The violins' bottom G string pizzicato, slowing down and augmented, is Marion's heartbeat stopping. The final held chord is F# against C# in the cellos and violas, creating a tritone (diabolus in musica), while the violins hold the same interval a semitone higher, creating a sense of dissonance to the Devil's chord. Every aspect of the final 20 bars is to illustrate the end of the world.

In the cue 'Toys' there is an interesting link between melody, tonality and the number 3. Herrmann uses a three-note motif to represent Norman's psychotic nature. We hear glimpses of the theme earlier when Norman is in the parlour. Later in the film, as Marion's sister enters a child's room in the house, there are dolls and teddy bears, there is an old record player with a record sitting on it. The record is a symphony. Hitchcock and Herrmann are linking the symphony with the murder, which is associated with Norman, while the record label states Symphony No. 3 in E major. The Psycho motif is E#; and the first note of 'The Murder' (shower scene) is E. This creates psychological undercurrents. Another technique used in 'Toys' is the use of the piano to build and construct melodic cells. The opening of 'Toys' has the cellos and basses playing a low E. The cellos are pizzicato and divided: the top part alternates between E and G, creating a tension which is difficult to hear, but you can feel it. Again we have the E motif.

In the cue 'The Cellar' the audience learns exactly who the murderer is as Marion's mother is sitting on a chair underneath a glaring lightbulb. The harmony is full of superb tension as the character tentatively reaches out to turn the chair. The piano plays a chord: Herrmann holds an enharmonic augmented chord combined with a sense of poise with the careful pause ascending through the string parts.

The final cue of the film, 'The Finale', is perhaps the most musically haunting. It features the scary voiceover of Norman's mother as he talks to himself in the police station.

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Herrmann scores a contrapuntal melodic motif using a polyphonic atonal slow, rocking melodic line built from crotchets only. This gives the feeling Norman Bates is psychiatrically dead but his mother lives on within him. illustrates the pure evil of his mother and Herrmann deliberately twists the intertwined knot. Herrmann does not let the music rest on the tonic and especially the 1<sup>st</sup> violin leap to very high range in bar 9. The 2<sup>nd</sup> violins do (stop) and the harmony is much 'crunchier' as the 2<sup>nds</sup> move up chromatic violins' top note. The uncomfortable dissonance gets worse as Norman's mother and blames Norman. The music reflects the insanity. The cellos and basses play a madness motif underneath.

In all, the tonality of the movie is very effective with successfully grotesque. Herrmann uses polytonality, atonality and bitonality to great effect by using sequences and chromatic harmonic designs. It is not always about what is included but what he deliberately leaves out, such as important notes from triads and chords. This gives the music the insecurity and ambiguity Herrmann was trying to achieve. very similar techniques; in his score for *Jaws* we see a clever use of a chromatic scale for the shark combined with ambiguous themes for the main characters, which illustrate victory and joy but at other times with a flick of a switch the 3 semitone and the listener is presented once more with a minor key, often for the shark motif. John Carpenter uses extraordinary harmonic development in *Psycho* similar to *Psycho* in that the themes are used at different times during the film to create meanings through thematic transformation. Feelings and states of mind are represented musically. Another example and link is the film noir picture *Vertigo* score by the Hungarian composer Miklos Rozsa. This nerve-jangling, suspenseful score where Rozsa includes music themes for fate, doom and uncertain love. It enters when the main character's efforts fail.

**(A Level) This essay is a top-band score 26/30 due to the following points:**

- Makes excellent secure links between the music and the context showing sophisticated understanding
- Constructs a balanced argument and never loses control (AO3)
- The musical examples are clearly used reflecting the melody, harmony and texture
- There is an excellent use of musical vocabulary (AO4)
- Very good links to relevant works and wider listening to justify points (AO4)
- Good use of critical listening skills evaluating the effectiveness of the music and its impact
- It is challenging to include the level of detail above under exam conditions. The examples are more than would be expected but reflect the appropriate level of detail.

Below are some pointers to help students tackle essays.

#### Tips on essay writing

- Always make a brief plan before you start
- Make notes alongside prescribed music cues of musical devices
- Summarise main points and distil information
- Practise verbally 'fleshing' out a key point before writing it down
- Start a paragraph with a point, then explain it further and justify your text with evidence

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# Glossary of Terms

<b>Acciacatura</b>	An ornamental note, sounded at the same time as a p (frequently a semitone) below. It adds dissonance to the 'March of the Merry Men' rhythm starts with an accia
<b>Appoggiatura</b>	From the Italian 'to lean'. An ornamental note that dis principal note in a stepwise motion.
<b>Arco</b>	Played with the bow (stringed instrument).
<b>Arpeggio</b>	The root, 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> notes of the scale played before r
<b>Arpeggiando</b>	Similar to arpeggio but 'rolled' like a <i>glissando</i> most e piano and harp. A cross between arpeggio and <i>glissan</i>
<b>Audion amplifier tube</b>	An electronic amplifying vacuum tube invented in Am was a glass tube that contained electrodes, a heated fi was the first mass-produced tube which could amplify
<b>Augmented chord</b>	Extending the 5 <sup>th</sup> note of a chord by a semitone result chord range.
<b>Bitonality</b>	The use of two keys at the same time. By combining c composers could develop and extend dissonant colour great effect in the twentieth century by composers suc Ravel. See <b>Polytonality</b> .
<b>Cell format</b>	Repeating musical ideas and phrases in sequences, us creating rhythmic <i>ostinatos</i> – but not repetitively min short motif that could be developed throughout a com applied to more modern music, yet we can see a cell fo context with Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 where the the first four notes heard: G G G Eb...
<b>Chorus</b>	A group of mixed vocalists usually divided into four se and bass (SATB). A female chorus consists of soprano female chorus can be organised as SSA, or SAA.
<b>Chromatic</b>	From the Greek ' <i>chroma</i> ' meaning 'colour', the chroma semitones. The notes are equally spaced and therefor associated with major or minor scales. Chromatic mus and chromatic tonality can be very ambiguous and un developing the 12-tone row (the chromatic scale) in a order. Chromatic notes are often used to embellish d harmonically inessential inflections in popular music a chromaticism in diatonic music to push the harmony f ambiguous soundscape.
<b>Circle of 5<sup>ths</sup></b>	The term '5 <sup>th</sup> ' defines an interval which is the most co The circle of 5 <sup>ths</sup> is a sequence of pitches often describ pitch is found seven semitones higher than the previo sequence is very useful for composers and musicians t different keys. It is a necessary tool for understanding signatures in Western tonal harmony.
<b>Continuity editing</b>	The predominant style of film editing during the post-producers and engineers smooth out the discontinuity to make the shots logical and coherent, thus creating
<b>Contrary motion</b>	Parts that move in opposite directions.

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<b>Counterpoint</b>	From the Latin ' <i>punctus contra punctum</i> ' meaning developed in the Renaissance and Baroque periods writing harmonically independent voices or parts referred to as contrapuntal writing.
<b>Critical listening</b>	This is where an analyst can pick out key techniques in a piece of music or drama by careful focus, noticing details.
<b>Cross-rhythm</b>	Two or more contrasting rhythmic metres performed together. An example is Leonard Bernstein's <i>West Side Story</i> 'Prologue'.
<b>Cutting</b>	A method of editing a movie film reel to switch the location to another. The 'cut' action is usually simultaneous with another action running in a scene, e.g. the archery tournament in <i>The Thin Red Line</i> .
<b>Diatonic</b>	Music that has notes mostly within the key. Opposite of chromatic.
<b>Diegetic music</b>	(Also known as source music or in-vision music) A piece of music that is part of the film space – characters on-screen singing or playing music in the film – is known as diegetic, and the opposite is <b>non-diegetic</b> (which is more common) where the music is not part of the screen action and the actors cannot hear it.
<b>Diminution</b>	Shortening the note values of a melody or phrase so that it is much shorter and quicker than previously used. This is often used in notably rhythmic. Composers use diminution to create a new fragment from a theme and use it in a different way. One of the best examples of diminution is Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 where he uses shorter fragments of the initial four-note theme in the later movements in the work.
<b>Displacement</b>	A compositional technique where the rhythm of a melody is shifted, sometimes resulting in the motif being unsettled or dissonant.
<b>Dissonance</b>	Two or more notes that clash, thereby creating a dissonance. Notes a semitone apart together and you create a dissonance. Dissonance is aimed at creating ugly-sounding music. Some of the most famous dissonance written, from Bach to Glass, uses subtle brief dissonance to release, darkness and light. Wagner's <i>Tristan und Isolde</i> uses beautiful dissonance. Jazz also uses dissonance to create a new sound.
<b>Divisi strings</b>	On the score this can be marked with a ' <i>div</i> ' sign. When a section of music in an instrumental part that can only use one instrument, the cellos, the composer may wish for the section to divide the parts up. N.B. stringed instruments can play two parts at once by playing two strings at once. This is called <i>divisi</i> and the section is <i>divisi</i> it usually results in a warm sound.
<b>Dominant</b>	The 5 <sup>th</sup> note of the scale.
<b>Dominant pedal</b>	A sustained, held or repeated note on the 5 <sup>th</sup> note of the scale. Pedal notes have a strong tonal effect and are often used on dominant notes of the scale. A dominant pedal point is the tonic and thus creates dissonance in the other parts.
<b>Fanfare</b>	A short musical theme often played by brass instruments and percussion. It is usually intended for important scenes, royal events, announcements and significant activities. It is often used symbolically to portray heroism, bravery and triumph.
<b>Flutter-tonguing</b>	A technique, most commonly used on the flute (though also used on the clarinet and some brass instruments), which involves vibrating the tongue while playing to produce rapid note repetition.
<b>Functional music</b>	Harmonic progressions that follow their expected patterns.
<b>Glissando</b>	From the French ' <i>glisser</i> ' meaning 'to glide'. A glissando is a slide from one note to another. On the trombone it is often referred to as a 'slide' or the term 'note bend'.

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<b>Half-diminished chord</b>	In music theory the half-diminished chord is also known as a minor 7 <sup>th</sup> flattened 5 <sup>th</sup> . The chord is composed of a minor 7 <sup>th</sup> and a diminished (flattened) 5 <sup>th</sup> and a minor 3 <sup>rd</sup> . E.g. C half-diminished chord is C, E <sup>b</sup> , G <sup>b</sup> , B <sup>b</sup> .
<b>Hit point</b>	An exact point during a cue when music or sound effects are used to emphasise a particular moment in a film.
<b>Homophonic</b>	Melody over blocked chords. Most pop songs are homophonic.
<b>Inner strings</b>	A term used to describe the writing of string music where the violin and cello/bass, better known as melody and bass, share a conversational harmonic relationship in support of the main melody. This was a feature of the string quartets of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven and seen in modern works.
<b>Leitmotif</b>	A recurrent theme throughout a musical or literary work associated with a person, time, object, idea or situation.
<b>Metamorphosis</b>	A minimalist technique where a musical theme, cell or motif is changed through transposition or modulation, through augmentation, diminution and fragmentation.
<b>Melisma</b>	A device whereby two or more notes are sung during a single syllable of a word.
<b>Mickey-Mousing</b>	A film technique that synchronises the film score music with the on-screen action. Originally a term used in early Disney animation to describe music that mimics the on-screen characters. Imagine any <i>Tom and Jerry</i> cartoon, and that is Mickey-Mousing.
<b>MIDI</b>	Musical Instrumental Digital Interface. A standard tool for communicating between operating electronic instruments and related devices such as computers.
<b>Minimalist</b>	A composer who uses simple ideas and gestures to create a complex musical texture. Minimalist techniques include repeated patterns of notes, rhythms, and timbres, and developed in America in the 1960s.
<b>Modal</b>	Music that uses modes instead of scales. These avoid the use of the 'black' notes of the keyboard. Each one of the seven common ones used in film music are Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Ionian, Aeolian, and Locrian beginning on D, E, G, and A respectively.
<b>Mono-aural</b>	Often just called mono, this means single channel, meaning that all the sound from a microphone and channels are fed from one signal path.
<b>Monophonic melody</b>	One line or part of music presented all alone without accompaniment or contrast, confused with unison, which could be in octaves.
<b>Motif</b>	Motifs are recurring structures, contrasts or literary devices that can be used to inform the text's major themes. In music a motif could be a short sequence or a rhythm.
<b>Motivic development</b>	Music that uses a range of techniques (such as repetition, transposition, inversion, etc.) to develop a small motif and move forward.
<b>Non-diegetic</b>	The opposite is <b>diegetic</b> . Non-diegetic is where the music is heard by the audience but the action and the actors cannot hear it; only the audience scores are usually non-diegetic.
<b>Ostinato</b>	From the Italian word 'stubborn' – a rhythmic or melodic pattern that is repeated in the same voice. Ravel's <i>Bolero</i> is a good example of an ostinato.
<b>Parallel motion</b>	Two or more lines of music which move in parallel motion, creating a sense of tension and dissonance.
<b>Pedal</b>	A note which is sustained by one instrument or part, or a series of notes, through consecutive harmonies, some of which may be dissonant.
<b>Polyphonic</b>	As used most frequently today, this term describes the simultaneous sounding of more melodies sounded together.
<b>Polytonality</b>	A musical device of using more than one key simultaneously. Polytonal music is a good example is Stravinsky's <i>Rite of Spring</i> .
<b>Polychord</b>	See <b>Polytonality</b> but the harmony is built vertically – i.e. chords are stacked on top of each other.
<b>Quartal harmony</b>	(G/C/F) Chords built up in 4 <sup>ths</sup> instead of tertiary harmony. Davis's 'So What' chords are built up using quartal harmony.

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<b>Raga</b>	Literally meaning 'colour and beauty', raga is the system of musical organisation based in India. A raga uses five or more notes in a melody, yet the musician's approach to the music is more important than the actual notes. It is a very complex part of the classical tradition, where the scales are based on qualities of sound.
<b>Sequence</b>	In melody this is where a pattern of notes is repeated to build up or building or easing tension.
<b>Short score</b>	A condensed orchestral score with less important parts written in a compressed score.
<b>Suspension</b>	One or more notes temporarily held before resolving.
<b>Suspension of anticipation</b>	Music is governed by a series of phrases and cadences and answers. If a composer delays conventional 'expected' cadences, codas, answering phrases or by not returning to the start continues to feed listeners' anticipation.
<b>Synchronisation</b>	The process of marrying up music and film. Usually involves sometimes communicating externally with a video editor.
<b>Synthesiser</b>	An electronic instrument which combines simple waveforms to create sounds – often played as a keyboard. The sounds can be used to artificially recreate sounds of acoustic instruments or create new sounds such as the 'saw wave'.
<b>Syncopation</b>	Otherwise known as 'offbeat', where the notes are placed between the stresses and the rhythmic stresses and accents.
<b>Talkies</b>	An early film with a soundtrack. From 1927 onward the inclusion of spoken word and music on the film reel 'talkie pictures', abbreviated to 'talkies'.
<b>Tessitura</b>	When an instrument or voice is at the extreme of its range, it has a certain timbral effect usually particular to that instrument or voice. For the clarinet sound very dark and brooding (often called 'dark timbre') which creates a completely different character to the more joyful. A good example to listen to is Gershwin's 'An American in Paris' where the clarinet starts low and quickly ascends to the top range.  For a vocal example of high <i>tessitura</i> listen to Mozart's <i>The Magic Flute</i> opera.
<b>Thematic transformation</b>	This is a technique of variation where the composer takes a theme from a piece and thus changes the mood, atmosphere or meaning to represent the developing plot and narrative accordingly.
<b>Theremin</b>	Originally known as the etherphone, it was invented by Léon Theremin and was meant to serve as a motion tracker. It comprises two oscillators, one for frequency and one for volume. The signals are then sent to a loudspeaker. Used more as a musical instrument, it is featured in the Beach Boys' 'Good Vibrations'.
<b>Tonality</b>	The system of organising music around a tonic or 'home' note and scales. Tonality was the predominant system of music in the West which used the major/minor tonality system up until the 20th century.
<b>Tone clusters</b>	Small groups of adjacent notes played simultaneously to create a crunchy effect.
<b>Tremolo (strings)</b>	Rapid movements of the bow on a single note result in a tremolo sound. In film music this can create tension and excitement.
<b>Triad</b>	The standard three-note chord of root, 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Tritone</b>	' <i>Diabolus in Musica</i> – The Devil in Music': a music interval of three whole tones, e.g. C–F# is a tritone = C to D, D to E, E to F# augmented 4 <sup>th</sup> and diminished 5 <sup>th</sup> . It has a dissonant sound as many as the Devil's interval.
<b>Tutti</b>	Everyone together, i.e. an orchestral <i>tutti</i> is the whole orchestra playing.
<b>Underscore</b>	See <b>Non-diegetic music</b> .

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# Sources of Further Information

Special thanks to Rachel Portman and Sarah Fuggle for providing original scores that facilitate in-depth analysis.

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## Web Links

<a href="http://www.imdb.com">www.imdb.com</a>	database of information on all films past and present
<a href="http://www.filmsite.org">www.filmsite.org</a>	lots of analysis of films, including substantial background information
<a href="http://www.mfiles.co.uk">www.mfiles.co.uk</a>	music files and lots of information on music in film
<a href="http://www.filmsound.com">www.filmsound.com</a>	excellent site for technical information
<a href="http://www.filmtracks.com">www.filmtracks.com</a>	modern soundtrack reviews
<a href="http://www.bfi.org.uk">www.bfi.org.uk</a>	British Film Institute website
<a href="http://www.mediaknowall.com">www.mediaknowall.com</a>	a good starting point for media studies
<a href="http://www.moviegrooves.com">www.moviegrooves.com</a>	free audio samples of film tracks

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