**Module 7: Music**

Music is the 4th component of film sound, and can make a huge difference to the success of a film. Film music is essential to helping an audience experience a wide range of emotions, including joy, sadness, fear, and anger. An example most of you are familiar with is the central musical theme by John Williams used in *Jaws* to indicate both the presence of the great white shark and an impending attack:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rW23RsUTb2Y>

Scene from Jaws (go about 1:30 into the clip to hear the music)

Everyone else involved in *Jaws,* including director Stephen Spielberg, thought that the film was going to be a critical and commercial disaster, until they saw the footage for the first time with the musical score. A test audience went wild over the film, and then they all knew that they had a huge hit with this film.

One of the many memorable scenes where music makes a huge difference is the one where Roy Scheider is throwing chum into the water to attract the shark, and then actually sees it in person for the first time. The music helps convey the sense of awe the crew feels at the enormous size of the shark.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wl0z6kS8dzI> You’re Going to Need a Bigger Boat

At least one reason pianos and organs were first used in the silent era was to drown out the sound of the noisy projector itself when it was in the same room, as opposed to later being in a projection booth. A theater like the FOX in Atlanta had an in-house organist, who would be given a cue sheet provided by the producers of the film. On some occasions, a live orchestra would accompany the showing of blockbuster films like D.W. Griffith’s *Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance,* and Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObM0drwTshA>

*Metropolis* trailer with some of the original orchestra score

One of the first Hollywood films to feature an action sequence where the music was synced to the action was *King Kong* in 1933.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmixe-Dii0Y>

King Kong scene: the beast takes the woman

This was to become the wave of the future in terms of how films were scored. In many cases today, the musicians can see the scene projected on a big screen, as they play the music composed for the scene:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnkO_Tvd5wk>

John Williams conducts the music for the second of the *Star War’s* prequels

POPULAR SONGS USED IN FILMS

Many films only utilize composed music that does not contain vocals, but it has also become common practice for some films to use popular music in places in the soundtrack, and for this even to be part of the marketing campaign to encourage people to come see the film.

Simon & Garfunkel did most of the soundtrack for *The Graduate* in 1967, which included an incomplete version of “Mrs. Robinson.” Another track was used to help support Ben’s alienation from his parents and their materialistic friends, as he struggled with figuring out what he now wanted to do after graduating from college.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9K_xTQA8Wok>

*The Graduate:* Sounds of Silence

This is from the 1967 film where Sidney Poitier is a teacher who has had an enormous impact on his students

To Sir, With Love (Lulu) – Lulu

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXaEf4ktpPA>

The James Bond films have almost always opened with a track of popular music, combined with signature style graphics of beautiful women, guns, and of course James Bond. One of the more memorable ones was composed by Paul McCartney in 1973 for *Live and Let Die.*

Live and Let Die, Goldfinger <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sn8alMYSu44>

“Can You Dig It? Right on!” The theme song for *Shaft* (1971) was composed by Isaac Hayes; John Shaft (Richard Rountree) was one of the first African American action film heroes.

Shaft <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFlsufZj9Fg>

The disco era exploded on the world scene in the mid-70’s. The title track to *Saturday Night Fever* was performed by the Bee Gees, and introduced us to the world of those whose entire lives revolved around dancing in these clubs. The below is a fun version cut to visuals taken from the film.

Stayin’ Alive <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxvBPH4sArQ>

17 year old Tom Cruise takes over the house when his parents go out of town. First, he ruins a glass of expensive Chivas Regal Scotch by pouring some Coke in it. Then he dances in his underwear to “Old Time Rock and Roll” in this hilarious 1983 film.

Old Time Rock and Roll (Risky Business) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UuQZfwWyTWY>

The final scene from *Flashdance* (1983) has working class welder by day Jennifer Beals auditioning for the Pittsburgh Conservatory of Dance, doing a very modern and expressive performance that finally wins over the stodgy judges who decide who gets in this elite school and who doesn’t.

Flashdance <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXQeVqLMr9Q>

In this 1985 Coming of Age classic film from John Hughes, 5 very different teens in Saturday detention go beneath their surface personas to discover what they have in common. This is the final scene from the film.

Don’t You Forget About Me (The Breakfast Club) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3CUh8v7MNo>

The dramatic final scene in this 1987 film features Jennifer Grey as “Baby”, transforming from a teen to a woman on stage, as she dances with Patrick Swayze, her dance instructor at a resort in the Catskill Mountains. You just cannot watch this scene and not feel the sparks flying between these two.

I’ve Had the Time of My Life (Dirty Dancing) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpmILPAcRQo>

The opening for this 1989 Spike Lee film introduced Rosie Perez, shadow boxing to some early rap music from NWA.

Fight the Power (Do the Right Thing) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=739XYgoA-x8>

This is a compilation of visuals over one of the most famous songs to ever come out of a film. Yes, it has been overplayed. It’s still a beautiful and very romantic song.

My Heart will Go On – Titanic <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18FMybmqadc>

Every girl from the age of 5-18 memorized the lyrics from this song in the 2013 film *Frozen.* The song obviously struck a strong chord with the desire of many girls to break free of the many harsh demands that society dumps on them, from being “good girls” to looking pretty and being expected to be compliant and responsible.

Let it Go – Frozen <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=18FMybmqadc>

THREE FAMOUS FILM COMPOSERS - PROFILES

There are a large number of composers whose film scores merit inclusion in a learning module like this, but time constraints mean that I am going to briefly touch on just 3 of them.

Bernard Herrmann (1911-1975) is best known for his collaborations with Alfred Hitchcock on films like *The Man Who Knew Too Much, North by Northwest, Vertigo,* and *Psycho.* Other famous film scores he did were for *Citizen Kane, The Day the Earth Stood Still,* and *Taxi Driver.* His best known work was for *Psycho,* particularly the shower scene where the slashing violin chords accompany the murder of Marion. Below are a few other great scenes that feature his memorable music:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBxjwurp_04>

Opening Title Sequence from *North by Northwest*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-kcczAff40>

*Vertigo*: Uncanny Resemblance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AbvWoruvf5c>

*Taxi Driver* Opening Titles Scene

John Williams (1932- ) is probably the best known of all film composers, largely because of his work with Stephen Spielberg on films like *Jaws, Close Encounters of the Third Kind, Raiders of the Lost Ark, E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial,* and *Jurassic Park.* He also composed the epic music for the *Star Wars* films for George Lucas. Much of his work is perfect for these grand, sweeping, epic films. Williams was also the Conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra for many years, and still has the title of Conductor Emeritus.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oR1-UFrcZ0k>

*E.T. the Extra Terrestrial*: Ride the Sky

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJlmYh27MHg>

Welcome to *Jurassic Park*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVdRfnLPypE>

*Raiders of the Lost Ark:* The Desert Chase Scene

James Horner (1953-2015) was a great composer and also a sentimental choice for inclusion because of his recent death in a plane crash. Horner collaborated with James Cameron on films like *Titanic* and *Avatar,* the two highest grossing films of all time, and his score for *Titanic* (including composing the song “My Heart Will Go On” for Celine Dion) sold more copies than other any compilation soundtrack for any film ever made. Other well-known scores he did were for *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan, Star-Trek III: The Search for Spock, Cocoon, Aliens, Field of Dreams, Glory, Legends of the Fall, Braveheart, Apollo 13, and A Beautiful Mind.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jaxZeisCHv8>

Legends of the Fall (1994)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXOE6EQtKcU>

“My Heart Will Go On”; official music video from Celine Dion, from the film *Titanic*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_wnD6jxREU>

*Field of Dreams:* the ending scene (Heaven is a place where dreams come true)

This is just a sampling of some of the great film music out there, but I think it is representative of some of the great orchestral music that has been composed. There are many other examples from composers of jazz, rap, electronic music and other musical forms that deserved mention here, and will receive more attention in future versions of this class.

The final combination of the components of sound creates what we call the **SONIC LANDSCAPE,** which helps shape the film experience for the viewer.

A great example of this is found in *Black Hawk Down,* the film about a failed military mission in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia in East Africa. It was in 1993; the people of this country were starving, and the food aid being sent in by the United Nations was being appropriated by the militias of Mohamed Farrah Adid instead of being given to the starving people.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDYY-zC7sUw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sam7O1JbmBM>

*Black Hawk Down:* opening scene

Note how the richness of the music, the sounds of the desert, the sounds of the crowds at the relief drop off point, and the sounds of the marketplace all combine to create the rich texture of the sonic landscape in this film.

Another great example is the soundtrack from *Avatar,* the 2009 film from director James Cameron. The challenge for this film was to create a sonic landscape for the moon Pandora in the Alpha Centauri star system.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_i2RCBa3l-g>

Trailer for *Avatar*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jxq_133jEtQ>

Music from *Avatar*, composed by James Horner

ARRIVAL: WINNER BEST SOUND MIXING AWARD

This 2016 film won the Academy Award for Best Sound Mixing; part of that included a great score. In this short video, the composer talks about his process in putting together that score.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3jSVnETtzM> Arrival: Eternal Recurrence (the Score)

LA LA LAND: A CASE STUDY IN GREAT FILM MUSIC

This 2016 film musical had one of the greatest scores ever created for a motion picture, and won well deserved recognition for both Best Song and Best Score at the 2017 Oscars.

The film centers on two young people who have come to Hollywood (as so many do) to make their dreams come true. Emma Stone is an aspiring actress, who also words as a barista in the coffee shop on the studio lot. Ryan Gosling is a jazz pianist, working playing Christmas tunes in supper clubs and performing with an 80’s band at various Hollywood gigs. They are very much in love, but he in particular is never willing to give her dreams equal footing with his own. I identified with the film because I knew a couple exactly like this. He was a cinematographer, waiting by the phone for his next gig, while his artist/wife was always taking the temporary jobs doing clerical work to keep their rent and other bills paid. And she finally wasn’t willing to do it anymore. Both made it big by the way – he’s now a very respected filmmaker and studio owner in Atlanta, and she is a renowned artist in New York City.

This is a terrific “Behind the Scenes” short documentary about the making of the film:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhDtuy-YG74> Behind the Scenes

City of Stars appears several times in the film; it is the “signature” song, much like “As Time Goes By” is in *Casablanca.*  It can and is played with various moods, from totally romantic to totally melancholy.

This scene shows Sebastian singing the song on a city pier; he is singing and dancing, very much like Gene Kelly in *Singin’ in the Rain.* Sebastian is very much in love, and the music does a terrific job of helping convey that feeling.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZAw8qxn0ZE> City of Stars (winner of Best Song)

This next scene starts with Emma at some of her many auditions, and then transitions to her at a typical Hollywood pool party, where she spots Ryan playing in an 80’s band and has some fun at his expense. Her choice of a song to request is a wonderful put down of the kinds of clichéd music these bands have to perform, and just in general of the kinds of things aspiring musicians and actors in Hollywood have to do to make money.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=61qHhxpCcbE> 80’s band scene

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKDnPGD8CIw> A Lovely Night

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3VMlzuvMf8> The Planetarium

In this scene, Gosling has joined the bank of John Legend and gone on tour; this is supposedly exactly the kind of “sell out” music he had claimed he did not want to play, but I personally think this is a terrific tune !

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5IkwXbxvmo> Start a Fire

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFUos9sYbHs&index=3&list=RD-3VMlzuvMf8> City of Stars duet. The green lighting is very reminiscent of *Vertigo.* Sebastian is on the road with the band. Mia is putting together her one woman show. Sebastian will end up missing her premiere, because he chooses to go to a photo shoot for his band.

The Epilogue Scene is reminiscent of *An American in Paris.*  It’s several years later; Emma is now married to someone else, has a child, and is a successful actress. She and her husband walk into a jazz club on a whim, even as Emma sees the name on the sign and realizes that it has to be Ryan’s club. She hears him playing “City of Stars” and her life as it could have been flashes before her eyes. This time Ryan shows up at the premiere of her one woman play, and everything works out wonderfully – until she snaps out of it and realizes that they truly have gone on in separate directions. The parallel reality fades; this was Sebastian’s dream too, and now there are only two empty chairs in the club as he looks out when the applause has faded.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkD10lhMMrg> Epilogue