

Project Two: Music

To develop an understanding of the history of music.

For this project you will be asked to create a fact file about how modern orchestral music is used in film scores.

Firstly, you will be asked to listen to three pieces of music. When listening to each piece of music, we would like you to consider the following questions:

- What instruments can you hear?
- What tempo does it have (fast or slow)?
- Does it sound happy or sad (major or minor key)?
- Do you like it or not (you must say why)?

Either using the MP3s attached (or a music provider i.e. spotify/youtube) listen to the following pieces:

1. Hedwig's Theme (Harry Potter)
2. Star Wars Main Theme
3. Jurassic Park Main Theme

After listening to this music, we would like you to select one piece and create a fact file which considers the following questions:

- Describe the sort of film the music comes from.
- Explain how you believe the music adds to the atmosphere of the film. i.e. What happens when Darth Vader enters with his theme music?
- Describe what instruments you can hear in the music.
- Using the information below (or your own research) include 5 facts about music in film to include in your fact file.

If you wish to push yourself...

- Justify why the film would not be as successful without the music.
- Explain how you could create a different mood using music for your film. Explain which instruments you would choose to convey this.



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A film score is original music written specifically to accompany a film. The score forms part of the film's soundtrack, which also usually includes pre-existing music, dialogue and sound effects, and comprises a number of orchestral, instrumental, or choral pieces called cues, which are timed to begin and end at specific points during the film in order to enhance the dramatic narrative and the emotional impact of the scene in question. Scores are written by one or more composers, under the guidance of, or in collaboration with, the film's director or producer and are then usually performed by an ensemble of musicians – most often comprising an orchestra or band, instrumental soloists, and choir or vocalists – known as playback singers and recorded by a sound engineer.

Film scores encompass an enormous variety of styles of music, depending on the nature of the films they accompany. The majority of scores are orchestral works rooted in Western classical music, but many scores are also influenced by jazz, rock, pop, blues, new-age and ambient music, and a wide range of ethnic and world music styles. Since the 1950s, a growing number of scores have also included electronic elements as part of the score, and many scores written today feature a hybrid of orchestral and electronic instruments.

Songs such as pop songs and rock songs are usually not considered part of the film's score, although songs do also form part of the film's soundtrack. Although some songs, especially in musicals, are based on thematic ideas from the score (or vice versa), scores usually do not have lyrics, except for when sung by choirs or soloists as part of a cue. Similarly, pop songs which are "needle dropped" into a specific scene in film for added emphasis, or which are depicted as being part of the scenes' background (e.g., a song playing on a character's car radio), are not considered part of the score, although occasionally the score's composer will write an original pop song based on their themes, such as James Horner's "My Heart Will Go On" from Titanic, written for Celine Dion.

John Williams is one of the most successful and sought-after film composers, writing for many blockbuster films and winning many awards. The Star Wars score is one of his most memorable and important pieces of work, becoming as iconic as the 1977 film itself.

John Williams was born in New York, USA, in 1932. He attended the Juilliard School for drama, music and art in Manhattan, New York. His first major success was for the film score for Jaws in 1975 for which he won an Oscar.

Williams has composed some of the most iconic film music of all time, including for Superman, Indiana Jones, E.T., Harry Potter, Home Alone and War Horse. He has composed music for over a hundred films and is still actively composing today. His music features in the latest Star Wars trilogy. In addition to composing, Williams conducted the London Symphony Orchestra for the Star Wars: A New Hope soundtrack performance in 1977.

Films were silent until technology developed to include sound in the 1930s. The first fully composed film was King Kong in 1933.

The music to King Kong included leitmotifs and themes, not just background music like previous film compositions. Leitmotifs are recognisable and recurring musical ideas relate to a character, object or emotion. Music became important within films and was recognised by the Oscars in 1935 when the award Best Original Film was introduced.

Further information about film score can be found here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zmphsrd/revision/3>