Film Music

Area of study 3 - Eduqas GCSE Music

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

STRINGS
- Violin
- Cello
- Viola
- Double bass
- Harp

BRASS
- Trumpet
- Trombone
- French horn
- Tuba

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

WOODWIND
- Flute
- Clarinet
- Oboe
- Bassoon
- Saxophone

KEYBOARDS
- Piano
- Electronic keyboard
- Harpsichord
- Organ
- Synthesizer

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

Musical elements

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

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

An **exciting car chase scene** in a thriller might have a fast tempo, busy, polyphonic texture, dissonant chords, loud dynamics, syncopated rhythms, a disjunct melody and short riffs.
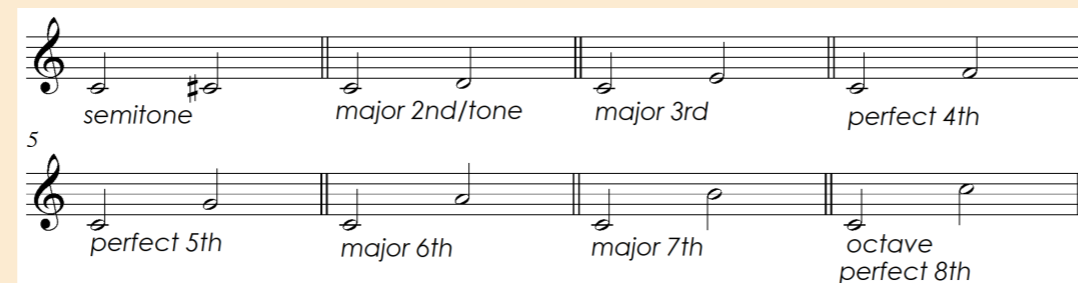
A scene where the **superhero 'saves the day'** might use a major tonality, brass fanfares, loud dynamics, accents, 4^{ths} and 5^{ths} (intervals).

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

Intervals

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

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

semitone   major 2nd/tone   major 3rd   perfect 4th

perfect 5th   major 6th   major 7th   octave perfect 8th

Rising interval: moving upwards (ascending)
Falling interval: moving downwards (descending)

Specific instrumental terms

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

Composers also use:

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

Music for ensemble

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Texture

MONOPHONIC	A single melodic line.
HOMOPHONIC	A chordal style or melody and accompaniment: moving together.
POLYPHONIC	A more complex (contrapuntal) texture with a number of different lines.
Melody and accompaniment	A tune with accompaniment (e.g. chords).
Unison	All parts play/sing the same music at the same time.
Chordal	The music moves in chords (e.g. like a hymn/chorale).
Descant	A decorative, higher pitched line.
Countermelody	A new melody, combined with the theme.
Round	A short (vocal) canon.
Canon	The melody is repeated exactly in different parts but starting at different times, with parts overlapping.
Drone	Long held notes.
2-3-4 part texture	Textures which have 2/3/4 different lines.

Jazz and blues

Scat: vocal improvisation using wordless/nonsense syllables.

Improvised: music made up on the spot.

Blue notes: flattened 3rd, 5^{ths}, 7^{ths}.

Syncopation: off-beat accents.

Call and response: a phrase played/sung by a leader and repeated by others.

Walking bass: bass line that 'walks' up and down the notes of a scale/arpeggio.

Swing style: 'jazzy' rhythm with a triplet/dotted feeling.

A jazz ensemble may contain:

Rhythm section
- Drums
- Bass (guitar or double bass)
- Piano/guitar

'Horn section'
- Trumpet
- Trombone
- Saxophone

Some groups use a wider range of instruments e.g. clarinet, violin.

12 bar blues

Chords

I	I	I	I
IV	IV	I	I
V	IV	I	I/V

Example in C major

C	C	C	C
F	F	C	C
G	F	C	C/G

Chamber music

Chamber music was music for a small ensemble, originally played in a small room in someone's home.

Baroque: The **trio sonata** featured one or two soloists, plus **basso continuo** (which consisted of a low-pitched instrument such as a cello playing a bassline, with an instrument playing chords e.g. harpsichord).

Classical: String quartets (two violins, a viola and a cello) were popular. They had **four** movements, with the 1st movement usually in sonata form.

Romantic: Chamber music groups were more varied in the Romantic era, using a wider range of instruments (e.g. piano quintet, horn trio). Performances happened in larger concert halls as well as in small 'chambers'.

A piece of music for:

DUET	2 performers
TRIO	3 performers
QUARTET	4 performers
QUINTET	5 performers
SEXTET	6 performers
SEPTET	7 performers
OCTET	8 performers

Musical theatre

Musical numbers may include:

Solo: a song for one singer.

Duet: a song for two singers.

Trio: a song for three singers.

Ensemble: a song sung by a small group.

Chorus: a large group (usually the full company/cast).

Recitative: a vocal style that imitates the rhythms and accents of speech.

Overture: an orchestral introduction to the show, which usually uses tunes from the show.

The orchestra/band is used to **accompany** the voices and to **underscore**.

Voices

Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass

The band/orchestra (sometimes called the 'pit' orchestra), may use **strings, woodwind** (sometimes called 'reeds'), **brass** and **percussion** and/or a rock/pop band, depending on the style. Most shows also use keyboards or synths.

JS Bach: Badinerie

Form and structure:
The piece is in **Binary** form (**AB**).

Section A is 16 bars long.

Section B is 24 bars long.

Each section is repeated (**AABB**).

Harmony:
Diatonic; mixture of root position and inverted chords; uses V7 chords and a Neapolitan sixth chord.

Imperfect and perfect cadences are clearly presented throughout. Both sections end with a **perfect cadence**.

Melody:
The movement is based on **two musical motifs**.

Both motifs begin with an **anacrusis**. Motif X is entirely **disjunct** whilst motif Y **combines disjunct and conjunct** movement.

Typical **ornaments and compositional devices** of the period are used including **trills, appoggiaturas** and **sequences**.

Dynamics:
Mostly *forte* throughout, although no markings appear on the score.

On some recordings, **terraced dynamics** (sudden changes) are included.

Metre and rhythm:
Simple duple time – 2/4 – with two crotchet beats in every bar.

Uses **ostinato rhythms** which form the basis of two short musical ideas (X and Y), consisting almost totally of **quavers and semi-quavers**.

Background details:
Composed by **Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685 – 1750), one of the main composers of the **Baroque** era in music.

Badinerie is the last of seven movements from a larger piece called **Orchestral Suite No.2**.

The piece was composed between **1738-1739**.

Instrumentation:
Flute, string orchestra and harpsichord.

The score has five parts (flute, violin 1, violin 2, viola and cello). The harpsichord player reads from the cello line and plays the notes with their left hand whilst filling in the chords with their right hand.

Texture:
Homophonic: melody and accompaniment.

The flute and cello provide the main musical material; however, the 1st violin participates occasionally.

The 2nd violin and viola provide harmony with less busy musical lines.

Tonality:
Section A begins in **B minor** (tonic) and ends in **F# minor** (dominant minor).

Section B begins in **F# minor** (dominant minor) and ends in **B minor** (tonic).

Section A modulates from B minor through **A major** before arriving at F# minor.

Section B modulates from F# minor through **E minor, D major, G major** and **D major** before arriving at B minor.

Tempo:
The tempo is **Allegro** (quick, lively, bright), although not marked on the score.

Toto: Africa

Soft rock

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Form and structure:

The piece is in **strophic** or **verse-chorus** form.

Intro	Verse 1 / Verse 2	Chorus 1 / Chorus 2	Link 1 / Link 2	Instrumental	Chorus 3	Outro
1 – 4	5 – 39 / 14 – 39	40 – 57	58 – 65	66 – 82	40 – 92	93 – 96
4 bars	35 bars / 26 bars	18 bars	8 bars	17 bars	22 bars	4 bars

Metre and rhythm:

Simple duple time – 2/2 (split common time) – with two minim beats in every bar.

Uses distinctive **ostinato rhythms** for both riffs, consisting almost totally of **quavers**, with constant use of **syncopation**.

Vocal rhythm looks complex but follows the natural rhythm of the lyrics.

Background details:

Composed by band members **David Paich** and **Jeff Porcaro**.

Recorded by the American rock band Toto in **1981** for their fourth studio album entitled **Toto IV**.

Released in **1982** and reached number one in America on 5 February **1983**.

Genre: **soft rock**.

Harmony:

Diatonic; mixture of root position and inverted chords.

Riff a can be heard during the intro, verses, link sections, instrumental and outro. This riff uses a three-chord pattern: **A** – **G#m** – **C#m**.

Choruses use a standard chord pattern: **vi** (F#m) – **IV** (D) – **I** (A) – **V** (E).

The **harmonic rhythm** (the rate of chord change) is mostly once per bar.

Melody:

Mostly **conjunct** (moving in step) with a **wide vocal range**.

Riff b uses the **pentatonic scale** (interpreted through E major):

Vocal improvisations occur towards the end of the song.

Texture:

Homophonic: melody and accompaniment.

Tonality:

The majority of the song is in **B major** whilst the choruses are all in **A major**.

Tempo:

The tempo is **moderately fast**.

Instrumentation:

Rock band: drum kit with additional percussion, lead and bass guitars, synthesisers, male lead vocals and male backing vocals.

Dynamics:

Most of the song is *mezzo-forte* (moderately loud) whilst the choruses are *forte*.