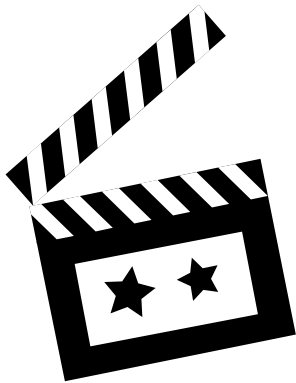


Name _____





Introduction

The aim of this topic is to introduce GCSE pupils to film music through composing and listening tasks. The main stimulus provided with this pack is music written by the composer Mark Slater.

Other listening material

At the discretion of the teacher, the music of other film music composers can be used of course; and there is nothing better than actually seeing excerpts of films to experience the role of film music at first hand. Particularly good is the music of :

John Williams : Full scale orchestral music. Famous memorable themes and melodies (Jaws semitone theme, ET theme, Harry Potter, AI, Superman etc.)

Thomas Newman : Very unusual sound effects and percussive music. Slow evocative themes. A lot of his music has been sampled into dance tracks. The music from American Beauty, Erin Brockevich, Meet Joe Black, The Green Mile and Road to Perdition are all superb.

Howard Shore : A less prolific composer but now very famous for writing music for the Lord of the Rings trilogy. Lots of chromatic and dissonant harmonies, choirs (using Tolkien's own language used in the books). Plenty of good listening work opportunities.

Illustrate the following and how they are important in creating soundscapes in film music

- Chromaticism
- Discordant harmony
- Tonal harmony
- Disjunct melody
- Conjunct melody

Play short excerpts of music and discuss musical elements of each. The Mark Slater music is a good starting point.

Often it is very simple ideas in Film music that are the most effective. Think for example of the simple semitone motif in Jaws which appears slowly at first then gets faster as the shark approaches the victim.

The Shower scene in 'Psycho' is another case where very simple resources are used to dramatic effect. High unison violins played staccato then with a glissando accompany the stabbing motion of the knife.

The projects

The projects in this pack may be approached in a variety of ways. Ideally, pupils should be divided into small groups and should attempt each project over a set period of time although time and resources may not permit this. Some of the projects require individual work while others are for the small group to work through together.

As an example, if a class of 20 pupils is working on this topic, then 4 pupils would rotate around the 5 projects. It is recommended that a set period of time, say 2 hours should be devoted to each project, followed by a presentation by pupils. This could be a performance, recording or a talk about the music listened to or composed.

MUSIC FOR FILM : TERMS



Chromaticism When melodies move by step by semi-tones, for example C to C#

Discords Clashing chords, which sometimes use chromatic notes. They are often used to create tension or fear

Tonal harmony Pleasant sounding chords, used to convey peace, happiness, tranquility etc.

Ostinato A repeated pattern. The ostinato can be in any part, including the bass and the rhythm.

Sustained Something that is held on, usually chords. In film music, sustained chords are used for effects such as open spaces, the sea, countryside, mountains etc.

Pedal This is a note, usually in the bass that is held on while other parts change.

Leitmotif - a theme representing a character or scene. For example, ET has his own leitmotif which disappears in the dying scene to be replaced by a dark synthesised sound.

Underscore - Light music which is designed to be the background to a scene. Usually it is not very exciting so as not to take away the interest from the film

Pastoral themes - These are peaceful themes used sometimes in countryside scenes.

Martial themes - Associated with the military.

Conjunct melodies - Melodies which have few wide leaps

Disjunct melodies - Melodies that leap about a bit

Augmentation - A theme may be played in longer notes, giving it more space. For example, if it is played originally in semiquavers, it may later be augmented to be played in minims.



Project 1 : Group task

You have been asked to write music for a film that has the following cue sheet.

0,00-0,30	A crowded street at rush hour in the city. Traffic and lots of people in the street going home from work.
0,31-1,05	Outside the city, a huge creature that has lived in the swamp, begins to stir. The scene is eery and foggy. The creature does not come into view yet. Audience must remain tense
1,06-1,30	A young couple drive out of the city, smiling and having fun.
1.31-1.45	Cut to swamp. The car's headlights are seen arriving. Tension is rising
1,46-2,15	The car stops in front of the swamp on a bridge. The girl gets out of the car and walks to the edge. She hears a sound behind her, looks round and sees a huge sea monster. Cut before she screams.

MUSIC FOR FILM : COMPOSING



Project 2 : Individual Computer based task

Load the MIDI file t2-theme. This is the theme music to Terminator 2. Listen to the simplicity of the melody and the repetitive rhythm combined with sustained sounds.

Compose your own theme for a Sci-fi film based on a super-race of robots landing on Earth.

Don't try to cram in as many sound effects as you can. This is a common mistake.

The theme must last for around 1,30.

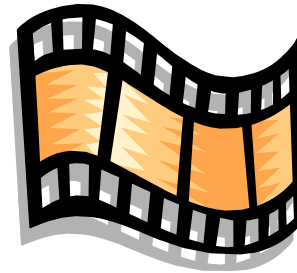
Music for Film - Composing



Project 3—Short themes

Listen to the accompanying CD, then compose your own short themes based on any THREE of the following. Each theme should last for about 45 seconds. You can use any instruments or ICT.

1. Chase (track 1)
2. Flying (track 2)
3. India (track 3)
4. Loneliness (track 4)
5. Cool (track 5)
6. Heroic (track 6)
7. Ireland (track 7)
8. Love (track 8)
9. Arising suspicion (track 9)
10. Dramatic death (track 10)
11. Pathetic (track 11)





Project 4 : Identity Hooks

An identity hook, or ident, is a very short snip of music which is associated with parts of a TV programme. On a news programme, one ident may be played for the local news, the sport or the weather parts of the programme. They are also heard on quiz shows and to accompany graphics to TV station logos.

Listen to track 12 on the CD for some examples of idents.

Idents are usually dramatic, short and punchy. They usually contain few changes in harmony, in fact the ones on the CD usually have only one chord played.

Compose your own ident for a TV station logo animation. Remember it must be short and very memorable.

Project 5 Part 1 : TV Commercials

Listen to Track 13-16 on the CD which has 4 adverts. For each one, describe the interesting features of the music relating to tempo, instrumentation, rhythm, harmony, tonality and any other features of interest. There are two adverts for cars, one for cat food and one for a building society. Can you spot which is which?

Advert A (Track 13)

Advert B (Track 14)



TV Commercials continued

Advert C (Track 15)

Advert D (Track 16)



Project 5 Part 2 : Forest Chase

Listen carefully to Track 17 on the CD which is the music accompanying a forest chase scene. The chart below is a Cue sheet for the music. Listen to the ways Mark Slater manages to bring tension into the music. Some of the chart is done for you. The timings are in the left column.

0.00–0.19	Unison _____ at the beginning playing a rising theme. This is answered by the _____ section. High violins join in and a _____ clash is heard at 0.11. Brass section finish off with tempo _____
0.19 -0.40	Sustained _____ at the beginning using _____ harmony. _____ plays a low pitched menacing motif. Special effects used such as delay, reverb and glissando
0.40-1.08	_____ and _____ play a rising motif answered by a fanfare type figure on _____. Melody played by xylophone, strings. Slight increase in _____.
1.08-1.30	Flute joins in over a _____ bass. This is followed by a _____ scale. Melody on strings returns. Time signature is _____
1.30-1.51	_____ chords played homophonically with a _____ beat to emphasise each chord. All cellos and double basses play an _____ passage over which we hear brass sustained notes using a m_____.
1.51-2.06	A quieter section using s_____ flutes with bass notes played on the _____ beat of each bar.
2.06-2.28	_____ _____ part returns. Trombone plays one note using flutter tonguing. Soon all the orchestra play the bass ostinato in _____ With a trill played on the _____. Brass chord played on each beat.
2.28–end	Bass ostinato now heard on the _____. Very discordant brass chord played suddenly. Synthesiser plays s_____ discord followed by dulcimer glissando and random bass chord at the end.



Forest Chase—ANSWERS

Listen carefully to Track 17 on the CD which is the music accompanying a forest chase scene. The chart below is a Cue sheet for the music. Listen to the ways Mark Slater manages to bring tension into the music. Some of the chart is done for you. The timings are in the left column.

0.00—0.19	Unison <u>double basses</u> at the beginning playing a rising theme. This is answered by the <u>brass</u> section. High violins join in and a <u>cymbal</u> clash is heard at 0.11. Brass section finish off with <u>tempo speeding up</u>
0.19 -0.40	Sustained <u>strings/synthesiser</u> at the beginning using <u>discordant/dissonant</u> harmony. <u>Piano</u> plays a low pitched menacing motif. Special effects used such as delay, reverb and glissando
0.40-1.08	<u>Double basses</u> and <u>tuba</u> play a rising motif answered by a fan-fare type figure on <u>trumpet</u> Melody played by xylophone, strings. Slight increase in <u>tempo</u>
1.08-1.30	Flute joins in over an <u>ostinato</u> bass. This is followed by a <u>chromatic</u> scale. Melody on strings returns. Time signature is <u>3/4</u>
1.30-1.51	<u>Dissonant</u> chords played homophonically with a <u>timpani/kettle drum</u> beat to emphasise each chord. All cellos and double basses play an <u>ostinato</u> passage over which we hear brass sustained notes using a <u>mute</u>
1.51-2.06	A quieter section using <u>sustained</u> flutes with bass notes played on the <u>1st</u> beat of each bar.
2.06-2.28	<u>Ostinato bass</u> part returns. Trombone plays one note using flutter tonguing. Soon all the orchestra play the bass ostinato in <u>unison</u> With a trill played on the <u>triangle</u> , Brass chord played on each beat.
2.28—end	Bass ostinato now heard on the <u>timpani/kettle drum</u> Very discordant brass chord played suddenly. Synthesiser plays <u>sustained</u> discord followed by dulcimer glissando and random bass chord at the end.