

ROYAL COLLEGE OF MUSIC

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**EXPLORING ISOMORPHIC (PARA-)CINEMATIC
STORYTELLING WITH MUSIC: A REFLECTION FROM THE
COMPOSER'S PERSPECTIVE**

DMus in Composition

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ABSTRACT

As a classically trained composer specialised in music for media, I have always been fascinated by the imagination that music can stir in audiences. Film music has acted as a catalyst for defining extra-musical content, with film composers devising and relying on effective musical formulas, here referred to as topics, to convey certain situations or emotions. Cinematic narrative has also affected how composers write music for media as opposed to the concert hall. Yet, the potential of cinematic storytelling with music has largely been neglected by music semioticians, with few exceptions in the last decades. My research seeks to bridge the gap between theory and practice by exploring working methods, narrative and musical strategies that define isomorphic cinematic storytelling with music, drawing upon my experience as a composer and scholar.

I first acknowledge the existence of narrative devices in instrumental and vocal music, exploring how those have been modified or continued in film music, clarifying cinematic-specific narrative devices, and reviewing the literature around the concept of musical narrative. After elaborating upon the key concept of 'para-cinematic', I then clarify the scope of this research, by focusing on music that mirrors the cinematic narrative, here defined as 'isomorphic'. I explain and contextualise the concept of para-cinematic used in the second group of works presented in this research, comprising programmatic works referring to an imaginary media. In this context, I aim to develop music that not only reflects the (audio-visual) narrative at hand but also the imagined editing techniques and camera movements, hence achieving an individual take on concert music by integrating film music strategies with traditional programmatic music, and thus going full circle from my starting point.

My analysis and commentary of the works presented as part of this DMus submission divides them into two groups. The first group features cinematic commissions composed between 2012 and 2021, where music has predominant importance in storytelling, with little or no dialogue/voice-over. The second group includes para-cinematic works based on fairy tales. My conclusions then review the selected devices previously identified in the works presented, reflecting on how the techniques and narrative strategies have improved my composing skills and pointing to future ground for further research.

INTRODUCTION

This DMus represents a convergence of my interests as a scholar, composer and screen composer. The capacity of music to convey extra-musical content has always been at the core of my interests during my studies in contemporary classical composition as well as while studying Musicology at the University of Rome and during my MMus at the Royal College of Music of London. When I started focusing exclusively on composition for media, I found creative satisfaction in my quest for storytelling with music. I started wondering if it is perhaps time for composers to look at cinematic practice with a more attentive eye, if not to engage more effectively with audiences, at least as new forms of inspiration when telling a story with music. This led to exploring the idea of writing programmatic music following an imaginary film, as Koechlin did in the seventh movement of his *Seven Stars Symphony*.¹ This type of programmatic music has been defined as 'para-cinematic' by Scott Paulin, whose research thesis has been particularly important for my DMus.² What would change in structuring a composition in the manner of the editing of an animation, for instance? What would change in my writing, and what benefits and pitfalls could I find in this compositional process? When writing programmatic music, what devices can be borrowed from cinematic practice to enhance the storytelling?

Aware that the definition of cinematic narrative is very broad, and intending to find narrative strategies that could be transferred to concert music, I decided to focus my reflection on cinematic examples where music has a predominant role in storytelling, with minimal interference from sound effects, dialogue or voice-over. This type of scoring is mostly drawn from scenes or sequences of narrative films where music plays a prominent role in underlining the story: fantasy movies, mainly, but also certain types of films and animations that are usually characterised by an overly rich musical score, predominantly orchestral and tonal.³ This choice inevitably has its limits. For instance, it does not consider any creative uses of silence between cues – intended as a significant amount of time without music – nor does it engage creatively with sound effects, often replaced or mimicked by music, as in the old animations from the 1930s and 1940s. Most significantly, it never contests the visuals, which can be a powerful technique in other kinds of film music.⁴ The cinematic musical narrative explored here

¹ Charles Koechlin, *The Seven Stars' Symphony*, op.132 (Paris: Max Eschig, 1933).

² Scott Paulin, "On The Chaplinesque In Music: Studies in The Cultural Reception of Charlie Chaplin" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2005), 59-60.

³ Regarding the concept of 'cinematic' see Scott Paulin, *op.cit.*, 6-20. Chapter I will further elaborate on the concept of storytelling. To mention a few movies I was inspired by: Terry Gilliam dir., 2005, *The Brothers Grimm*, Mosaic Media Group et al, DVD, Miramax International; Steven Spielberg dir., 1991, *Hook*, Amblin Entertainment, DVD, TriStar Pictures; Chris Columbus dir., 2001, *Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone*, Warner Bros, DVD, Warner Bros; Dean DeBlois and Chris Sanders dir., 2010, *How To Train Your Dragon*, DreamWorks Animation, DVD, Paramount Pictures. These movies do not have a "wall-to-wall" score, but often feature scenes or sequences where music is playing throughout.

⁴ More on the concept of contesting music is discussed at page 30-31.

is, therefore, 'isomorphic' to the visual storytelling, offering strong temporal, qualitative and narrative analogies.⁵ In my opinion, this offers a valuable and underexplored opportunity to study how music may convey extra-musical meaning.

In Chapter I, I review some of the storytelling musical devices that emerged in Western instrumental and vocal music; in doing so, I also sum up debates on music narrative and clarify my opinion by supporting Byron Almén's stance on narrative musical archetypes. I then analyse what storytelling devices have been employed in film music, some of which are continuations of those already detected in instrumental and vocal music, while others are new and cinematic-specific. While supporting my taxonomy with relevant literature, I was quite surprised to discover how little attention music semioticians have given to cinematic narrative in relation to music. Film music has percolated styles and techniques from concert music and re-proposed them, updating semantic conventions in music narrative for the contemporary audience. Yet, except for Philip Tagg and a few other scholars, I found little literature to support my analysis, especially for the definition of 'musical topic' and 'inherent and arbitrary associations', as will be further discussed. Next, I explain and review the literature around the concept of 'para-cinematic', which I encountered when reading Scott Paulin's dissertation "On The Chaplinesque In Music: Studies in The Cultural Reception of Charlie Chaplin" (2005).⁶ Finally, I clarify the concept of isomorphism, starting from Susanne Langer's definition and concluding with a list of characteristics that I took into consideration for my research.

In Chapter II, I comment on a group of isomorphic soundtracks commissioned and written between 2012 and 2021. In those cases, the very fact that the director and the production team have approved my music – or, as in *Luminaris* and *The Saint*, the fact that the panel has awarded the work as finalist in an international contest – led me to think that the soundtrack is deemed effective in telling the story. The commentary on these works focuses on the practical aspects and the process of making musical choices for storytelling, providing answers to the sub-questions of the research, in particular the application of the core narrative devices and how to maintain a cohesive musical arc in an isomorphic context.

Chapter III focuses on para-cinematic works written for the research, including two commissioned pieces (*Cetreria de Reyes* and *Bremen Town Musicians*). Through the commentary, I attempt to answer the main research question, whilst acknowledging the limits of the research, focusing in particular on how the core narrative devices can be applied in a para-cinematic context, and how the para-cinematic merges with the practice of writing concert music. For these works, I imagined the cinematic

⁵ Please see Chapter I for an extended explanation of the term and its use in literature.

⁶ See footnote 2.

programme before writing the music, including general ideas of camera movements, shots, fade in / out, and timings between an event and the next.

The final chapter, Conclusions, goes back to the main research question and sub-questions, revising the material and recapitulating the findings of my dissertation, including the contribution to knowledge and the advancement in current practice. For clarity, here is a chart of the key research question, aims and objectives of this DMus.

Key Research Question	What is the potential of storytelling devices used in isomorphic cinematic scores as the basis for para-cinematic composition?
Sub - questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the core devices of musical storytelling in isomorphic cinematic scores? 2. How may these devices be deployed in para-cinematic compositions to amplify music's potential to convey extra-musical content? 3. How is the compositional approach affected by integrating these devices in a concert work? 4. How to compensate the potential fragmentation of isomorphic music writing through a coherent musical arc?
Aims	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To explore how relevant literature in music narrative and semiotics can be deployed for writing isomorphic cinematic scores 2. To investigate how the selected devices found in cinematic scores can be applied in para-cinematic compositions 3. To improve my compositional language and gain a better understanding of isomorphic (para)cinematic narrative
Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To analyse the practice of film music using an appropriate semiotic approach 2. Through a portfolio of cinematic (written to picture) and para-cinematic (written to a cinematic programme) works, to show a personal selection of techniques and musical strategies capable of carrying and enhancing extra-musical meaning

	3. To provide a reflective commentary on my intentions and compositional approach
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CHAPTER I - Music as Narrative Device: Theoretical Framework, Debates, and Definitions

In order to explore the application of film music narrative strategies to purely instrumental composition, it is important to recognise how film music evolved from established narrative devices in instrumental and vocal music. This chapter will address some of the main theories and debates around the concept of music narrative, clarifying my stance and the theoretical framework supporting my research. After an appraisal of the principal means used by composers to convey narrative in instrumental and operatic music, I address some of the philosophical debates around music and narrative, and then turn to consider the implications of these for film music composition. The key terms 'para-cinematic' and 'isomorphic' are defined in relation to their use in existing literature. The overall purpose of this chapter will be to establish the nature of this project's original contribution to knowledge.

An Historical Overview of Narrative in Instrumental and Operatic Music

Film music is deeply indebted to instrumental music and opera. The first film music composers were already established in the European classical music world and consequently brought their experience and aesthetics into composing for screen (Camille Saint-Saëns, Max Steiner, Erich Korngold, to name a few). They naturally drew upon the increasing interest in emotion and dramatic narrative within classical music, an interest that had a long history and became particularly important within Romanticism in the 19th century.

The storytelling aspect of musical composition has undergone substantial changes throughout history because of wider shifts in culture and artistic expression. The practice of using instrumental music to narrate stories or represent scenes gained momentum during the Baroque period: early programmatic music, which was mainly descriptive and evocative (such as Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, written in 1725), established foundations that supported future genre growth during the Romantic era, as composers like Berlioz and Liszt broadened musical storytelling in their programmatic instrumental works. A similar interest was at the core of music for ballet in the 19th and 20th centuries, where Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky and Prokofiev (amongst others) made significant progress in the art of musical narrative.

Storytelling conventions in instrumental work drew, in turn, upon expressive devices from vocal music. The capacity of opera to underpin the story's dramatic aspects with

musical elements was already evident with Claudio Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* in 1607. The quest for a deeper connection between narrative and music characterised the subsequent history of opera, finding fertile ground for more intricate stories and character arcs in the Romanticism and late-Romanticism of the 19th - 20th century. Wagner's operatic works, especially *The Ring Cycle*, demonstrate this transformation through their seamless integration of music and storytelling.

In considering the significance of such developments for the later history of film music, it is helpful to identify key devices used throughout the centuries to define extra-musical content. Considering their relevance for this research, I focus on the following: musical topics, thematic structure, Leitmotivic writing, and onomatopoeia.

Musical Topics

In his seminal book *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style*, Leonard Ratner laid down an early definition of musical topics to explain how various styles and genres interact and influence one another, and come to convey extra-musical meaning. This theory posits that composers used stylistic conventions as a form of communication with audiences, crossing genre boundaries in ways that created strong associations between particular kinds of musical material and an emotional or situational intent. As Allanbrook has written:

From the Greek *topos*, "place", or in its technical use in rhetoric, "commonplace". Aristotle's *Topica* is a collection of general arguments which a rhetorician might consult for help in treating a particular theme. In music this term has been borrowed to designate "commonplace" musical styles or figures whose expressive connotations, derived from the circumstances in which they are habitually employed, are familiar to all.⁷

Scholars such as Agawu and Monelle have advanced the study of topics with more detailed catalogues (such as Agawu's *Universe of Topics*, for instance, drawn from the work of Leonard Ratner) and semiotic interpretations, some of which will be further discussed later in this chapter.⁸ Music topics are culturally-shaped musical conventions, with a restricted scope of signification; fig. 1, for instance, shows an example of the topics *Ombra* and *Tempesta* as presented by Clive McClelland:

⁷ Jamison Allanbrook Wye, *Rhythmic Gesture in Mozart: 'Le Nozze Di Figaro' and 'Don Giovanni'* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1983), 329.

⁸ Essential biography for this very concise historical summary is:

- Leonard Ratner. *Classic Music: Expression, Form and Style* (New York: Schirmer, 1980)
- V. Kofi Agawu. *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991)
- Raymond Monelle. *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000)

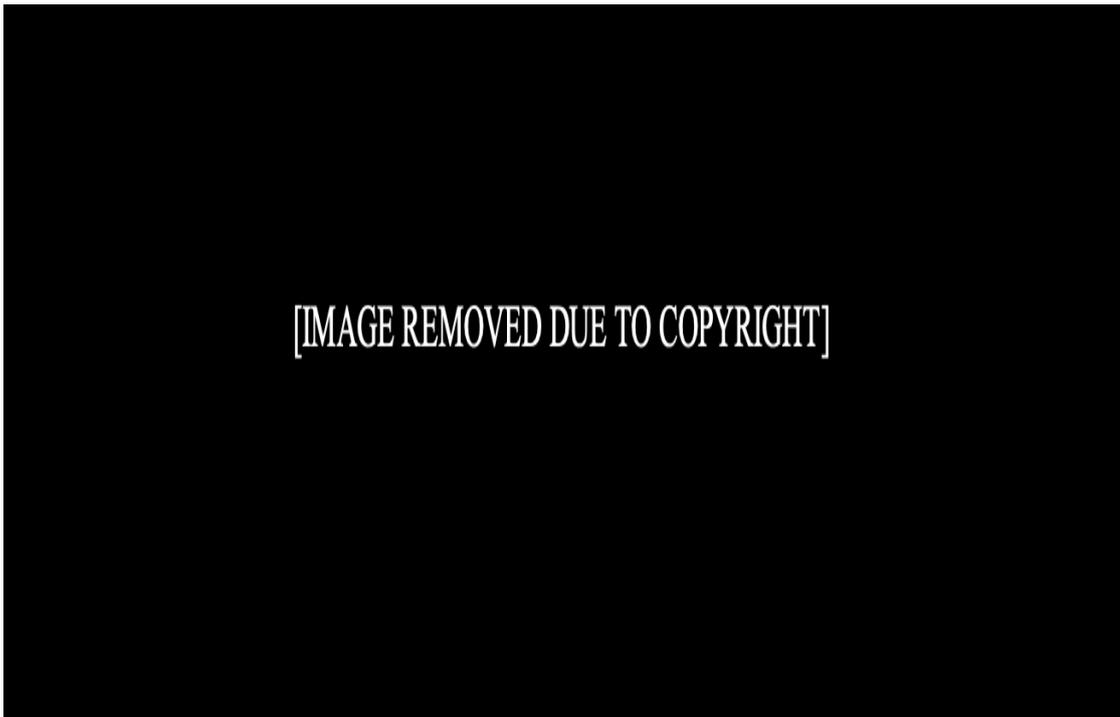


Fig. 1: definition of *ombra* and *tempesta*. C. McClelland, 'Ombra and Tempesta', *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 282.

Besides its fascinating relationship with music semiotics, the notion of topic has also proved problematic, firstly because it has been applied to music that pre-dates the theorisation of topic itself, and secondly because there isn't a defined taxonomy of musical parameters that can be univocally applied to topics: some have been dissected in multiple characteristics, some others have a more loose definition, and some theorists consider them to be in constant evolution.⁹ As highlighted by Ana Stefanovic, one of the main problems of music topic theory so far is 'the unclear use of the very concept of "topic" and its content'.¹⁰ Similarly, Esti Sheinberg states that 'While the terminology of music topics is relatively new, awareness of 'characteristic figures' that would point to a variety of signifiers is neither new nor consistent', and argues that 'music topics are discussed under various terminologies in different countries and cultures'.¹¹

⁹ See Sulzer's different description of 'military' and 'sarabande' as exposed by Danuta Mirka in the introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014), 22-23. Agawu says also that 'Theoretically, UT [Universe of Topics] is open, since it continues to expand as more and more topics are uncovered; UT can only attain closure on the last day of research'. See Kofi Agawu, *Playing with Signs: A Semiotic Interpretation of Classic Music* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 128.

¹⁰ Ana Stefanovic, "Once more on music topics and style analysis. A critical examination of Agawu's analysis of the introduction to Beethoven's *Pathetic Sonata*", *ZGMTH* 7/3 (2010).

¹¹ Esti Sheinberg, ed., *Music Semiotics: A Network of Significations* (London, New York: Routledge, 2016), 7.

It is indisputable, however, that composers—rationally or instinctively—strived to provide music with meaning, and they used similar formulas because of their successful mimesis of the extra-musical objects they referred to. So, despite the criticisms, musical topics remain at the forefront of an understanding of music semiotics and so will constitute an important narrative device to consider in this research.

Thematic Structure

Musical forms and thematic structures are pivotal in establishing narrative coherence within instrumental music, encouraging parallels to be drawn with the storytelling techniques found in literature and visual arts. Music's narrative potential can be expressed through various compositional techniques, including thematic transformation, harmonic manipulation, and the development of musical motifs.

Fred Maus delineates several key features that explain why music has been so often compared to narrative. Firstly, he highlights the role of temporality, noting that the linear progression and development of musical phrases can evoke a sense of unfolding events or character development. Secondly, this temporal dimension allows listeners to perceive a sequence of musical ideas as a coherent narrative that may resonate with their emotional states and lead to anthropomorphic interpretations.¹² For instance, the Rondo form, although it is not programmatic, parallels the concept of 'trying to return to a position of stability', which in turn can be interpreted more specifically by the listener.¹³ The genericity of the musical narrative is further explained by Maus with Vladimir Propp's definition of 'plot' in his *Morphology of the Folktale*:

Plot, in Propp's account, is determined by the succession of events in a story; the distribution of characters within a story, and the personalities of the characters, are less crucial. [...] Narrative theory abstracts from individual narratives in somewhat the same way that instrumental music abstracts from everyday human action.¹⁴

¹² 'Listeners can hear musical successions as story-like because they can find something like actions, thoughts, and characters in music.' In Fred Everett Maus, 'Music as Narrative', *Indiana Theory Review* (Indiana University Press, 1991), 6.

¹³ F. E. Maus, *op. cit.*, 14.

¹⁴ F. E. Maus, *op. cit.*, 15. In footnotes, he also wrote 'One could almost claim that music is more like narrative theory than it is like narrative'. Regarding Propp: Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. Laurence Scott (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968). I will come back to the Russian formalists when addressing the reasons behind choosing fairy tales as the subject of my para-cinematic works (Chapter III).

The anthropomorphic interpretation of instrumental music did not spare music theorists such as Schenker, who wrote that

in the art of music, as in life, motion towards the goal encounters obstacles, reverses, disappointments, and involves great distances, detours, expansions, interpolations, and, in short, retardations of all kinds. Therein lies the source of all artistic delaying, from which the creative mind can derive content that is ever new.¹⁵

In some cases, composers organised their themes around specific literary writing techniques: this is the case of Robert Schumann, for instance, who modelled most of his *Carnaval* (1835) on the Romantic novelists' *Witz*, 'the faculty by which subtle underlying connections are discovered (or revealed) in a surface of apparent incoherence and extreme discontinuity'.¹⁶ Musical forms – 'the constructive or organizing element in music' – imply that music follows its own narrative, or structure, a point I consider further below in relation to Byron Almén's *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (2008).¹⁷

Leitmotivic Writing

Theorised and applied by Wagner for his operas and music dramas, the leitmotif is an answer to the rigidity of musical forms within operatic and instrumental traditions, that, especially in the 19th century, started crumbling under the increasing complexity of composers' ideas; it can be defined as 'a recurrent musical idea which has been invested by its composer with semantic content'.¹⁸ The very fact that the first proto-leitmotifs can be found in much earlier operatic music (Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, Carl Maria von Weber's *Der Freischütz*) testifies to how relevant they are within a narrative context where music is called to represent extra-musical ideas. The associative nature of a leitmotif makes it the ideal candidate for musical storytelling, as much of the programmatic music of the 19th century proves. Not only is the leitmotif associated with an element of the story (be it a character, a situation, a scenario, or a feeling), but its recurrence in the musical piece also implies that the audience can make sense of it in the new context. Leitmotivic writing has been particularly relevant in film music, as it will be discussed later.

¹⁵ F.E. Maus, *op. cit.*, 4, quoting Heinrich Schenker, *Free Composition*, trans. and ed. by Ernst Oster (New York: Longman, 1979), 5.

¹⁶ Anthony Newcomb, 'Schumann and Late Eighteen-Century Narrative Strategies', *19th Century Music* (California: University of California Press, 1987, V.O.I. 11, n.2), 169.

¹⁷ Arnold Whittall, "Form." *Grove Music Online*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.09981>. Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008)

¹⁸ Warren Darcy, *Wagner's Das Rheingold* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1993), 45.

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeic effects – for instance, the bugle call or a military march rhythm – have been used in instrumental and operatic music to reinforce their semantic signification, engaging the audiences on a very immediate sensory level.¹⁹ There are several definitions in scholarly literature of the term ‘musical onomatopoeia’, which mostly refer to it as the ‘imitation of non-musical sounds’²⁰ or ‘graphic representations or imitations’.²¹ The use of violin trills to imitate the chirp of birds in Vivaldi’s *Spring*, the circular pattern at the piano in Schubert’s *Gretchen by the Spinning Wheel* to refer to the spinning wheel, or the car horn sound in Gershwin’s *An American in Paris*, are just a few examples testifying to how composers have explored the mimetic possibilities of music through the centuries.²² Whilst less ambiguous in meaning, onomatopoeic effects have been used quite sporadically in classical music.

On Musical Narrative: Debates and Definitions

The preceding outline gives a summary view of key developments in narrative within instrumental and vocal music from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries. However, such an outline does not fully recognise the debates that have arisen about music’s relation to narrative and its capacity to support extra-musical associations. Eduard Hanslick’s seminal book *The Beautiful in Music* (1854) initiated a debate between absolutists and referentialists: those who considered music only capable of expressing itself, and those who admitted the possibility for music to reference something else.²³ This debate persisted through to the twentieth century; and while in recent times it has become uncommon to argue that music cannot convey extra-musical meaning, there remains disagreement about the way in which this happens. A century after Hanslick, Leonard Meyer even proposed that that the two concepts - the absolute and the referential - might coexist in the same musical composition.²⁴

¹⁹ For the Military, see R. Monelle, *op. cit.*, p. 133-184.

²⁰ Carl Dahlhaus, *Realism in Nineteenth-Century Music* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985), 18.

²¹ Vernon Gotwals, *Haydn: Two Contemporary Portraits* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 186.

²² An insightful classification of musical onomatopoeia is offered in Luis E. Casteloes, ‘A Catalogue of Musical Onomatopoeia’ in *International Review of the Aesthetic and Sociology of Music*, vol. 40, no. 2 (2009), 299-347. The fascination of the mimesis of the musical onomatopoeia and its potential as a tool for carrying on meaning has captured scholars already (Coker, 1972; Sloboda, 1985; Monelle, 2002).

²³ Eduard Hanslick, *On the Musically Beautiful: A New Translation* (transl. by Lee Rothfarb and Christopher Landerer; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018)

²⁴ Leonard Meyer, *Emotion and Meaning in Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).

So, what kind of narrative can music express? Many contrasting perspectives have been advanced. In his article "Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?"²⁵ Jean-Jacques Nattiez essentially stated that musical narrative is a fallacy: narrative in music arises only because audiences interpret music as narrative. Music's extrinsic referrals are mainly 'the spatio-temporal, the kinetic and the affective', but beyond these there is little that music can suggest.²⁶ In particular, he presented a fascinating survey based on the responses of 11-14-year-old children to Dukas' *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. The experiment collected the possible stories the respondents imagined for the music. Although these stories were different, Nattiez could identify the pattern of calm/chase/calm as a common feature for all.²⁷ Interestingly, Nattiez did not consider this to be positive evidence of the narrative potential in music.

Contrastingly, Byron Almén, writing a decade later, reminded his readers that 'scholars such as Vladimir Propp, Joseph Campbell, Northrop Frye, and Lord Raglan have suggested that it is the *relations between elements* and not the elements themselves that are the foundation of narrative'.²⁸ With this in mind, Almén has gradually dismantled what he defines as the 'descendant model' of musical narrative. This model, adopted by many scholars, including Nattiez and Abbate, evaluates musical narrative as a 'transposed reflection of literary narrative'. It is Almén's opinion that a 'sibling model' should be considered, where 'the two media share a common foundation but varying manifestations'.²⁹ Following an approach very much in line with Fred Maus's observations, he defines musical narrative as 'the process through which the listener perceives and tracks a culturally significant transvaluation of hierarchical relationships within a temporal span'.³⁰ Almén defines narrative as sourced by an initial contrast between elements; if we agree with this, it is now clearer how thematic structure, Leitmotivic memory and recontextualization can be seen as essential ingredients for musical narrative, from a strictly-musical approach. In Almén's view, narrative can unfold according to four possible pathways, directly borrowed from Northrop Frye's theory of 'narrative archetypes': romance, tragedy, irony and comedy.³¹ When applying a narrative interpretation of a piece, the

²⁵ Jean-Jacques Nattiez and Katharine Ellis, "Can One Speak of Narrativity in Music?", *Journal of the Royal Music Association*, 115 (1990): 240-257. For a historical review of the literature published around the early 1990s see Matthew McDonald, "Silent Narration? Elements of Narrativity in Ives's *The Unanswered Question*", *19th-century Music* 27 (2004), 263-266

²⁶ J.-J. Nattiez, *op. cit.*, 243.

²⁷ J.-J. Nattiez, *op. cit.*, 246.

²⁸ Byron Almén, "Narrative Archetypes: A Critique, Theory, and Method of Narrative Analysis" *Journal of Music Theory* 47 (2003), 12.

²⁹ B. Almén, *op. cit.*, 2-3.

³⁰ B. Almén, *op. cit.*, 12.

³¹ Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957). For clarity, here the definition presented in Byron Almén, *A Theory of Musical Narrative* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008), 74, quoting James Jakob Liszka, *the Semiotic of Myth: a Critical Study*

contrasting primary elements of 'order' and 'transgression' should be identified, followed by an analysis of how the two interact. Romance and comedy place emphasis on the victory (respectively, of order and transgression), whilst tragedy and irony place emphasis on the defeat (respectively, of transgression and order).

Although I have made reference to Almén's theories in my commentary, a limitation of his analyses of individual classical pieces – no matter how fascinating they are – is that it is often impossible to know whether the composer actively meant to convey the narrative emerging from the analysis. In the para-cinematic works contained in the portfolio for this submission, there is always a strong narrative intentionality, as I describe in Chapter III.

Underpinning such debates are the similarities and differences between musical meaning and linguistic meaning. Notwithstanding the doubts theorists have expressed about the relevance of linguistic models, light can be cast upon musical narrative by considering theories developed to understand language. One of the most accepted semantic theories is Peirce's triadic taxonomy, based on the distinction between *icon*, *index* and *symbol*. Simplifying, an icon is 'a sign which *exhibits* or *exemplifies* its object' (i.e., a photograph of a fire), an index is 'the relation of a sign to an object' (i.e., smoke standing for fire), and a symbol establishes an arbitrary connection with the signified (i.e., the word 'fire').³² When this theory is applied to music, however, things get more complicated. Music lacks the specificity that words and visual signs can have in representing the signifiers.³³

Without aiming to delve into the complexity of music semiotics, but rather trying to find a pragmatic approach to it, in the present commentary I have decided to adopt the bipartition of *inherent* and *arbitrary associations*, as brilliantly presented in the study "Associations of Meaning in Programme Music: on Denotation, Inherence, and Onomatopoeia" conducted by Antovic, Stamenkovic & Figar.³⁴ Inherent associations

of the Symbol (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 121-40: 'A *romance* narrative involves the *victory of an order-imposing hierarchy over its transgression* (victory + order); a *tragic* narrative involves the *defeat of a transgression against an order-imposing hierarchy* (defeat + transgression); an *ironic* narrative involves the *defeat of an order-imposing hierarchy by a transgression* (defeat + order); and a *comic* narrative involves the *victory of a transgression over an order-imposing hierarchy* (victory + transgression).

³² Respectively, (1) Arthur W. Burks "Icon, Index, and Symbol." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 9, no. 4 (1949): 675. (2) Thomas A. Goudge "Peirce's Index." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 1, no. 2 (1965): 52. For a more colloquial explanation of the terms, please see <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/peirce-semiotics/>, paragraph 2, accessed on 11/07/2022.

³³ This is also reflected in contradictory interpretations of Peirce's concepts in music. Koelsch states that Susanne Langer's definition of icon belongs more to the definition of index; in Stefan Koelsch, *Brain and Music* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2013), para 10.2.1 (Kindle edition). Stefanovic (*op.cit.*, 321-322) reveals the confusion in Monelle's use of indexical and symbolic topic.

³⁴ 'As our study deals with associative processes, we label the first group *inherent association* (resembling HaCohen & Wagner's, 1997, "inherent" and Koelsch's, 2013, "iconic") and the second

are any musical gesture that strictly mimics natural and human features – a category that embraces onomatopoeia. Onomatopoeia, as such, is singular (referring to a specific sound or motion), mimetic (descriptive) and iconic (following Pierce’s semantic classification). Arbitrary associations on the other hand are more complex in that (a) they could include inherent associations in their overall structure, (b) they are invested by the composer with semantic meaning, and (c) they are culturally accepted. The main arbitrary associations that are relevant for this research are Leitmotivic writing and musical topics.³⁵

Music and Narrative in Film Music

The fact that film music is indissolubly intertwined with moving images implies the evolution and continuation of existing musical narrative devices (such as onomatopoeia, Leitmotivic writing, and musical topics), together with new, extra-musical ones arising from the techniques of film-making: in particular, editing and montage, focalisation and representation (or *mise en scène*). The following paragraphs will review the significance of each of these techniques, with a specific focus on my own practice and the theoretical approach adopted in this research.

Musical Topics in Film Music

Early film scores perpetuated the conventional topics used in instrumental and operatic music, associating and adapting them for the cinema. During the silent era, for instance, catalogues and repertoires of instrumental and operatic music (Lang and West’s *Musical Accompaniment of Moving Pictures*, for instance) circulated among the piano improvisers who provided live music in the theatres.³⁶

Of course, the combination of image and music in films continued to create new associations and new conventions that exceeded what was inherited from earlier classical music. The popularity of TV shows and movies often contributed to the

arbitrary association (close to Koelsch’s “symbolic” meaning, Davies’, 1994, “intentional, arbitrary stipulation of stand-alone meaning”, or Cross’s, 2001, “culturally-shaped association”).’ Mihailo Antovic, Dusan Stamenkovic. & Vladimir Figar, “Association of Meaning in Program Music: On Denotation, Inherence, and Onomatopoeia”, in *Music Perception: And Interdisciplinary Journal*, vol.34, 2 (December 2016), 243-248; University of California Press, 244. Koelsch defines iconic ‘musical information, resembling sounds of objects, qualities of objects, or quality of abstract objects’ (*op. cit.*, para 10.2.1, Kindle Ed.).

³⁵ In line with the concept of *arbitrary associations*, Chattah asserts that ‘because topics establish an arbitrary signifier-signified relationship, and because these signs become conventional within culturally defined repertoires, we should regard them as *symbols*’. Juan Chattah, “From Topics to Troping within Film”, in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Music Semiotics* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 2012), 405-406.

³⁶ Edith Lang and George West, *Musical Accompaniment Of Moving Pictures* (Boston: The Boston Music Company, 1920)

success of their soundtracks; in this way, a certain soundtrack became iconic of a particular genre, leading to several soundtracks that share common traits because of the same cinematic genre they refer to. As Nicholas Cook states, 'meaning lies not in musical sound, then, nor in the media with which it is aligned, but in the encounter between them'.³⁷ Therefore, given an established pairing of musical topic/cinematic sequence, once the visual medium is removed, the music often still retains the same or a similar meaning.

The film and game music literature has used different terminology for discussing this aspect of conventionalised musical meaning. Several books on film and computer music, for instance, refer to musical topics without explicitly using the word. Claudia Gorbman's notion of 'cultural musical codes' is an emblematic example:

Any music bears cultural associations, and most of these associations have been further codified and exploited by the music industry. We all know what "Indian music", battle music, and romance music sound like in the movies.³⁸

Karlin and Wright' *On The Track* has an entire chapter dedicated to 'genre music', giving several specific insights for each.³⁹ Among those, some (in particular action and horror) have traits that hint at possible topical classifications. Interestingly, the following chapters focus on musical parameters (melody, harmony, rhythm, orchestration) and what they can achieve dramatically. One might argue that the concept of musical topic forms the missing link between 'genre music' and those musical parameters analysed afterwards. Similarly, Paul Gilreath in *MIDI Orchestration* and Norman Ludwin in *Composition: A New Approach* and *Advanced Orchestration Volume III* suggests conventional orchestrations and compositional approaches to achieve specific moods, identifying musical traits that could fall under the definition of musical topics.⁴⁰

Only in recent years, through the work of Tagg, with his *Introductory Notes to the Semiotics of Music* (1999), and his 'ethnocentric selection of connotative spheres',⁴¹ Lehrich's analysis of Takemitsu's 'distorted iconism', and especially Chattah's *From Topic to Troping Within Film Music* – to name those relevant for my research – has film

³⁷ Nicholas Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 260. The popularity and success of music library companies in the last two decades seem to corroborate the potential of musical topics.

³⁸ Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 3.

³⁹ Fred Karlin and Rayburn Wright, *On The Track* (NY-London: Routledge, 2004), 179-188.

⁴⁰ Paul Gilreath, *The Guide to Midi Orchestration* – 4th edition (Oxford: Focal Press, 2010), 546-553; Norman Ludwin, *Composition: A New Approach – Scoring Tips* (Ludwin, 2017) and *Advanced Orchestration Volume III* (Ludwin, 2018).

⁴¹ Philip Tagg, *Introductory Notes to the Semiotics of Music* (Liverpool / Brisbane, 1999)

music attracted some attention from musical topic theorists.⁴² Topic theory is bound to evolve its terminology according to ever-changing social and cultural circumstances; bizarrely, whilst there is a conspicuous literature on topics in 18th-century music, relatively little has been said about their role in 19th-century music, and even less for 20th and 21st-century music.⁴³

For the purpose of analysing my own practice, I propose to take a personal stance on the matter, by defining a musical topic as a formula of musical elements that, together, and only together, contribute to suggest a specific meaning.⁴⁴ An important contribution of my research is that, in chapters II and III, I propose new musical topics – clearly identified in italics throughout this thesis – that are central to my own compositions and that derive in certain ways from previous conventions in film music and earlier classical composition. The musical elements that are part of my definition of each musical topic are not, *per se*, either exclusive of the topic or necessarily able to carry meaning on their own. What makes them meaningful is the way they are combined. A musical topic is thus the result of different musical elements combined, some of which could be invested with inherent associations, to create a symbolic representation of an extra-musical meaning of significance in the narrative context. It can be descriptive, but it is a more complex system than a purely onomatopoeic gesture. The topic *Beautiful Forest* used in my work *Rapunzel*, for instance (discussed in detail in chapter III), is not only descriptive of the forest but also of its positive quality; without this, it is not possible to appreciate the gradual twist to the tragic ending of the sequence. So, the positive quality of the forest has an important narrative significance. This will explain why many of the topics here individuated have a definition requiring two or more words, often hinting at an emotional or narrative implication (*Beautiful Forest; Fantastic Flight; Lurking Dangerous Presence; etc.*). In order to define a musical topic, I found examples in film music to support my description, often pairing them with examples from classical music, where film composers have sourced the topic. Generally, the definitions offered in this research must be understood as the result of a personal take on the subject, albeit supported by analysis of the literature.⁴⁵

⁴² Christopher I. Lehrich, "Hearing Transcendence: Distorted Iconism in Tori Takemitsu's Film Music", *Signs and Society* 2 (2014); Juan Chattah, *op. cit.*

⁴³ On 19th century music, I could only find J. Dickensheets, 'The Topical vocabulary of the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Musicological Research* (2012), 31:2-3, 97-137, and V. K. Agawu, *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁴⁴ This finds support in A. Stefanovic, *op. cit.*, 319.

⁴⁵ In defence to this personal approach, I would like to quote J. Dickensheets, who also admits – from her 'not exhaustive' lexicon of musical topics, that 'topic analysis will always be subjective, in that it requires the interpretation of the analyst' (J. Dickensheets, *op. cit.*, 137-138).

Leitmotivic Writing

There is extensive literature on the subject of Leitmotivic writing in film music, and especially on how the latter has borrowed the technique from Wagner, spanning from its first acknowledgement in Lang and West's publication *Musical Accompaniment of Moving Pictures* (1920) to Bribitzer-Stull's *Understanding the Leitmotif: from Wagner to Film Music* (2015).⁴⁶ Although not exclusive to and not exclusively used in film music, Leitmotivic writing works as a structural device that adapts to the extra-musical ideas with which it is supposedly associated.⁴⁷ Scholars have readily observed the importance of this principle when addressing film music: Sergio Miceli and Emilio Audissino, for instance, state that film music should strive for both musical and functional dignity to contest the absolutists' prejudice that music for the screen lacks coherence and artistic value.⁴⁸ This is an important aesthetic consideration that has always shaped my approach to screen music, and that I have often accomplished by using recurring themes and motifs.

Leitmotif is present in most of the scores presented in this portfolio as a viable technique to suggest a narrative, working as a mnemonic reference for the audience and at the same time also shaping a coherent structure to the musical pieces. One aesthetic challenge of film music is that the musical form is often dependent on the editing: in such a context, the leitmotif, with its flexibility, helps preserve musical coherence, absorbing in itself the traditional narrative role of thematic structure and form. In this Doctorate, I prefer using the term 'Leitmotivic writing' – that is, writing using recurring musical ideas invested with semantic meaning – over leitmotif;⁴⁹ this allows me to include in this definition themes that have a longer arch or musical elements that aren't thematic but have significance in my writing.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ E. Lang and G. West, *op. cit.*, 6-7. Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding Leitmotif: from Wagner to Film Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

⁴⁷ It is important to mention that Leitmotivic writing is not exclusive to film music: recent scoring trends are increasingly demonstrating the effectiveness of textural writing – Steven Price's soundtrack for Alfonso Cuarón's *Gravity* (2013) is an example, for instance. However, it could be said that Leitmotivic writing is statistically and historically the most prevalent technique in film music. As for techniques in film music, see also Emilio Audissino, *John Williams's Film Music* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2014), 33-35. Also, for more on film music trends – specifically the recent trend towards uniformity, see Sergio Miceli, *Film Music* (Milan: Universal Music MGB Publications srl & LIM Editrice, 2009), 345.

⁴⁸ Sergio Miceli, Interview on RAI radio 3, 15th August 1999; Emilio Audissino, "Overruling a Romantic Prejudice: Forms and Formats of Film Music in Concert Programs" in S. Stoppe (ed.), *Film In Concert, Film in Score and their Relation to Classical Concert* (Gluckstadt: VWH, 2014). The concept of a coherent structure can be compared to the notion of 'Gestalt' applied to film music studies, see Emilio Audissino, in "A Gestalt Approach to the Analysis of Music in Films, *Musicology Research 2* (2017), 69-88.

⁴⁹ Paraphrasing Warren Darcy, *Wagner Das Rheingold* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1993), 45.

⁵⁰ Bribitzer-Stull well illustrates the complexity of offering an exhaustive definition of the leitmotif; see *op. cit.*, 1-30. Most of the issues in defining the leitmotif exposed in his introduction, however, have little relevance in this Doctorate, since I am acting as both the composer and the scholar who analyses the leitmotif or musical elements used in Leitmotivic function.

Onomatopoeia: or shall we now call it “Mickey-Mousing”?

Mickey-Mousing – ‘the exact synchronization of music and action’ – was a common practice in animation during the 1930s and 1940s, where music not only paralleled actions, but often provided musical sound effects; with the development of the sound effect department, Mickey-Mousing became less literal in animation but still quite effective as a mimetic device.⁵¹ This practice has often been regarded critically, especially when applied in live-action movies, where it would be seen as a way to ‘vulgarize the scenes’ or to reduce the score ‘to its primary condition of crude sound’.⁵² However, in my opinion, it should be regarded as one of the most compelling attempts made by composers to describe visual actions, movements, and noises in music; besides, composers like John Williams have proved how it can be used elegantly and musically.⁵³

Mickey-Mousing implies an ‘audiovisual *relationship*’ between music and visuals, because it entirely depends on the cinematic actions and how they are edited: without the visuals, we only have onomatopoeic effects.⁵⁴ It can be said, therefore, that Mickey-Mousing is synched onomatopoeia. Whilst onomatopoeia was quite marginally used in instrumental and vocal music, Mickey-Mousing has been particularly successful in film music, as a device able to reinforce the action and direct the audience’s attention.

Beyond Music: Editing and Montage

I now turn to film-specific techniques that affect composers’ choices. Editing techniques and camera movements have a direct impact on writing music for film because they develop, as music does, through time, creating a visual rhythm (i.e. the length of different shots, how fast or slow the camera moves in the scene, etc.) that can be mirrored by musical gestures. For instance, a sudden cut may correspond to a sudden music juxtaposition; a crossfade may be represented by interlocked dynamics. The composer may choose to follow or ignore the visual rhythm of a film, but the very fact that he or she must deal with it makes it relevant in his or her

⁵¹ Daniel Goldmark, *Tunes For 'Toons* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 6.

⁵² Both quotes are related to Max Steiner’s use of Mickey-Mousing in his scoring: Irvin Bazelon, *Knowing the Score: Notes on Film Music*, (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1975), 24, and Maurice Jaubert, “Music on the Screen” in Charles Davy (ed.), *Footnotes to the Film* (London: Lovat Dickson Ltd., 1938), 108.

⁵³ An interesting reading about Mickey Mousing and John Williams can be found in Peet Gelderblom, “In Defence of Mickey-Mousing”, *Directorama* (<https://www.directorama.net/2007/06/22/film-music-blog-a-thon-in-defense-of-mickey-mousing/>, accessed on 22 April 2025)

⁵⁴ Andy Birtwistle, *Cinesonica: Sounding Film and Video* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 206.

compositional choices. Editing and montage also have an important influence on how time is perceived; as Frank Martin wrote in 1925

Cinema possesses two effective means of influencing music: either according to the pressure it exerts on the techniques and habits of a composer in the course of the collaboration; or, that which it exerts on his creative sense itself, by suggesting to him a new way of perceiving succession and time⁵⁵

There is evidence that cinematic narrative often involves a temporal contraction, a trend that has become ever more apparent in recent times: shot and scene lengths have become shorter through the decades, implying a different perception of time.⁵⁶ This is also reflected in the average length of a music cue, usually well under five minutes.⁵⁷ In my experience, the main implication of such a contraction of time is a much leaner musical structure, with shorter introductions and limited developmental sections, shorter thematic ideas and more sudden modulations. As Lehman states

The conflicting duty toward short-term cinematic temporality and longer-range “pure” musical temporality is a tension that surfaces throughout discourses on film musical aesthetics.⁵⁸

Mark Richard, for instance, noted that since the 1990s, statistically, film music themes tend to be shorter.⁵⁹ He attributes this to increasingly demanding and strict deadlines for composers, who in turn adopted, thanks to technology, a writing style based on patterns and short ideas that could be easily edited for last-minute changes in the

⁵⁵ Frank Martin, “Musique et Cinema” in “Influence Du Cinema sur les Arts: Musique et Cinéma”, 116; translated in Scott Paulin, “On The Chaplinesque In Music: Studies in The Cultural Reception of Charlie Chaplin” (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2005), 46.

⁵⁶ David Bordwell in *The Way Hollywood Tells It* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California press, 2006, 57-58) mentions for instance that ‘from 1930 to 1960, most films averaged 2 to 4 minutes per scene, and many scenes ran 4 minutes or more’, while ‘in films made after 1961 most scenes run between 1.5 and 3 minutes’. As further evidence, the findings of a 2011 study over 160 English language films released from 1935 to 2010 (J. E. Cutting et al., “Quicker Faster Darker”, *i-Perception* 2, accessed April 5, 2015) are confirming this trend in that shot lengths have gotten shorter and that in contemporary films shorter shots have proportionately more motion than longer shots, whereas there is no such relation in older films.

⁵⁷ There aren’t any official studies to relate to this subject, but out of ten soundtracks that I have been looking at or inspired by for the scores included in this research (*Avatar*, *Lord of the Ring*, *Big Fish*, *Shrek*, *The Brothers Grimm*, *King Kong*, *The Lion*, *The Witch*, *The Wardrobe*, *How To Train Your Dragon*) the average length results being a mere 3’46”. It is also important to mention that these durations refer to the album release, often resulting in musical editing choices where smaller cues are merged. In *How To Train Your Dragon*, for instance, the album track ‘*This is Berk*’ is the result of 1M2 ALT followed by 1M2 Bars 40 to end. Therefore, it is fair to assume that the average cue length is likely shorter than the mean duration of the album release. See Appendix I.

⁵⁸ Frank Lehman, *Hollywood Harmony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 32.

⁵⁹ See Mark Richard’s “Film Music Themes: Analysis and Corpus Study”, *Society for Music Study* (March 2016), accessed December 14, 2022. <https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.16.22.1/mto.16.22.1.richards.php>.

picture lock. Although this may well be true, one might argue that it is also the result of the reduced length of scenes in modern editing styles. The same can be said for the predilection for modulating using pan-triadic chromaticism instead of cadential formulas. The sense of wonder and awe that the former technique provides is due to the suddenness with which the composer shifts the music from one key to the next, very often dependent on changes of scenes in the scored sequence.⁶⁰

One possible way to explore this argument is by tracing the common features that distinguish film music re-adaptations for the concert hall from the original soundtrack and vice-versa (original musical works adapted for cinema). For the first category, Vaughan Williams' *Sinfonia Antartica* (1953), derived from his soundtrack for *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948), is an outstanding example. In the concert work, some sections are expanded and motivic development is more prominent. Although this is not surprising, given that Vaughan Williams had to group different cues from the film (mostly under five minutes), it is nevertheless indicative of differences in the specific timings of concert and film music. When, in the *Prelude* of the symphonic work, Vaughan Williams decided to expand the descending passage at bars 59-68 from the original five bars of the soundtrack, it may well have been that he felt that the musical flow needed more time to unfold within the context of concert music.⁶¹ The case of *Sinfonia Antartica* may explain why film composers prefer to arrange their soundtracks into musical suites (John Williams' orchestral suites for *Harry Potter* or *Star Wars* for example) so that there is little editing and development involved.

Disney's *Fantasia* (1940) represents a contrary example of the adaptation of pre-existing concert music for the screen. In this film, the selected music has been associated with animated stories that are different from the original extra-musical intentions – as in the case of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, re-interpreted as the music for a prehistoric scenario. At first glance, the fact that a concert piece from the past could serve as the soundtrack to an animated short may prove that cinematic narrative can adapt itself accordingly and therefore lacks medium-specificity. But in fact, Stokowski did edit and re-adapt all the pieces in *Fantasia* which means that, after all, the cinematic medium had some bearing on these decisions. Bach's *Tocatta in D minor* has been transcribed for orchestra, in order to be functional to the meta-musical animation; Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker Suite* is presented as a selection that

⁶⁰ For a detailed definition of the use and role of pan-triadic modulations, see Frank Lehman, *op. cit.*, 165-196. In one of my lectures, for instance, I have been analysing the use of pan-triadic modulations in John Powell's *This is Berk*, from *How To Train Your Dragon* and Danny Elfmann's *Gran Finale* from *Edward Scissorhands*. In both sequences, each modulation coincided precisely to a significant change of scene.

⁶¹ See also Eugene Marshall, "The Cinematic Symphony. Vaughan-Williams Sinfonia Antartica and its film score origins" (BMus dissertation, University of Western Australia, 2011).

does not follow the original order of the suite;⁶² Dukas' *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* is, overall, presented in its original form, but with changes here and there;⁶³ Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* is heavily modified; the development section in Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* has been re-adapted; Ponchielli's *Dance of the Hours* has the first section of the composition repeated but entirely re-arranged; similarly, Mussorgsky's *Night on Bald Mountain* has been re-adapted.

Summing up, cinematic re-arrangements of concert pieces tend to have these common traits: predilection for thematic over developmental sections, different timbral colours to better adapt to the visuals, and a consequential reduction in length of the original works. This, in turn, reinforces the importance of editing and montage – these being the agents causing these changes – as narrative devices directly affecting how music develops through time.

External Events vs Internal States: Focalisation in Film Narrative

Film narrative is different from literary and theatrical narrative at a specifically textual level. According to Bal's tripartition of narrative elements, every narrative has a *fabula* (logical and chronological series of events), a *story* (the fabula presented in a certain manner) and a *text* (linguistic, and visual signs, if we are dealing with plays or films).⁶⁴ The text of a film is compounded by narration and representation (or *mise en scène*): whilst the latter is a common trait of theatrical plays as well, the narration in film is quite unique because it is accomplished by both the narrator and the focaliser. Focalisation is 'the relationship between the vision, the agent that sees and that which is seen'.⁶⁵ In 'Focalisation in Film Narrative', Celestino Deleyto has analysed this subject matter in depth, in particular regarding how it is more independent from narration:

In the novel focalisation is not explicit in the text, but must be elicited by the critic from the information given by the narrator. [...] In film, focalisation may be explicit in the text, in general through external or internal "gazes" and works simultaneously and independently from narration.

⁶² The order in *Fantasia* is as follows: Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, Chinese Dance, Dances of the Flutes, Arab Dance, Russian Dance, Waltz of the Flowers. Whereas the original order in the suite is: Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy, Russian Dance, Arab Dance, Chinese Dance, Dances of the Flutes, Waltz of the Flowers.

⁶³ By way of example, in the first two minutes of the composition alone: bar 13 has been removed; at bar 22 the imitation is further expanded; the pauses from bar 42 onwards are shortened; bar 124-126 are removed.

⁶⁴ In Celestino Deleyto, 'Focalisation in Film Narrative', *Atlantis* (1991, Vol 13, no. 1 / 2), 162.

⁶⁵ Mieke Bal, *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: The University of Toronto Press, 1985), 104.

Deleyto goes further in clarifying the difference with literary narrative:

Regardless of the various subjectivities that may appear in the text, the almost permanent external presence of the camera ensures a vantage point for the spectator, which continually tends to dissociate itself from and supersedes that of the various characters involved in the action; in the novel, on the other hand, both narration and focalisation can be exclusively subjective.⁶⁶

The focaliser, states Deleyto, 'always occupies the position of the camera'.⁶⁷ However, he also admits that the camera is not the exclusive tool of focalisation: editing, montage, the *mise en scène* and (I would add) music and sounds, contribute to clarify the message, given the difficulty for film narrative in itself to convey subjective states of mind. In fact, subjectivity in film is often and almost necessarily shown in relation to external focalisations previously established, revealing another fundamental difference with literary narrative:

In a novel, in a passage in internal focalisation, the mind of the character can be shown without a change in focalisation. [...] In film, although [...] dreams, hallucinations, memories, etc., can be shown, it is problematic to express the characteristics of the vision while showing its object, hence the resource to shots in external focalisation, in which the focaliser becomes focalised and in which we can analyse better how what he perceives affects him.⁶⁸

Interestingly, while admitting the importance of music and sound in clarifying the focalisation, Deleyto does not go into further details; the following considerations are intended to continue where his research stops and clarify how music contributes to the subject matter. Visually, internal focalisation can be represented by different techniques: subjective shot (a character's point of view), perception shot (showing the heightened attention of a character), eyeline match (a shot over a character looking in a certain direction, followed by a shot of the object observed), shot/reverse shot (alternating between two perspectives). When asked to score a sequence displaying internal focalisation, the composer may have to discuss with the director if the soundtrack should reflect the focaliser's perspective (the character's point of view) or the narrator (the external unfolding of events, or the bigger picture), if there should be transitions from one to another, or superimpositions of elements belonging to both.⁶⁹ Music can also act in contrast to how the camera is behaving: for instance, it

⁶⁶ Both quotes in Deleyto, *op. cit.*, 167.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Deleyto, *op. cit.*, 170.

⁶⁹ I believe that the two scenes at the opium house in S. Leone's *Once Upon a Time in America* (1984) could contribute to clarify these otherwise complex concepts. The first scene where David 'Noodles' drugs himself occurs at the beginning of the film (0: 05:54 into film). Over a number of close – medium

could reflect a character's point of view even if the camera does not display any internal focalisation, or anticipate the moment when the camera explicitly switch to it.⁷⁰ Considering that the works presented in this Doctorate are isomorphic, this particular aspect of contrasting music is not covered here, but yet one can affirm that music can act as a fundamental tool to reinforce and shape the internal or external focalisation of a sequence. As will be explained in the following chapters, this is an important element of my rationale when writing for the cinematic and para-cinematic works analysed in this portfolio.

Representation, or *mise en scène*

The way settings, production design, lighting and grading are displayed on screen is defined in this project as *mise en scène*: in itself, it is capable of conveying aspects of the story that dialogue cannot express.⁷¹ It informs the audience about the film genre: dark, cold tints for gothic drama, or bright, colourful palette for comedy animation, for instance. For the composer, this is an important aspect to evaluate when writing for screen. As a device it is less film-specific, having originated in theatrical plays and opera, hence pre-dating the advent of cinema; however, some aspects of it, such as grading, are only possible in a cinematic context. *Mise en scène* affects a score's timbre, textural colours and motion, even the stylistic traits of a composition. In my personal experience, it has influenced me almost unconsciously, and it is thanks to this research that I became more aware of the power of this device.

external shots, a loud telephone sound makes him agitated (0:07:50): this is an aural anticipation of the internal focalisation firstly starting with a subjective shot (0:08:30: the camera moves towards the light Noodles is looking at) and continuing as a flashback. We do understand then that the ringing phone is in his mind and is signalling the transition to his internal state. The last scene of the film displays the very same opium den (around 03:41:38), the same character, similar medium/ close shots, but this time both music and camera do not venture in his internal state, which is only reflected in his iconic laugh that ends the movie. Narratively speaking, the narrator is telling the same story: Noodles goes in the opium den and hallucinates. The focalisation, instead, is completely different: it goes inside the character the first time, and proceeds in parallel with the narrator the second time.

⁷⁰ In P. Larrain's *Spencer* (2021), an emblematic case of anticipation of internal focalisation is represented by J. Greenwood's magisterial score: a string quartet is playing in the room where Diana is having dinner with the royals; the camera is displaying medium shots of the dinner table, and the music, started in classical style, progressively introduces oddities (overly long notes, dissonances) that are clarified only much later when a series of eyeline matches, followed by perception shots, tell us that Diana's perspective is in focus. The scene can be found here: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/foimfva65cuw7b6lki2fd/Spencer-2021-Dinner-Scene.mp4?rlkey=y6t7igeajprx2c5mz7speboto&st=ozcyizye&dl=0>

⁷¹ For an extensive discussion and explanation of the term, see Alicia Lutes, 'What Is *Mise en scène*? A Guide to Impactful Visual Storytelling', in *Backstage*, accessed 29/04/25 at <https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/mise-en-scene-definition-examples-75967/#:~:text=Mise%20en%20sc%C3%A8ne%20is%20a,on%20as%20the%20story%20unfolds.>

Para-cinematic? A Review of Literature

After having discussed how instrumental music and opera have influenced film music, and after having explained how film music has brought new narrative devices, it is now time to explore the original part of my research: how film music strategies could influence a new approach to programmatic instrumental music. Positioned somewhere in between non-film music and film music, the notion of 'para-cinematic' adopted in my research is that of an instrumental music piece that precisely responds to an 'imaginary film', for which editing, montage, camera shots, scenes and sequences have been written down on a timeline and are an integral part of the programme notes the composer should follow. A para-cinematic score is a specific type of programmatic instrumental piece that not only depends on a *fabula*, but also on how this has been imagined as a detailed, albeit imaginary, film narrative; in this regard, editing and montage and focalisation are the new parameters that will shape the music piece further. This concept of para-cinematic music was explored in the seventh movement of Koechlin's *Seven Stars Symphony* (1933), in which the composer followed an imaginary programme featuring Charlie Chaplin as the main character of a short film.

There is a substantial literature around the term that needs to be reviewed before proceeding further with my own definition. According to Walley

Paracinema identifies an array of phenomena that are considered "cinematic" but that are not embodied in the materials of film as traditionally defined. That is, the film works I am addressing recognize cinematic properties outside the standard film apparatus, and therefore reject the medium-specific premise of most essentialist theory and practice that the art form of cinema is defined by the specific medium of film.⁷²

Scott Paulin deploys the term in the context of a quite critical appraisal of the use of 'cinematic' in relation to music. He states that cinematic language can offer the false security of 'explaining' certain jarring or otherwise perplexing moments in music.⁷³ He also argues that anything evocative of editing techniques is not exclusive to the cinematic world: 'a harp glissando connecting two disjunct sections of a score may be evocative of a wipe edit, but harp glissandi [...] clearly predate cinema and cannot be neatly labelled as cinematic parallels'.⁷⁴ However, he accepts that works such as Koechlin's *Seven Stars Symphony* (in particular the seventh movement, which embodies the same principles I have adopted in my para-cinematic works) could provide a reasonable basis for approaching musical composition in terms of cinematic

⁷² Jonathan Walley, "The Material of Film and the Idea of Cinema: Contrasting Practices in Sixties and Seventies Avant-Garde Film", *October* (Vol.103,2003), 18.

⁷³ Scott Paulin, *op. cit.*, 440.

⁷⁴ (*loc. cit.*).

influences. Paulin offers a provisional taxonomy that I will briefly summarise to contextualise the works presented in my portfolio:

- 1) invocations of cinema as a multivalent signifier; 2) impressions of particular movie stars; 3) reactions to specific films; 4) works conceived as soundtracks to imaginary films; 5) appropriations of techniques and technologies, visual or acoustic; 6) imitations of film music; 7) para-cinematic performance.⁷⁵

Among these, I exclude works where the cinematic is used as an abstract inspiration (category 1 in Paulin's taxonomy; Arnold Schoenberg's *Begleitungsmusik zu einer Lichtspielszene* or Bohuslav Martinu's piano suite *Film en miniature*, for instance). Similarly, para-cinematic performance, in Paulin's sense – such as The Velvet Underground and Andy Warhol's *Exploding Plastic Inevitable* (1966) – is irrelevant to this research, being a live show with multiple film projectors at work. Paulin's second group of works has a more descriptive intent but mostly consists of songs. However, it does include other parts of Koechlin's *Seven Stars Symphony* and Castelnuovo-Tedesco's *Stars: Sketches for Piano* (1940). In both works, the references are to cinema stars but not to cinematic narrative (the exception being the seventh movement of Koechlin's symphony, as I will discuss). The third group is also of limited relevance to this project as it consists mainly of operas (Harrison Birtwistle's *The Second Mrs. Kong*, 1994) or ballets (Louis Aubert's *Cinema*, 1953). However, it includes Alfredo Casella's *Pagine di Guerra* (1915), a work inspired by cinematographic images of war. Unfortunately, the cinematic parallel ends here, as the composer did not specify any direct sources or specific programme. Very similarly, Igor Stravinsky declared that the third movement of his *Symphony in Three Movements* (1945) was 'inspired by a war film, this time a documentary of scorched-earth tactics in China'. Given his absolutist approach to music, it is no surprise that he briskly concluded: 'In spite of what I have said, the Symphony is not programmatic'.⁷⁶

Paulin's fourth group (works conceived as soundtracks for imaginary films) is the one most relevant to my research. Koechlin's seventh movement from the *Seven Stars Symphony* is a programmatic composition dedicated to Chaplin and closely follows a detailed imaginary cinematic plot. The same concept has been applied to my para-cinematic works, with each piece conceived after creating a timeline of imaginary cinematographic events. Another work worth mentioning is Michael Daugherty's *Spaghetti Western* (1998) for English Horn and orchestra, where the composer declares that 'the English Horn soloist is the "Man With No Name" moving through a series of musical landscapes'; however, he also states that the three movements are

⁷⁵ Scott Paulin, *op. cit.*, 68.

⁷⁶ Igor Stravinsky and Robert Craft, *Dialogues* (London: Faber Music, 1968), 50-52.

not meant to allude 'to particular film scenes or following their plot'.⁷⁷ If not for its programmatic intentions, then, *Spaghetti Western* is interesting as a relatively recent example of the use of musical topics – in this case, what Tagg defines as 'Italian Western' in his selection of 'connotative spheres'.⁷⁸

Among these works, I also include Scott Bradley's music for the short animation *Dance of the Weed* (1941). In this unique case, the composer wrote the piece for the given story, and the animation was modelled on the recorded music. The example is quite close, conceptually, to my research; however the animation is presented as a sort of animated ballet – apparent from the title – on a straightforward love story in which, as has been noted, the music 'never establishes a substantial connection with the action' and is 'not enough to support a particularly engaging drama or comedy'.⁷⁹ Bradley, it must be said, is particularly relevant for theorising a specific idea of animation, where the music is composed 'in the symphonic-poem manner, i.e. written to a definite program and recorded before a foot of animation is in production'.⁸⁰

Paulin's fifth group (musical works that explore similarities with visual editing) interestingly includes avant-garde composers (Huib Emmer's *Montage*, 1997; Wolfgang Rihm's *Cuts and Dissolves*, 1976; John Zorn's *Godard*, 1986). From these works and the preliminary reflection on my practice, it emerges that jump-cuts, fades and zooming in/out can be effectively translated in music. However, it should be noted that abrupt musical juxtaposition – which is the prevalent technique to represent jump-cuts, for instance – is not cinematic per se: as Taruskin states, it belongs to the Russian aesthetic that Stravinsky inherited and applied in his works, and which in turn became one of the main features of twentieth-century concert music.⁸¹ Similarly, a gradual musical transition to represent a fade-in may not necessarily be considered cinematic, and in fact belongs more appropriately to the German tradition of development. This does not nullify, in my opinion, the theoretical framework of my research: if the composer intentionally uses either of these musical techniques for the purpose of representing editing choices, these techniques are also para-cinematic.⁸²

⁷⁷ Michael Daugherty, programme notes (accessible here: <http://www.boosey.com/cr/music/Michael-Daugherty-Spaghetti-Western/51145>).

⁷⁸ Philip Tagg, *Music's Meaning* (New York & Huddersfield: The Mass Media Music Scholars' Press, 2012), 176.

⁷⁹ Daniel Goldmark, *Tunes For 'Toons* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 57.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁸¹ Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically* (Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 1997), 383.

⁸² Besides, this is also the point that Scott Paulin made regarding works such as Koechlin's VII movement from his *Seven Stars Symphony*, as mentioned earlier.

Music that references film music (category 6 in Paulin's taxonomy) is only considered in the following text if relevant to the work being analysed. John Adams' *Chamber Symphony* (1992), for instance, is a conscious homage to the tradition of 'flamboyantly virtuosic' American cartoon music, and this precedent was considered as preparation for writing the symphonic piece *Cat and Mouse in Partnership*, discussed further in chapter III.⁸³

Isomorphism: Unifying the Descendant and Sibling Models of Musical Narrative

The notion of narrative adopted in this research is at the same time extrinsic (descendant model) and intrinsic (sibling model): respectively, it arises from both the capacity of music to refer to a story, and the narrative resulting from the musical form itself. When the two are in harmony with each other, we witness isomorphic narrative writing.

The word isomorphic appears in Susanne Langer's seminal book *Philosophy in a New Key*. In music, she argues, the listener's understanding is determined by the isomorphism between the temporal structure of music and the temporal structure of feelings, or more generally, 'all mental acts, as long as they exceed the threshold of awareness to become part of our conscious life'.⁸⁴ Although respectful of Langer's philosophical point of view, I should clarify that the definition of isomorphic in this research is related to narrative structures, or stories, and not solely feelings or mental acts, which otherwise would broaden the meaning of the word to practically any musical form.

The concept of isomorphism finds probably its best and most precise application in relation to film music. Compared to operas, programmatic music or musical theatre, where timings could be changed, directorial choices could change the synchronization of events and music, or the relationship between story and music is more approximate, movies do not change once recorded and finalised in post-production.

The term 'isomorphism' has been used by Emilio Audissino to define musical gestures used in film music that are descriptive of cinematic events, usually by sharing similar

⁸³ John Adams, liner notes to John Adams, *Chamber Symphony, Grand Pianola Music* (Nonesuch 9 792192, 1994).

⁸⁴ Ling, Zou, "The Tension Structures of Consciousness as the Subject of Art – An Interpretation of the Central Thesis of Susanne Langer's Aesthetic Theory", *Proceedings of the European Society for Aesthetics*, 5 (2013), 290. Susanne Katherina Langer. *Philosophy in a New Key* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942).

qualities and features.⁸⁵ The term has an equivalent in the concept of 'conformance' used by Nicholas Cook in *Analysing Musical Multimedia*.⁸⁶ Music is conformant when it describes what happens visually: taking as an example the opening of *The Hateful Eight* (Tarantino, 2015), the frozen landscape is mirrored by sustained notes on the strings, which are 'isomorphic with the visuals: the music is as static and frozen as the landscape we see'.⁸⁷ Not all film music is isomorphic, of course: music can also complement and contrast the visuals; for this research, however, only conformant / isomorphic music will be considered.⁸⁸

Isomorphic film music is to be intended here, therefore, as music that is:

- 1) Synchronous (matching the editing and montage)
- 2) Consistent with the narration (which is the combination of the narrator and the focaliser)
- 3) Consistent with the representation (*mise en scène*)

In my usage, it is essential to insist that the three parameters shall coexist together to define the term. It is not enough to claim that isomorphic is simply synchronous with the visuals: contesting music can be synchronous with the events but have opposite or radically different qualities.⁸⁹ Going back to the example of the opening of *The Hateful Eight*, let's clarify further:

- 1) Static shots of frozen landscape are matched with sustained notes at the strings (synchronous)
- 2) The mighty, static, frozen and slightly daunting scenario has a parallel in the harmony used, consisting of minor and slightly dissonant chords (as opposed to a major, *fanfaresque* chord progression for instance, that could be synchronous as well but not consistent with the narration, or belonging to a different musical topic). In this case, narrator and focaliser's point of views coincide, so there is no need to distinguish between perspectives.
- 3) The representation of cold colours is paralleled with chords whose notes are spread across the frequency spectrum in open position rather than closed, avoiding too much presence in the mid frequencies (which would suggest warmth)

⁸⁵ Emilio Audissino, "A Gestalt Approach to the Analysis of Music in Films, *Musicology Research 2* (2017), 69-88.

⁸⁶ Nicholas Cook, *Analysing Musical Multimedia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

⁸⁷ Emilio Audissino, *op. cit.*, 77. The mentioned section runs for the first 58 seconds.

⁸⁸ Taking the same opening, a contesting approach would be for instance a fast paced, joyful music cue over a very frozen and static landscape. In that case, whilst the narrator is showing the landscape, the focaliser would display, through music, some message that would have to be clarified later in the story.

⁸⁹ Stanley Kubrick has shown in his works (*A Clockwork Orange* for instance) how contesting music can be also synchronous with the visual pace.

Intrinsically, the opening music for *The Hateful Eight* has traits that suggest stillness, stasis, coldness; extrinsically, it reinforces the message of the visuals of those first 58 seconds, depicting a hostile, cold and frozen landscape.

In my project I challenge the concept of isomorphism further by asking myself whether it is possible to use cinematic music storytelling as the basis of a new type of programmatic music, which I label as 'para-cinematic'. The initial hypothesis is that, with a cinematic programme – rather than a literary one – the musical form will be necessarily different and, in responding to the different focalisations, editing choices, and sense of time, will constitute a new development in the tradition of programmatic music, with more concise themes, with developmental sections that are shaped around shorter timings, with a more contemporary sensibility towards musical topics. At the same time, this approach poses some further questions and potential challenges related to the relationship between musical form and mimesis: can the composer retain musical coherence, so that the piece does not seem like an assembly of different musical gestures for the sake of being isomorphic with the 'imaginary film'? What would he or she leave out or minimise in order to achieve a solid musical piece? Can we really apply the concept of isomorphic to imaginary films, if the latter are, indeed, imaginary? The original contribution of this research stands in the attempt to answer these questions through intentional creation of a conspicuous corpus of para-cinematic works, building on isomorphic conventions.

Concluding Remarks

The subject matter of this research has required innumerable incursions into film, musical narrative and music semiotic studies; the reason behind this is that, as a composer, I needed to define my understanding of these contributions in order to be able to use them for creative purposes. Setting aside this difficult journey, I believe that the other aspect of originality of this research is indeed in the attempt to apply narrative and semiotic theories while writing music, bridging the gap between theory and practice. Clearly, all these elements have ultimately been filtered by my personality in a way that will work with my own aesthetics, hence exposing the human limits of the research itself. However, by commenting on narrative strategies consciously adopted in my para-cinematic musical works, I will document first-hand the process of applying narrative archetypes in music composition, rather than interpreting *a posteriori* as most music theorists, including Almén, inevitably do; by analysing cinematic musical topics, and the relationships between music, representation and focalisation, I will contribute to a growing but recent literature in film music studies.

CHAPTER II - Isomorphic Cinematic Works

To better understand how music and film narrative devices interact isomorphically in movies, this chapter focuses upon five soundtracks written between 2012 and 2016: *Luminaris* and *Suckablood* (2012), *The New Pioneers* (2015), the black-and-white sequence in *Rudy Valentino*, and *The Saint* (2016). The findings and considerations of this chapter will feed into chapter III, where I will discuss and compare how the same storytelling devices interact in para-cinematic works. This chapter aims at answering mainly sub-question 1 (what are the core devices of musical storytelling in isomorphic cinematic scores?) and 4 (how to compensate the potential fragmentation of isomorphic music writing through a coherent musical arc?).

The selection of pieces takes into consideration:

- The variety of approaches in creating inherent associations (in particular, the hard-synched Mickey-Mousing technique applied in *Luminaris*, *The Saint* and *Rudy Valentino* versus the more subtle ones used in *The New Pioneers* and *Suckablood*)
- The variety of musical topics explored (*Epic Battle / Lurking Dangerous Presence* in *The New Pioneers*, *Cheerful Puppets* and *Fantastic Flight* in *Luminaris*, *The Horror Scare*, *Hauntingly Beautiful* and *Counterpoint* in *Suckablood*, and *Cartoonesque Flamboyance* in *The Saint*)
- The variety of genres and editing styles (adventure for *The New Pioneers*, surreal comedy in *Luminaris*, gothic horror in *Suckablood*, period silent comedy in the sequence of *Rudy Valentino*, and title sequence for *The Saint*)
- The variety of musical decisions in relation to focalisation

The common traits of the five soundtracks are:

- The film genres' suitability to isomorphic writing (adventure; animation; fantasy; old-style silent comedy)
- Leitmotivic writing as a narrative device capable of giving continuity and structure to the soundtrack; in particular, my personal quest to reduce the musical narrative to one or two main leitmotifs – no matter how complex the narrative is, or how many characters there are – makes these scores particularly suitable for Almén's narrative analysis, which focuses on contrasts between two main different elements
- Almost continuous presence of the music throughout each movie or sequence (the so-called 'wall-to-wall' soundtrack)

The commentary for each piece is articulated as follows:

- Context and Description, where I explain the circumstances, requests and details of the commission, together with a short summary of the story
- Musical storytelling, where I break down the score into a detailed micro-analysis of narrative and music
- Conveying the Narrative, where I highlight the aspects of particular relevance for this research and for my own practice (macro-analysis), with reference to concepts introduced in chapter I and highlighting the contribution to knowledge across the portfolio.

Luminaris

1. Context and Description

Luminaris is a rescored soundtrack made as part of the Berlinale Film Score Programme in Berlin, Germany, in 2012. Each year, only three composers were selected to score a short film and were offered to record their soundtrack. I was chosen that year and offered a recording and mixing session at Babelsberg Studios. *Luminaris* is a short fantasy-comedy silent film in pixilation (stop-motion animation with live actors) written and directed by Juan Pablo Zaramella in 2011. It tells the story of a man who steals light bulbs at the factory he works in, aiming to create a giant light bulb balloon and fly over the city. The animation seemingly describes the two final days of his accomplishment. As the cue list suggests, the story is articulated in five main sections:

- 1) Presentation of the character and his world (1m1)
- 2) Working at Luminaris (1m2)
- 3) Back home, where he tries and fails to create the bulb balloon (1m3)
- 4) Last day at Luminaris, where he is fired because he was found red-handed (1m4)
- 5) Realization of the experiment thanks to his colleague, with whom he flies over the city (1m5)

With the film being completely silent, I could apply my ambitious idea of storytelling through music, which *in nuce* is the starting point for my reflection on programmatic music. For the score competition, not only could we make full use of the orchestral line-up given, but we could also use our samples if needed, since the programme also offered a mixing session. Therefore, I decided to work on orchestral colours to deliver a quirky, odd and rich palette to accommodate the needs of the comedic and fantastic elements of the narrative. The reference score includes both sampled (smaller staves) and live instruments. Among the sampled instruments, I used glass vibraphone, glass harmonica, toy piano, marimba, bass marimba and music box. The other advantage of the programme was that we did not have to worry about overlaps between cues, which usually implies additional costs in a recording session.

2. Musical Storytelling

<p>Cue 1M1</p> <p>Bars 1-14</p>	<p>The sun rises over the city, window shutters are opened. Music reflects the dawn with a silky texture of glass harmonica, sul tasto high strings,</p>
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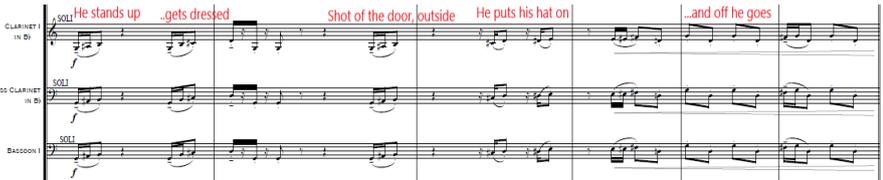
<p>Bars 14-16</p>	<p>non-vibrato flutes and air noises produced by all the wind and brass players except flutes, clarinets and first horn. The fast septuplets at clarinets and glass vibraphone add a gentle shimmering to match the fast flickering typical of pixilation. A very simple melody is assigned to the flutes, ending exactly where the title <i>Luminaris</i> is formed. Harmonically, this is a dominant pedal in the key of G major, reaching the dominant chord just before the title.</p>
<p>Bars 17-22</p>	<p>Mickey-Mousing gesture over the brass hen activating the alarm. Bars 15-16 introduce a pulse of quavers, reflective of the pixilation technique, over the shot of the main character dragged to the left side of the bed.</p> <p>Bassoons, clarinets and piano play short phrases in sync with the main character's actions. The motif in bar 17, repeated at bar 18, is derived from the main theme incipit, with a different melodic rhythm.</p> 
<p>Bars 23-48</p>	<p>Violins answer displacing the short motifs by a beat until bar 19, then joining together from bar 20. Behind this and other gestures (tremolos at cellos and flutter tongue at flutes) there is the idea of replicating the flickering, busy visual texture of pixilation. The entire section lies on a pedal of tonic (G).</p> <p>Exposition of the main theme, over the sequence describing the main character going to work, joined by other workers, and sitting in his workplace next to his partner.⁹⁰ The alignment of the main musical events and the visual is as such:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) first thematic phrase (bars 23-30) over him going out until he puts his briefcase down b) second thematic phrase (bars 31-36) over the close-up on his shoes and then the shot from below revealing there are other people behind him c) thematic reprise (bars 37-42) over the wide angle shot of the people going to the factory, with a richer orchestration involving

Fig. 2. action-musical alignment for 1m1, bars 17-22.

⁹⁰ See paragraph 3 for more details on thematic analysis.

	<p>flutes, clarinets, first trumpet, violins and viola playing the main theme. The change in orchestration is isomorphic with the visual shift of focus from a single character to many</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) coda (bars 43-46) over the shot of the factory swallowing employees, at the same pace of the music e) little Mickey-Mousing detail at the celesta matching the two characters being dressed up for work (bars 46-48)
<p>Cue 1M2 Bars 48-74⁹¹</p>	<p>The work at the factory is rather boring, and nonsensical: the main character has to blow small glass marbles to turn them into light bulbs and pass them to his partner, who will lighten them up by wide opening her eyes. The musical phrasing is paced with the different visual events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) first phrase of the augmented theme (bars 48-57) over the description of the coordinated work of the main character and his co-worker b) second phrase (bars 58-68) over the repetition of the same actions for the second light bulb c) third phrase (bars 69-74) over the zoom-out to reveal different rooms and couples of employees in the factory. The main melody is now assigned to oboe instead than bassoon. In the background, the toy piano displaces the ticking gesture of col legno violins and vibraphone by a quaver, whilst the harp is playing the same gesture in diminution (every quavers instead than crotchets). This accumulation of similar events matches in fact the vision of different couples doing the same work in a staggered way. The insistent runs upwards and downwards at the celesta aim at offering a mesmerising, dream-like texture.⁹²

⁹¹ Please note that most of the cues overlap, having been recorded separately, therefore, the content of bars 48 in cue 1M1 differs from that of cue 1M2. Please refer to the score.

⁹² It seems that patterns of arpeggios in upwards / downwards direction are often associated to dream-like visions. One striking proof of that is in Korngold's *Fog Dance* from *A Midsummer's Night Dream*. Korngold was asked to re-arrange Mendelssohn's score for the movie; in the *Fog Dance*, however, he went through a drastic change of orchestration to match the visuals, creating 'a smoother musical texture that mirrors the seamless dissolving of sequential images' (N. Platte, "Dream Analysis: Korngold, Mendelssohn, and Musical Adaptations in Warner Bros. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1935)", in *19-th Century Music*, Spring 2011, vol. 34, n. 3, 225) consisting in arpeggios at harp and strings. Another example of use of patterns of arpeggios is in Herrmann's *Prelude* in *Vertigo*, where two arpeggios in contrary motion are used to represent the spiralling patterns of the visuals. For more details, please refer to D. Blim, "Musical and Dramatic Design in Bernard Herrmann's *Prelude* to *Vertigo* (1958)", in *Music and the Moving Image* vol. 6 n.2 (2013), 21-31.

<p>Bars 74-79</p> <p>Bars 80-96</p> <p>Bars 97-105</p> <p>Bars 106-116</p> <p>Bars 116-122</p>	<p>The main character steals light bulbs without being seen; musically, this corresponds to the mischievous variation of the second motif of the theme, assigned to cellos and basses with doubling of bassoons and bass clarinet. The augmented triad at bar 77 is in sync with his partner's sudden glance.</p> <p>This section is an interplay of the augmented theme and the sneaky motif related to the main character's secret plan. The principal contrast arises from the plain, slow pace of the former and the bouncy quality of the latter. The augmented theme is now assigned to strings and clarinet, in a faster pace that matches the speed of the visuals, with a mechanical ticking accompaniment at toy piano and celesta, together with flutes and oboes with grace notes, as in the first exposition of the theme in 1M1. The section from bar 85 is quite Mickey-Mousing in the way it follows the different facial expressions of both characters.</p> <p>The low athenatic rumble in this section describes the arrival of the employer checking on his employees.</p> <p>The new theme variation reflects the hectic pace of the moment, as further described in paragraph 3.</p> <p>The emphatic conclusion lands over the scene of the bell announcing that the working day is over.</p>
<p>Cue 1M3</p> <p>Bars 120-136</p> <p>Bars 137-146</p>	<p>This section is scored over the journey back home of our main character, who reveals a mysterious paper with calculations related to his secret plan. Motif b of the <i>Main Theme</i> is here introduced as a hint of what the <i>Dreaming to Fly</i> theme will be. Harp and mallets are the motor of the section, representing the kinetic motion of the main character. The motif is staggered in different entries and instruments throughout to represent the busyness of the pixilation technique and the main character's busy mind. His gestures are timely synched with either new entries of the motif or dynamic swells: for example, while he is pointing at his calculations (pizzicato at bar 126), or when he hides the secret paper in his ear (low D at bassoon at bar 130).</p> <p>As the sun sets, the pace is now slower and prepares the ground for the</p>

<p>Bars 147-160</p>	<p>next variation of the <i>Dreaming to Fly</i> theme, exposed over the close-up of the jar of glass marbles (bars 139-142). The moment when the character adds more marbles is mirrored by a cascade of entries of the melody (bars 141-144) and downward aeolian glissandos at the harps; music box and vibraphone add a certain “glassy” quality to the overall sound. The hit at bar 145 corresponds to the main character’s sudden look-up.</p> <p>While he is trying to complete his experiment (with the <i>Dreaming to Fly</i> theme becoming more evident to raise the expectations), the onomatopoeic gesture at bar 159-160 (Mickey-Mousing the exploding bulb) announces its failure.</p>
<p>Cue 1M4</p> <p>Bars 163-170</p> <p>Bars 171-194</p> <p>Bars 194-203</p>	<p>As the new day starts, the music is shaped similarly to cue 1M1: the quaver accompaniment is now assigned to vibraphone, and a pattern of alternated quavers and semiquavers (similar to the vibraphone in cue 1M1) is now at violins. Low woodwinds and basses play a variation of the incipit of the theme, followed by a different motif repeated three times after its first exposure, in orchestral crescendo. This is meant to be an introduction to the following section of the cue.</p> <p>This is the final variation of the main theme, as described in the previous paragraph. The music follows the interplay between the main character and his employer closely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at bars 175-176, the hit is in sync with the appearance of the employer and the runs with the bulb’s lightening - at bar 180, while the theme at trumpet is still playing, woodwinds are performing random fast notes to mirror the fast, stealthy action of the main character who’s stealing the marbles - at bar 182 the hit on the third quaver is in sync with the employer’s surprised face - at bar 186 the hit is over the employer’s close-up, followed by the hit at bar 187 over the colleague’s surprised face, and at bar 188 over the employer throwing out the glass jar - at bars 188-194 the alea and gradual crescendo is to accompany the employer’s growing anger culminating in kicking the main character out of the factory

	<p>Motif b is assigned to solo clarinet in the key of G minor, to match the main character's fall into despair</p>
<p>Cue 1M5</p> <p>Bars 203-215</p> <p>Bars 216-228</p> <p>Bars 229-248</p>	<p>The visual sequence here connects the shot over the calculation paper to the interior of the house where the main character is alone in desperation. The music is quite static here, there is no driving motif and the pace is overall slowing down (see the tempo changes at bars 211 and 215). The glass harmonica adds a sense of magic over the shot of the discarded paper next to the colleague's feet; some sound effects are also provided within the music, such as the tubular bells at bars 210-211 for the doorbell. The hit point at bar 215 is over the colleague's smile.</p> <p>The flute does an introduction based on the <i>Dreaming to Fly</i> theme, on a pedal dominant in G major. This corresponds to the moment where the girl and the main character activate the experiment together. Intentionally, I wanted to restrain from any excessive Mickey-Mousing here, because I thought the music had to connect the different actions (the jar being filled up, the main character munching the marbles, the girl lightening up the big bulb) in an overall arch leading to the next scene rather than breaking down into specific moments. It also works well, in my opinion, as a break from the heavily Mickey-Mousing scoring of the previous cue.</p> <p>The flight over the city with the big light bulb, now a sort-of hot air balloon, is a very magical moment in the film. My idea, since the first planning of the scoring, was to choose a romantic style, keeping the tonal centre stable (G major) and creating a lush melody. This section is articulated in two parts. The first runs till bar 242, exposing the first half of the theme. The section at bars 239-241 follows the shot of the movement from left to right of the balloon, whilst working as a connector into the second part. The latter, from bar 242 till 248, focuses more on the two characters and their waving to the angry employer, and exposes the second half of the theme.</p> <p>In the first part (bars 229-241), to get the most out of the orchestra, I divided the texture in four main sections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - theme in foreground at oboes, violins and violas over three octaves - "flying gestures" of semiquavers at flutes, clarinet, celesta, piano, plus harp glissandos to provide the motion, in line with the

<p>Bars 249-260</p>	<p>topic of <i>Fantastic Flight</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - low winds, brass and strings performing both the bass line and low chords to add warmth to the texture - horns in countermelody <p>In the second part (bars 242-248) I changed the texture as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - theme in foreground as before, plus cellos (violas and cellos both in a very high register, resulting in a louder, more romantic performance) - flying gestures to the same instruments as before, but in a different pattern (downwards/upwards arpeggios, with different meters) until bar 246 - low winds brass and basses are playing chords in syncopation, to add more motion - horns and trumpets playing sustained chords <p>Over their kiss, a new variation of the <i>Dreaming to Fly</i> theme occurs, encompassing features from the main theme as well. The most evident trait carried forward from the main theme is the motor of quavers and quavers alternated with semiquavers, which now has an additional quirky quality in the irregular meter used throughout. The bouncy bass line comes back as well; furthermore, the very final conclusion (bars 259-260) is modelled on similar endings as in bars 46-48, or bars 116-118.</p>
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3. Conveying the Narrative

In this animation, editing and *mise en scène* have been particularly influential in figuring out the soundtrack's main qualities, in particular the specific orchestral timbre and pulse, the use of one main theme and a secondary theme linked to two distinct topics (further analysed in the following sub-paragraphs), and the persistent Mickey-Mousing technique.

Mise en scène

In terms of representation, I decided to correspond the pixilation technique with a constant motor in the score. The bright colours of the *mise en scène* suggested to me a rich, enhanced orchestral scoring, where live orchestra was also integrated with sampled celesta, toy piano, tubular bells, glass harmonica and glass marimba. These were in charge of adding what I define as 'the sparkle' in orchestration: high pitched percussive tuned sounds that could be used to reflect brightness, shimmering and flickering – like the pixilation technique.

Mickey-Mousing

The fact that the animation is silent allowed me to make conspicuous use of the Mickey-Mousing technique. In some occasions, I paid homage to the early silent films where music was required to make up for the lack of sound effects: this is the case for the tubular bells standing in for the factory clock's strike (cue 1m2, bar 116) or, later on, for the doorbell (cue 1m5, bars 110-111), for which I also panned them to the right and took off the reverb. Some moments in the score are particularly successful in delivering the Mickey-Mousing technique while being organically integrated in the music:

- Cue 1m1 (bars 14-15). The fall of the brass cockerel coincides with the harp's downward glissando (kinetic equivalence).
- Cue 1m2 (bars 48-57). Ticking col legno strings stand for the passing of time and the mechanical order of the factory; celesta represents the co-worker's activity, responsible for switching on the light bulbs; cellos and violas in glissando are onomatopoeic effects kinetically replicating the main character blowing the glass.
- Cue 1m3 (bars 159-160). The explosion of the light bulb is represented musically by the sudden orchestral hit.
- Cue 1m4 (bars 175-176). The co-worker's fast-forward gesture of lightening up the bulbs is represented by woodwinds, celesta and harp runs.

Musical Topics

a) *Cheerful Puppets/Military for Children*

This topic is often found in fantasy movies and animations, usually employed to present funny-looking characters; they may be the main characters – as in Julian Nott's "A Grand Day Out", the main theme for *Wallace and Gromit – The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* (2005), or in Leigh Harline and Ned Washington's "I've Got No Strings" from *Pinocchio* (1940) – or a group of minions working in a certain, very peculiar place – as the Oompa-Loompas in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1971), or the puppets welcoming Shrek in Duloc in *Shrek* (2001).⁹³ The examples gathered show similarities in how they re-interpret and parody the features of Raymond Monelle's *Military* topic – hence the definition of *Military for Children*.⁹⁴

⁹³ Please see playlist provided, Appendix II.

⁹⁴ Raymond Monelle, *op. cit.* (see footnote 8), 113-184.

- Features of the march: binary rhythm, bass line in downbeat (usually alternating dominant and tonic), harmonic chords in upbeat, often accented
- Instrumentation: rarely, that of a marching band; more frequently, lighter orchestration (more woodwinds and strings, less or no brass), toy instruments, small percussions (woodblocks, toy percussions)⁹⁵
- Mainly aiming at a regular segmentation of the melodic phrase (phrases of 8 bars, periods of 16, etc.)
- Often in major keys; also, clusters/odd harmonies (as in John Williams' "The Little People", from *Star Wars - A New Hope*, 1977)

This topic has been used to present the protagonist marching to work and working, and is often deployed in conjunction with the main theme. In *Luminaris*, I also had the opportunity to reflect on how to gradually diverge from the topic for narrative purposes, as will be explained later.

b) *Fantastic Flight*

When approaching the magical sequence of the flight over the city, I decided to reference some of the most iconic film scores related to a similar concept. As main models, I used John Williams' "Flying to Neverland" from *Hook* (1991), "Adventures on Earth" from *E.T.* (1982), John Powell's "Romantic Flight" from *How To Train Your Dragon* (2010) and James Newton Howard's "Flight" from *Peter Pan* (2003) and "Maleficent Flies" from *Maleficent* (2014). Although I could not find any similarity with established topics – perhaps the only valid reference could be Ratner's *Fantasia* – ⁹⁶ some of its traits could be traced in Igor Stravinsky's *The Firebird* suite (1911); conversely, from the examples provided it seems that this topic is well established in film music. A list of the main features of the topic would include:

- a strong, cantabile melody in the middle register
- a very active section of instruments (mainly woodwinds) in high range
- a lightly weighted low register ⁹⁷

⁹⁵ The grand instrumentation for *Wallace and Gromit* is the only exception in the list of examples provided: in this context, the parody arises by the comparison of that grandeur and the funnily looking main characters.

⁹⁶ Quoted in E. Dickensheets, *op. cit.*, 106. The characteristics of this topic are, however, rather generic.

⁹⁷ See Appendix II for visual references.

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

[IMAGE REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT]

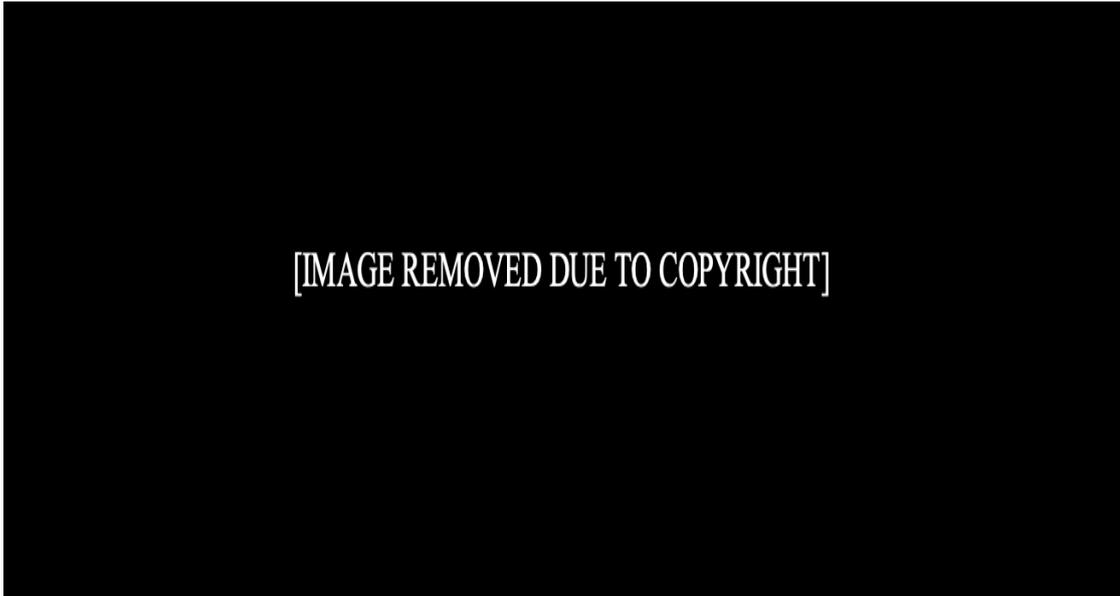


Fig. 3. Three examples of the musical topic for *Fantastic Flight*; reduction from scores.

Leitmotivic Writing

The perception of time resulting from the editing is articulated around the main character's desire to accomplish his plan. For instance, unnecessary parts of the two days are scrapped from narration (the second morning is not described; the interval between his expulsion from the factory and his desperate state at home is omitted with a fade to black, and so on); in one case, over the description of the first day's last working hours, actions are also fast-forwarded. How time is intended, and the constant focus on the main character, affected my decision to create an omnipresent main theme for his persona; out of a segment of it, I derived a secondary theme that stands for the character's secret dream. Each theme is mainly associated with a specific topic: *Cheerful Puppets/Military for Children* and *Fantastic Flight*.

a) Main Theme

The main theme is introduced in conjunction with the *Cheerful Puppets* topic, as a light-hearted march for strings and woodwinds, where the solo clarinet exposes the main melody. The contrast between the steady pace of the march and the occasional odd harmonies and clusters was strategic to mirror the paradox of the main character, very precise and serious, depicted with the quirky pixilation.

23 (cl)
f bring out, playfully

(ww/strings)
f *p* *mf*

31
p *mf*

37 (ww/str./tp)
f bring out

(ww/str./brass)
p *mf*

46
 OVERLAP
niente

OVERLAP
niente

Fig. 4. *Luminaris*, 1m1, Main Theme, reduction, bars 23-50.

The first variation of the theme describes the mechanical life at the bulb factory and the secret agenda of the main character, who's stealing and sneakily collecting light bulbs. To represent the boredom of the factory, I therefore decided to augment the first motif of the main theme:

♩=129 Slower
♩=120

2 BARS IN OVERLAP

Music Composed By
ENRICA SCIANDRONE

48 (bassoon) 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57

AUGMENTED MOTIF

mp "bored"

mf *pp*

MICKEY-MOUSING GESTURES (lighting)

(celesta)
p dolce *mp* *p* *mf* *p*

(fl/cl)
tr *pp* *pp* **SHIMMERING TEXTURE (atmosphere)** *mf* *pp*

TICKING GESTURE (mechanical passing of time, boredom)

(vi col legno)
mp *meccanico e precise as a Swiss clock!*

MICKEY-MOUSING GESTURES (blowing)

(vc/va)
yawning *yawning* *gliss.* *gliss.*

yawning *p* *mf > p* *p* *mf > p* *p* *f* *p* *p*

Fig. 5. *Luminaris*, 1m2, reduction, bars 48-57.

To accompany the main character's attempts to steal the light bulbs, conversely, I used and varied the second motif of the main theme, in a much faster pace:

Faster
♩=144

ARCO POCO S.P.

74 75 76 77

mf *stealthily* *p* *mf > p* *f*

Fig. 6. *ibid.*, cello part, bars 74-77.

When the episode with the factory owner is over, and the characters are back to work, another central theme variation is in place. The key musical features for this chaotic and accelerated sequence until the bell signs the end of the working day are the following:

- faster metronome mark
- fast trills and octave jumps at the high woodwinds
- bass line of augmented fourth intervals – instead of the conventional perfect fourth

- use of bitonality (oboes are in F# major) together with the harmonic oddities already featured in the first exposition of the theme
- the melodic repeat of the second motif one tone up (bars 110-111)
- the use of an orchestral tutti over a raising, step-wise line (bars 112-116)

2 BARS IN $\text{♩} = 156$
 0:02:15:20
 TAKE 3

106 107 108 109

f playfully
 (high ww)

mf leggiero
 (vl, pizz.)

f leggiero

$\text{♩} = 156$
 (brass/pno/toypiano)

mp leggiero

f leggiero
 (bass cl, bn, tbn, vc/cb)

110 111 112 113 114 115

(toy pno, pno)

p

(high ww)

p

(vl/va, arco)

p

(brass)

p

p

Fig. 7. *ibid.*, reduction, bars 106-122.

The last significant reprise/variation of the main theme occurs to describe the next day at the factory. This sequence is even more hectic, as the factory owner finally discovers the main protagonist's agenda and fires him. The destabilising effect of the tritone introduced in the previous variation at the bass line is now extended to the main harmonic structure of this variation, which gradually shifts from traditional harmony to atonality. Summing up, to suggest the imminent disaster and the intensification of events, these gestures have been used:

- pattern of quavers at the lower register instead of the typical, reassuring bass line of the march (further diverging from the *Cheerful Puppets* topic)
- high woodwinds in random playing and hectic writing for snare drum and timpani
- harmonic tritone progression (G-C#, bars 171-173) repeated one tone up (A-D#, bars 177-180) and culminating in an atonal episode on a pedal of D# (bars 182-186).

Therefore, the main theme is subject to an ironic narrative. Its orderly presentation in conjunction with the *Cheerful Puppets* topic is dismantled by a gradual shift to chaos, represented by the increasing atonality and aleatoric writing.

2

LUMINARIS - 1m4 - Last Day At Luminaris Inc. / Fired

(tp, harmon mute)
f "bored"

(high ww, harp, celesta)

(pno, pizz strings, E.Hn, bass cl)
(bn, vc, cb) *mf*

177

RANDOM HIGHEST PITCH FAST STACCATO !!!

RANDOM PERCUSSION GESTURE

Snare Drum, timp (D-Eb)

(strings, brass)
f frantically

182

(tp, xyl, mar)
f frantically

184

(+ harp)

Fig. 8. *ibid.*, 1m4, reduction, bars 171-186.

b) Dreaming to Fly

As the main character has a secret dream, I wanted to give voice to it by creating another melodic theme derived from the main theme's motif b:

Fig. 9. *Luminaris*, Main Theme, motivic analysis.

Fig. 9. *Luminaris*, Main Theme, motivic analysis.

Motif b is substantially different, if not opposite, to motif a, in that it 1) has a downward melodic contour, and 2) starts on the upbeat. In cue 1m3, the incipit of the new theme sneaks in from the music accompanying his way back home, with a comic and lively twist.

Fig. 10. *Luminaris*, 1m3, reduction, bars 123-135.

Fig. 10. *Luminaris*, 1m3, reduction, bars 123-135.

Later, when he is home experimenting, the motif is tinged with a more romantic, operatic character:

The musical score consists of three systems of staves. The first system (bars 139-143) includes a piano part with dynamics *pp*, *mf*, *f*, and *mf con amore*. It also includes a woodwind/strings part (ww/str) and a section marked '6'. The second system (bars 139-143) features a section marked 'niente (tr)' and 'mp dolce (mallets and keyboards)'. The third system (bars 139-143) features a section marked 'pp'.

Fig. 11. *ibid.*, bars 139-143.

The new theme is played very sparsely, with pauses between episodes, to match the picture and give a sense of uncertainty. The last stretch of this sequence sees an answering phrase and a motivic development culminating with an unexpected ending. As in other moments of this score, everything is functional to the narrative:

- the shimmering texture (vibraphone, harp, mallets, keyboards) represents the element of magic and hope in the story
- the low woodwinds and bass trombone persist with a more comical and light quality, matching the comedy genre the short film is affiliated with.

The musical score reduction consists of two systems of staves. The first system (bars 147-151) includes a string part with 'gliss.' markings and a vibraphone part with 'Shimmering textures (magic, hope)' annotation. The piano part features sixteenth-note accompaniment. The second system (bars 152-160) shows a piano part with a crescendo and a vibraphone part with '(high ww)' annotation. Performance markings include *mp espress.*, *mf*, *pp dolce accompagnando*, *mf playfully*, and *ff*. Annotations include 'Answering phrase', 'Motivic development (from incipit) and crescendo', and 'Comic element'.

Fig. 12. *ibid.*, reduction, bars 147-160.

Introduced by a solo flute, 'Dreaming to Fly' is the protagonist of cue 1m5, where the two characters fly over the city. Other than starting from motif b, this theme has a longer arch that sums up the different melodic hints disseminated in the previous episodes where it appeared.

Whilst the main theme is invested by an ironic narrative, 'Dreaming to Fly', derived from the former, is destined to have a romantic narrative: from being a transgression to imposing its new order. The isomorphism with the narrative is, at least conceptually, clarified: as the character's secret dream is finally fulfilled in this sequence, so is the complete exposition of the musical theme that represents it.

Fig. 13. *ibid.*, 1m5, melodic analysis bars 229-248.

'Dreaming to Fly' also dominates the final part of the score, now reduced to several reiterations of motif b. However, I wanted to combine it with the comical aspect of the story, hence the irregular meters and the bouncy quality of the accompaniment, derived from the *Cheerful Puppets* topic used for the short journeys of the main character back and forth from the factory.

In conclusion, *Luminaris* is the first soundtrack where I noted how influential cinematic devices such as editing and *mise en scène* were in shaping the score. Even the particular choice of deriving the secondary theme from the first responds to the animation's editing, so focused on the main character. The isomorphism of this score is particularly precise and an excellent example to have in mind for my para-cinematic writing.

Suckablood

1. Context and Description

Approached by directors Ben Tillett and Jake Hendriks in 2012, I wrote this soundtrack for a gothic dark fairy tale about a little girl named Tilly and a monstrous entity called Suckablood that, according to Tilly's evil stepmother, kills little children who suck their thumb. The short film develops in three acts, with a Voice-over that describes the story in rhyme. The first act shows the setting and the scary warning of Tilly's stepmother, the second act is set in Tilly's bedroom at night, when the monster comes to visit, and the third act offers the story's final twist. With its period drama's gothic setting and dark colours, we all thought the film would require an orchestral score to support the narrative. The soundtrack, as well as the short, turned out quite successfully and was awarded the Peer Raben Award for best music in 2012 in Cologne. Primary sources of inspiration were soundtracks like Danny Elfman's *The Corpse Bride*, Wojciech Kilar's *Dracula*, James Newton Howard's *The Sixth Sense* and Alejandro Amenabar's *The Others*, all of which combine horror elements with mystery and lyricism.⁹⁸

2. Musical Storytelling

<p>ACT I (bars 1-37)</p>	<p>Act I introduces the settings and characters of the story.</p> <p>The incipit of the Monster's theme starts over the shot of the moon;⁹⁹ a cluster at bars 4-5 highlights how the tree branches form the title 'Suckablood'. The sustained low E at bars 6-8 is functional to allow the sound effects to be heard properly.</p> <p>At bar 9 another hint of the Monster's theme starts, together with the incipit of Tilly's theme (glass harmonica and women choir): this coincides with the first Voice-over (V.O.) phrase (bars 9-15). The irregular melodic rhythm of Tilly's theme is functional to not interfere with the words' rhythm, making sure that each pitch is located either after or before the start of a new word.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">On dark stormy nights, The Suckablood comes For those boys and girls Who still suck their thumbs!</p>
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⁹⁸ From *The Others*, in particular, I borrowed some textures like the blend of glass harmonica, piano and harp to describe the fragility of the little girl. Interestingly, the same references – *Corpse Bride* excluded – are cited by Neil Lerner as examples of types of horror where there is some aesthetical indulgence over the beauty of horror, mystery and even nostalgia. See Neil Lerner, *Music In The Horror Film* (New York & London: Routledge, 2010), Chapters 11 and 12, Kindle edition.

⁹⁹ Please refer to paragraph 3 (Leitmotivic Writing) for the thematic analysis.

	<p>From bar 14, there is a short polyphonic passage culminating at bar 19 beat 2, where the lightning reveals the stepmother. It accompanies the forward tracking shot (bars 14-17), the first shot over Tilly (bar 18: this is also reinforced by a short quote of her theme at horns, glass harmonica and bass flute) and the shot of the door where the stepmother appears.¹⁰⁰ The musical comment over Tilly and the V.O. text needed to be appropriately timed. At bar 18, the V.O. says</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This is small Tilly</p> <p>then lightning and thunder follow, and the V.O. resumes to</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Caught once again With thumbs that need lessons From Stepmother’s cane</p> <p>It was important to make sure that the crescendo would end exactly where the thunder hit was heard. This is the reason why the crescendo ends irregularly at bars 19/2. The following sustained section in piano (bars 20-22) makes space for the rest of the V.O. In bars 23-25, there is another quote from Tilly’s theme at the bass flute, whose pitches are alternated with the cane beatings noise. The following melodic phrase (bars 27-31) occurs right in the middle of the next verse:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Since punishment won’t stop her thumbs getting wet Mother calls down a curse That the girl won’t forget</p> <p>The section at bars 31-37 is very important as it deals with the stepmother’s curse:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Suckablood, Suckablood I beg you come To slaughter my daughter Should still suck a thumb!</p> <p>This verse is mirrored musically by a longer quote of the Monster’s theme at cellos, basses and low brass, sustained by another cluster swelling to bar 36.</p>
<p>ACT II (bars 38-99)</p>	<p>Act II follows little Tilly through the stairs into her bedroom, where she feels scared and lonely. In the middle of the night, the Suckablood finally comes but she is so clever that she chooses another finger to suck. Therefore, the monster spares her life.</p>

¹⁰⁰ A tracking shot is ‘a shot taken from a moving dolly (a platform on a set of wheels) when the camera moves towards the subject’

(<http://userhome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/anthro/jbeatty/COURSES/glossary.htm#name40>)

For the staircase scene, I used Tilly’s theme in a very gentle orchestration: piano does the melody, harp provides an accompaniment in quavers, strings sustain, glass harmonica plays a countermelody. Most important here was the musical pacing under the V.O. Having the melody in a mid-high register was also strategic to contrast – and avoid frequency interference – with the low-pitched V.O.

The approaches used here to pace the music under the V.O. were:

- 1) to give some lead to the first line of each verse by having the melody on a sustained note so that the V.O. can be heard without much musical interference; to accomplish this, the next musical semi-phrase unfolds in a way that its end coincides with the end of the verse.
- 2) to start the next musical semi-phrase before the next verse, trying to avoid any musical note that coincides with any strong inflexion in the spoken poem.

Here is a visual guide to where and how these approaches were combined in this passage:

1 = approach 1 (new v.o. line on melodic pause)
2 = approach 2 (new v.o. line follows new melodic semi-phrase)

39 1
 And without any prayers, Without

43 1
 being fed Up the dark stairs She is sent to her bed Poor Tilly

47 2
 fears This house in the night, The monsters who live here Have large appetites

51 1
 She tries not to wake them She creeps like a mouse And climbs to her

55
 room, At the top of the house

Fig. 14. V.O. and music alignment, bars 39-58.

To add a sense of danger and ominousness, I introduced some bursts of tremolo at the cellos (bars 48-50), leading to a variation of the scale for the Monster's theme.

The section from bar 58 to 80 is the most aleatoric of the piece. Narratively, it corresponds to the view from above of little Tilly in bed. Here is the breakdown:

Bars 58-65.

The V.O. recites the next verse:

Alone in her room
The candles grew dim
The wind howled and droned
And the monsters looked in

The harp, with a pattern in E minor derived from the accompaniment in the previous section, keeps maintaining its pace, doubled by celesta on a high pedal of E at strings in harmonics. Cellos are doing harmonic glissandos in staggered entries underneath (bars 63-65), and some pre-recorded effects are also playing their part in making this atmosphere dark and scary but not too full of musical events. The central hit point – the jump-scare given by thunder noise and a sudden zoom-in of the camera to reveal a tree-monster – is tackled quite suddenly by anvil, bass drum and Bartok pizzicatos.

Bars 66-80. The alignment of this section is with the following verse:

Tilly craved comfort
And looked to her thumb
begging 'Suckablood Suckablood
Please do not come!

Slow cluster glissandos and microtonal bending at strings and winds, plus a free celesta part, provide the aleatoric texture in crescendo. At bar 79 the introduction of the bass drum roll accompanies the revelation of the Suckablood lurking under the bed.

Bars 80-99. A powerful exposition of the Monster's theme at low strings, bassoons and brass in low range clarifies the relationship of this melodic material to the Suckablood who's creeping under Tilly's bed sheets. From bar 87 random pizzicatos at violins transition this orchestral section into silence. In the original mockup, the pizzicatos are in crossfade from bar 93 with a synth patch (not included in the score provided).¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ For crossfade it is to be intended the fade out of a gesture (pizzicato) at the same time with the fade in of another (the synth patch), here happening at bar 93.

<p>ACT III (bars 100-192)</p>	<p><u>Bars 100-108.</u> Of the entire score, this is where a synth patch and sound effects mostly prevail over the orchestra. The short crescendo at bars 101-102 reinforces sound effects. After the climax in Act II, it was important for the directors and me to leave the narrative a breather from music.</p> <p><u>Bars 109-119.</u> When Tilly is seen opening the door leading to the staircase, music starts again with a diminished triad on E in third inversion at violins and violas. After a few notes of Tilly's theme (bars 111-113), the V.O. resumes, with the same principle used in Act II of alternating it with musical phrases:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">She felt her way back Without any light An evil was looking But when would he bite?</p> <p>To represent this verse in music, cellos and double basses in tremolo <i>sul ponticello</i> stand for the evil presence, while piano and glass harmonica continue Tilly's theme. A cluster at winds and brass in crescendo is used to enhance the sound effect following the last line of the verse (bars 114-119).</p> <p><u>Bars 119-138.</u> The reinstatement and complete exposition of the Monster's theme at cellos and basses, with the accompaniment pattern at harp in E minor (already seen in Act I and II), hints at the presence of the monster – or, rather, the effects of his rage:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Through a house full of shadows Tilly tipped on her toes When reaching the study Her tiny heart froze</p> <p>The pattern of semiquavers at violas helps create a motor on which relying for this entire section.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For there laid her mother. At this side of a wall Were written my words In a black oily scrawl</p> <p>At bar 133 – in correspondence with the word 'mother', a thundering noise and the sudden shot over the dead stepmother – violins start carrying on the Monster's theme, followed by horns, adding further energy to the orchestral crescendo. In addition, the different</p>
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entries in counterpoint highlight the supernatural quality of the monster and his actions, providing further gravity to the section.

Bars 139-158.

What a clever young girl
Not sucking your thumb
I could not eat you
So I've taken your mum!

Over this verse, music intensifies with the addition of sextuplet patterns at winds, strings and piano, a broadened range and a richer texture in general. The last word of this verse ends at bar 143, emphatically marked with another flash of light and thundering noise.

Music climax continues, however, as I thought it would be beneficial to insist on the Monster theme a bit more and let the music expand further so to cover the next and final verse of the poem and the final twist of the story, where we finally see the Suckablood and understand he is the V.O. of the poem.

At bar 147, I reinstated the horns with a phrase complementary to the Monster's theme, repeated at bar 151 and then, with a conclusive variation, at bar 156 by trumpets, timpani and tubular bells. The three repetitions of this phrase mark the outro of this section in a final epic conclusion. The pacing of it with the words has been particularly accurate as below:

Bars 147-150: first statement of the complementary phrase

Bars 151-155: second statement of the phrase with a pause on the dominant chord at bar 155, to wait the end of the verse

On dark stormy nights
The Suckablood comes
For those cruel folks
Who curse their young ones!

Bars 156-158: third statement of the phrase, immediately after the monster's disappearance.

Bars 158-end. Over the rolling end credits Tilly's theme comes back in a minimal orchestration for celesta, piano, glass-harmonica, choir, low strings and bass flute.

3. Conveying The Narrative

In addition to editing and *mise en scène*, focalisation has a central role in shaping the score; musical topics and Leitmotivic writing are separately discussed in this commentary to highlight how I capture the narrative through music.

Editing, *Mise en scène* and Focalisation

The perception of time in this movie is partly dictated by the V.O., and partly by the cinematic scenes occurring during the silences of the V.O. A few late hours of a dark stormy night have been summarised in just around ten minutes of a short film: the contraction of time here is apparent but not extreme. This, in my opinion, contributes to the slow/medium pace of the movie and, through isomorphism, of the music. When I started working on this short film, it was paramount to reflect the movie's tripartition in music. A musical pause separates each act: 2 bars (bars 36-37) between Act I and II, and 6 bars of silence before Act III (bars 94-100). About the latter, the longer musical pause here avoids interfering with sound effects and creates a much-needed change, given the previous climax. In this film, the camera movements convey uneasiness and fear, together with the gloomy, dark and gothic *mise en scène*. Sound effects mirrored some, so deciding which needed further support with music and which to leave without was essential. Here is a list of the main choices I opted for:

- The formation of the title (bars 4-5, 00'24"-00'30" into the film): As the camera zooms out, it reveals that the tree's branches make up the title. Musically, this is paired with an orchestral cluster in crescendo to provide an immediate sense of uneasiness
- Tilly looking over her bed (bars 101-102, 3'45"-3'48"): The sudden camera movement is marked with an orchestral cluster in crescendo; this happens after a long musical pause, providing a good alternation of music and sound effects
- The sudden appearance/disappearance of the monster while Tilly is climbing down the stairs (bars 114-119, 4'17"-4'20") is mirrored by another orchestral cluster in crescendo

The narrator of this tale is the monster himself, who only appears towards the end of the movie. This is particularly interesting to further clarify how focalisation proceeds independently from narration. In several examples, the shots are set to focus on Tilly's response to the scary environment, with a variety of eye-match shots (1'51"-2', or 2'30"-2'35" into film for instance), which punctually are amplified by onomatopoeic effects. During those moments, I chose therefore to amplify the little girl's perspective, rather than simply staying with the description offered by the narrator.

The *mise en scène* of the short film, the angularity of the shots, and the overly dark, gothic tints have their counterpart in the orchestration, which tends to enhance the low sections of the orchestra; Tilly and her fragility is conversely represented by piano, celesta and strings in mid-high register.

Musical Topics

a) *The Horror Scare*

Music for horror films has certain codes to oblige to be successful. Being a vast subject itself, I will limit my focus on orchestral music used in the horror style – excluding a conspicuous number of interesting electronic and hybrid soundtracks which would go beyond the scope of this analysis.¹⁰²

The Horror Scare is my rendition of *demonic style* used by Janice Dickensheets to define topics in 19th-century music, in turn derived from Ratner's *ombra*, which will be discussed in more depth in the commentary for *The New Pioneers*.¹⁰³ She points out that

the Demonic Style often makes use of the minor mode, but a harshly wicked major key can also be employed in conjunction with frequent diminished chords. Rising scalar patterns in the low register (scored frequently for cello or double bass) are almost always found ascending in chromatic or altered scales, conjuring fantastic images of spectres arising out of the deep [...] followed by cackling passages of glissandi or agitated high strings and woodwinds. [...] Low brass [...] are featured in a forced, almost overblown manner¹⁰⁴

Whilst there are common traits to *The Horror Scare*, one should acknowledge that the Demonic Style appears dated when compared to modernist techniques of the 20th century, which deliver even more effective 'cackling passages'; in fact, the most

¹⁰² One great reference among others can be found in N. Lerner, *Music in the Horror Film: Listening to Fear*. (Routledge Music and Screen Media Series.) New York: Routledge, 2010.

¹⁰³ Janice Dickensheets 'The Topical Vocabulary of the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Musicological Research*, 31:2-3 (2012), 118.

¹⁰⁴ J. Dickensheets, *op. cit.*, 119-120. She also offers some examples of the topics, such as Berlioz's 'Dream of a Witches' Sabbath' in *Symphonie Fantastique*.

prominent feature of horror music is the use of atonality to convey the unknown and the unsettling. As Halfyard writes:

In horror films, the monsters are “Others” who are themselves outside the (human) system, so here we tend to find the humans represented by tonality, and the monsters by atonality.¹⁰⁵

Expanding this concept, anything that does not belong to traditional tonal music is therefore welcome: from unusual textures to aleatoric effects, music for the horror genre has gained a conspicuous amount of freedom in borrowing from 20th-century contemporary concert music. Those features are used chiefly as effects to enhance the emotion of fear and terror, to direct the audience’s attention and to liaise with silence to create jump-scares:

Terror is the objective in a horror film [...] and it’s important to remember that the music is scoring not the action, but the emotions; the throbbing heart, the shrieking voice, the inescapable and overwhelming fear the audience feels.¹⁰⁶

Among the main elements of the horror topic are:

- Harmonic uneasiness (atonality, clusters, aleatoric writing)
- Inherent associations such as microtonal bending, glissandos, extended techniques to create aural analogies with screams, yells, etc. For instance, at bars 48-50 / 1’52”-1’58” into the film, cellos in tremolo replicate Tilly’s trembling in fear; at bars 68-80 / 6’46”, the microtonal bending and slow glissando of the strings are reminiscent of painful screams, laments, or begging, over the verse describing Tilly praying the monster not to come.
- Kinetic inherent associations with a throbbing heartbeat, such as a frantic pulse
- Dynamic extremes (sudden hits/silences, crescendos from *pp* to *ff*)

b) *Hauntingly Beautiful*

I have borrowed this definition from James Deaville’s analysis of Lucy’s theme in Wojciech Kilar’s score for *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* directed by Francis Ford Coppola (1992).¹⁰⁷ This topic, found in soundtracks such as *The Sixth Sense* (1999), *Brothers Grimm* (2009), *The Others* (2001), *Rosemary’s Baby* (1968) is often used as the counterpart of *The Horror Scare*.¹⁰⁸ The topic usually is related to the fragile side of the characters – be they the victims, or the monsters themselves – or, in non-horror

¹⁰⁵ Janet K. Halfyard, “Mischief Afoot – Supernatural Horror-comedies and the *Diabolus in Musica*”, in Neil Lerner, *op.cit.*, p.22.

¹⁰⁶ Fred Karlin and Rayburn Wright, *On The Track* (NY-London: Routledge, 2004), 185.

¹⁰⁷ In Neil Lerner, *op. cit.*, 193.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 183-221.

contexts, to describe the beauty of the mystery, its settings and mysterious characters (as in *Brothers Grimm*). The traits that can be attributed to the musical topic include:¹⁰⁹

- Chant-like melody, usually stepwise or in narrow intervals
- Insistent use of repetition (of motifs or melodic rhythm), very similar to a lullaby
- Slow or moderate pace, without rhythmic complexities
- Unexpected/unusual/ ambiguous harmonic changes
- Usually orchestrated for strings, woodwinds, piano, harp, celesta/music box, rarely choir

c) *Fate/Plot/Determination-Revealing Counterpoint*

The use of counterpoint, or *learned style*, in eighteenth-century music has been analysed as a topic by Keith Chapin in extensive detail.¹¹⁰ In his article, Chapin highlighted that the learned style (or, as he goes further to explain, similar concepts such as *stile antico*, strict style, or church style), being used out of context, still retained some associations with the original place or cultural settings, and therefore the style remained identified with rigour, religion, austerity, and so on.¹¹¹ These associations are 'motivated by a combination of factors: by the character of the music produced by learned styles, by the social place and function of learned genres, and by the performing forces required by some polyphonic genres' (for instance, the necessity of using larger forces, such as choruses, to play the many different polyphonic lines).¹¹²

Continuing this research, which sets its limits to a specific historical period, as part of my seminars at RCM I have been investigating the use of counterpoint in film music.¹¹³ Analysing sequences from about 15 films spanning from *Psycho* (1960) to *Vice* (2018), my findings show that counterpoint – which is very rarely used in film music – tends to be used to describe either mental derangement/hyperactivity,¹¹⁴ supernatural

¹⁰⁹ Please refer to the playlist provided in Appendix II.

¹¹⁰ In D. Mirka, *op. cit.*, 301-329.

¹¹¹ 'God, cosmology, nature, number, law, communal collectivity, uncanny alterity, seriousness of purpose, routine and pedantry, the mechanical, and masculinity', he writes (D. Mirka, *ibid.*, 323)

¹¹² In D. Mirka, *op. cit.*, 323-324. 'The choruses are grand. They use techniques associated with church music and legitimated by their antiquity and sophistication.'

¹¹³ The cycle of seminars about counterpoint starts by establishing what counterpoint is and what kind of counterpoint has been analysed. Most of the times we are talking about passages within a musical sequence involving some degree of polyphonic writing, from canons to 2 or more parts inventions, although there are also examples of fugues in film music (*Vice*, *Troy*, *Home Alone*). Using counterpoint in film music is quite a rarity given its complex texture, which may either distract from the narrative or interfere with the sound effects; this explains why the polyphonic sections are relatively short and generally are part of a cue with a predominantly homophonic texture.

¹¹⁴ Other than *Psycho* and *Vice*, this approach is found also in the sequence where Tristan becomes almost mad for the loss of his brother in *Legend of the Falls* and in the opening sequence of *Atonement*.

phenomena or entities,¹¹⁵ or symbolic music intended to sum up different narrative threads, levels, or characters, revealing the way they are connected.¹¹⁶ The other interesting finding of this research is that the polyphonic texture – especially when there are staggered entries as in a stretto – enhances the directionality of the musical discourse; in other words, it naturally builds up towards the next climax.

In *Suckablood*, two small passages are written in a more contrapuntal way, both used as a build-up to a particular shot or event. The first is at bars 14-20, immediately after the V.O. line 'the Suckablood comes' and over the tracking shot. The three entries of the Monster's theme reinforce the mysterious atmosphere generated by the opening and by the tracking shot itself – which from outside, gaining in speed through a crack in the house walls, reaches the living room where Tilly is – and subtly imply that the camera is, in fact, taking the monster's point of view. At the same time, the hint of Tilly's theme over her first appearance contributes to establishing the thematic material.

Fig. 15. *Suckablood*, reduction, bars 14-19.

As an exquisite example of hyperactivity there is also the sequence related to setting the trap for the burglars in *Home Alone*

¹¹⁵ In *1408* (2007) Gabriel Yared wrote a fugue to represent the first direct encounter of the protagonist with the evil spirit; examples of counterpoint writing can also be found in mainstream blockbuster movies such as *The Lion*, *The Witch and The Wardrobe* (2005).

¹¹⁶ Examples are the Dunkirk sequence in *Atonement* (2007), the end credits in *Mission* (1986) and *The English Patient* (1996), the caveau scene in *The Best Offer* (2013). This use seems to find further confirmation in Frank Lehman's "Manufacturing the Epic Score" in *Music in Epic Film*, edited by Stephen C. Meyer (New York: Routledge, 2017), 34-36. Lehman refers to the 'ponderous passacaglia' and its counterpoint as a way composer Hans Zimmer conveys the epic; however, none of the reasons he offers (the sense of 'dramatic intensification' or 'certain cultural associations – severity, difficulty, effort – that can be tapped to good effect in depicting both external calamity and tortured psyches'; *op. cit.*, 34) are related to the epic genre, but rather to the counterpoint itself. The counterpoint used in *Psycho*, for instance, is an example.

The second example is when the story's final twist is revealed, and we see the dead stepmother in the chair (bars 119-155). Here I wanted to represent the supernatural quality of the monster whilst also building up into the wider shot over the bloody writing on the wall.

The image shows a musical score reduction for bars 125-138. Bar 125 is labeled 'Monster's Theme' and 'vc+cb'. The notation is in bass clef. Bars 133-138 are labeled '2nd entry - Monster's Theme incipit' for the violin (vl) and '3rd entry - Monster's Theme incipit' for the horn (hn). The violin part is in treble clef, and the horn part is in bass clef. The piano accompaniment is in bass clef. The score shows various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Fig. 16. Further examples of contrapuntal writing in the score, reduction, bars 125-138

Leitmotivic Writing

This score features two main themes, one for the monster and one for little Tilly.

a) Suckablood's Theme

The image shows a musical score for 'The Monster's Theme' in 2/4 time. The score is in bass clef and marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The notation includes notes, rests, and a dynamic marking.

Fig. 17. *Suckablood*, the Monster's Theme.

Suckablood’s theme is based on the scale of E minor, quite insistently emphasising the tonic and dominant of the key, with no significant harmonic surprises. As the monster reveals itself only at the end of the film, so does the theme, hinted at in Act I and II, emerging from the aleatoric uneasiness of Act II as a majestic display of orchestral forces (bars 139-160).

b) Tilly’s Theme

Little Tilly's Theme
(with harmonic reduction)

The figure displays a musical score for 'Little Tilly's Theme' with harmonic reduction. The score is in E minor and consists of three systems. The first system shows the melody and chords: Em, B, Cmaj7, F#7/C#, G/D, Bm/D, C, F#7/C#. The second system shows: Bm/D, F#7/E, Bm/D, Cm (circled), Gm/D (circled with VI below), and Em (circled with IV below). The third system shows: C#m (circled), Am/C (circled), Em/B, B7(b5), and Em.

Fig. 18. Little Tilly’s Theme, melodic and harmonic reduction.

Tilly’s theme, built on the musical topic of *Hauntingly Beautiful*, represents both her fragility and the unfolding mystery of the plot. Despite the apparent simplicity of the melody, the harmony is quite dynamic, shifting smoothly from E minor to B minor but then changing quite often using pan-triadic chromaticism to get back to the original key, as highlighted in the figure above. The so-called French sixth at the end of the theme adds a touch of mystery and oddity thanks to the unexpected F natural (the diminished fifth of what would otherwise be a dominant seventh) in harmony and melody. Tilly’s theme appears in its entirety at bars 39-59 and then again at bars 166-189.

In Alménian terms, the narrative emerging is, paradoxically, romantic: the order is represented by the Monster’s theme, which is challenged by Tilly’s theme and the various aleatoric gestures (transgression), to then finally emerge victorious in its final epic rendition. The coda of the piece, based on Tilly’s theme, should not be taken into

account because it responds to the typical reappearance of themes during the end credits of a movie.

The example of *Suckablood* carries particularly relevance for the para-cinematic works discussed in the next chapter. It explores a number of typical musical topics used in fairy tales (*The Horror Scare, Hauntingly Beautiful*) which will be returned to in the para-cinematic compositions. It also highlights how the device of focalisation works in practice, turning our interest towards Tilly's point of view, and suggesting methods that may be creatively extended in a para-cinematic context.

The New Pioneers

1. Context and Description

The New Pioneers is a pilot episode created by Chris Perry and the production company BitFilms, released in 2015. According to the series bible, 'the New Pioneers is an animated epic adventure set in an Earth-like world where evolution has gone bananas, forcing orphan teen Mynn and the few remaining humans to take shelter in the enclosed city of Tabah'.¹¹⁷ In the pilot episode, a beast tries to force its way into the city but is eventually defeated.

The plot unfolds in eight main sections:

- 1) The arrival of the beast (bars 1-11)
- 2) Mynn wakes up at the sound of the alarm, making her way to the battlefield (bars 13-45)
- 3) The beast seeks to enter the dome (bars 45-55)
- 4) The beast finds its way in, and men fight it (bars 56-67)
- 5) Mynn's solo initiative (bars 68-84)
- 6) Shots of Mynn looking at the beast's green eyes alternated with men trying to reject the beast (bars 85-105)
- 7) Epilogue, the beast defeated (bars 106-113)
- 8) Title card (bars 116-119).

I was asked to follow a temp track mostly taken from the iconic anime movie *Princess Mononoke*, scored by composer Joe Hisaishi. As usual in my scoring approach, I wanted to rely on a main theme and mould it according to the narrative plot. This also served to present a recognisable and memorable musical signature, which would be strategic to the series, should it be produced in the future.

2. Musical Storytelling

Bars 1-12	Topic of <i>Lurking Dangerous Presence</i> and the Beast's theme over the shot of a wild forest at night where the shadow of a beast appears.
Bars 13-19	Short presentation of Mynn's Theme as she wakes up at the sound of the alarm

¹¹⁷ The New Pioneers Bible, PDF at https://www.dropbox.com/s/mp1cs6qwjy9wgfa/NEWPIONEERS_bible_052015%20%281%29.pdf?dl=0

Bars 20-28	Short variation of Mynn’s theme with different orchestration to highlight the almost comical scene of Mynn’s siblings sleeping through the noise
Bars 29-45	Full exposition of Mynn’s theme while getting ready for the battlefield + topic of <i>Epic Battle/Fighting Hero(es)</i>
Bars 46-55	Topic of <i>Lurking Dangerous Presence</i> over the shot of the beast trying to break the electrified shield. Brass mainly carry on the atonal harmony, lower instruments play the main motif associated with the beast, percussions are steadier. The pulse established creates a sense of waiting rather than unpredictability (after all, we now know what this beast looks like and what it is up to). Dynamics are more nuanced and swelling to suggest tension.
Bars 56-67	First episode of the fight, alternating shots of soldiers with shots of the beast. Musically, this corresponds to a dialogue between the two main themes. High woodwinds, strings and percussions make the main motor for the action. To differentiate the two factions, horns and bassoons in a medium range play the heroic motif (Mynn’s theme, here representing the entire cohort of soldiers fighting) whilst low brass, strings and piano play the Beast’s motif. To suggest that the beast might succeed, all the mentioned instruments – plus trumpets – play the beast motif at bars 63-66 through the climax of this episode. To add more tension and an increase of energy, I shifted the motor a third up at bar 59 and again at bar 62.
Bars 68-82	Mynn’s individual fight. Agility is again represented by using small forces (such as strings and saantor for the main motor on quartal harmony) and irregular accents. The main melody is performed by the brass section instead. In this scene, however, Mynn’s agility is even more evident on the screen as she climbs a tower; for this reason, I decided to add a very fast Mickey-Mousing gesture to high woodwinds as a middleground layer.
Bars 83-94	Tensive moment where Mynn is believed defeated. In this section I decided to combine features of both the contestants. While the main melodic element is taken from Mynn/New Pioneers’ theme, I presented it in the low register, which is mostly used for the Beast’s theme. Additionally, I stayed away from exposing the motif in full, limiting this section to reiterating the first three notes of its incipit: almost if the theme could not find a way to develop, if it was “stuck”, exactly as Mynn is in this sequence. To help that, swelling clusters are performed at brass, high strings and woodwinds. The resolution to this suspenseful moment is only at bars 91-94, where a reprise of the motor used for the fight leads to the climax, coinciding with Mynn’s unsuccessful strike towards the beast.
Bars 94-105	In this pivotal moment, Mynn is doubting that the beast is dangerous: to highlight it, I tried to create a sense of radical change using timbre: over a

	high pedal over B and A#, a distant choir performs a new melody, punctuated by the first three notes of the beast's motif at the harp.
Bars 105-116	In this sequence the soldiers finally strike the beast causing it to recede in the woods. On one hand, this is a victorious moment for the men, but on the other there is the suspect that the beast is not of a dangerous type, after all. The orchestral arrangement here is therefore comprehensive of both sides: while percussions bring back the action of the fight, the choir's melody is now expanded to strings in a plain arrangement in E minor (where the hero's motif makes its way more as a countermelody than as the main theme). Over the shot of the beast receding in the woods, a solo clarinet performs one more reiteration of the short melody.
Bars 117-119	Titles – main theme sting over <i>Battle Scene/Fighting Hero(es)</i> topic.

3. Conveying the Narrative

In this movie, there are two main parties involved: the beast on one hand, and the humans on the other hand. This contrast is represented by two different topics (*Epic Battle/Fighting Heroes*, and *Lurking Dangerous Presence*) and by two different themes (Mynn's and The Beast), analysed in more depth below.

The *mise en scène* of this animation depicts a quite primitive society (soldiers have spears, characters dress in simple clothes). To represent that, I chose a predominantly quartal harmony, which indeed often appears as part of Mynn's theme. Conversely, the beast and the threat that it poses are represented with chromaticism and dissonances.

In this commentary, I give particular attention to the implications of editing and montage, reflecting on the sense of contraction of time and how music handles it. The target audience of the animation, as written in its bible, suggested me to avoid too much Mickey-Mousing, although there is a very subtle exception when Mynn climbs to the higher ground; most of the inherent associations in the score are integral parts of the musical topics, as explained below. In this score there is also a moment where music is isomorphic with the internal focalisation suggested by the camera movements and editing.

Musical Topics

a) *Epic Battle/Fighting Hero(es)*

This topic occurs in the score over the battle scenes and the title card at the end. It also helps identify the heroic quality of the theme of Mynn/New Pioneers. It is often

used to describe an epic battle from the standpoint of the sheer size of the parts involved, the intensity of their fight, and the heroism of the protagonists. In my research, I found it both in epic battle scenes and in superhero themes that are willing to incorporate some of the heroic traits of the character. Among the musical features of this topic, there are:

- Incisive melodic statements in *ff*, often starting on the first beat of the bar, mostly in binary rhythm
- Motor (melodic and/or percussive) in background
- Pace tending to be medium-fast, at the same speed of a march or a run (onomatopoeically alluding to marching soldiers etc.)
- Snare drum / trumpets used as an inherent association with war
- Brass often in foreground.

One can say that the 'epic battle' topic is partly derived from the historical *Military* topic, explored in greater details by Raymond Monelle, who states that it is primarily identified by rhythmic structures (the march), a certain pace (as those of marching troops), specific timbres (brass, in particular trumpets, defined as 'military signifier', percussions) and also influenced by the notion of gallantry and the social construct of the soldier's role in society (which corresponds to the idea of fighting heroes, in my definition).¹¹⁸ Acknowledging that his analysis focuses only on music of the 18th century, the military topic has evolved considerably: as Julian Horton states, 'a march written in 1770 carries very different connotations than one written after the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars', giving examples how the military in Haydn's '*Military*' *Symphony* (1793-1794), the finale in Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* (1808) and the fourth movement of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* (1830) offer different aspects and meaning of the topic;¹¹⁹ to add one more example, one could think how, on a structural level, the 5/4 in Gustav Holst's 'Mars, the Bringer of War' (*The Planets*, 1916) diverges from the binary rhythm of a march, whilst the piece still retains many connotations of the military.

The main difference between my definition of the topic and Monelle's *Military* is the more emancipated focus on the hero: as a consequence, the identifying elements of battle and war (such as martial rhythms, or timbres such as snare drums and trumpets) are used in support of the celebratory and the heroic rather than in the foreground.

Defining the heroic topic in music poses some considerations: firstly, what kind of hero is represented. Answering this, Ari Kohen identifies three categories: Achilles (the battlefield hero, challenging his life knowing it may result in his own death),

¹¹⁸ R. Monelle, *op. cit.*, 113-184.

¹¹⁹ In D. Mirka, *op. cit.*, 649.

Odysseus (tactical, but requiring endurance and suffering to succeed), and Socrates (ethically engaged in committing to others).¹²⁰ Among them, Achilles seems to fit the narrative of my rendition of the topic. Tracing it back to classical Western repertoire, it is quite natural to think of Beethoven, whose music displays 'heart-stopping pauses, crushing register shifts, startling harmonies, [...] loud dynamics, accented chords, and often brass timbres', or whose heroic style was for Richard Wagner 'one in which the entire musical texture assumed the forward flow of a melodic line'.¹²¹ Russian composers, during the complex Stalinist period, contributed to evolve the heroic topic further with their works; in particular, Shostakovich's *Fifth* and *Seventh Symphony* (1937 and 1941) included elements of both heroic and military, and Prokofiev's soundtrack for Eisenstein's *Aleksandr Nevsky* (1938) initiated the translation of the topic into film score literature.

Proceeding into more contemporary film scoring, there are several examples to quote. Howard Shore, for instance, in his cue "Forth Eorlingas" from *The Two Towers* (2003), introduces a string motor and snare when the battle starts, all of which are quite contrasting and different from the previous texture.¹²² Hans Zimmer, in the initial battle scene of *The Gladiator* (2000), evidently pays homage to Holst's *Mars*. Among superhero themes featuring the topic, I will mention Alan Silvestri's *The Avengers* (2012), Danny Elfman's *Spider-Man* (2002) and Pinar Toprak's *Captain Marvel* (2019). Other uses of the topic as a signifier for the heroism of the protagonists can be traced in John Powell "This Is Berk" from *How To Train Your Dragon* (2010), when describing Stoick the Vast (with an evident homage to the Russian composers during the Stalinist period), and also in James Horner's "Attack on Murrone" from *Braveheart* (1995) where drum patterns accompany the previously romantic theme to the point that it loses its romanticism entirely. It is also worth mentioning that the same texture – with sonic hybrid twists – is equally used in dystopian/modern settings, as in *Matrix Reloaded* (2003) and *Mad Max* (2015).

b) *Lurking Dangerous Presence (Ombra)*

The topic appears at the piece's beginning in conjunction with the Beast's Theme; my definition is essentially a more descriptive tag for the concept of *Ombra*, used by Hermann Abert for defining ghost scenes in Jommelli's operas, implying 'a sense of shadowiness and approaching fear'.¹²³

¹²⁰ Judith Lochhead, 'Emilie du Chatelet, Kaija Saariaho, and Heroes of the Twenty-First Century', in B. Kutschke and K. Butler (ed.), *The Heroic in Music* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2022), 347-348.

¹²¹ Lawrence M. Zbikowski, 'Design Principles for the Musical Heroic', in B. Kutschke and K. Butler (ed.), *op. cit.*, 160.

¹²² Links to the audio-video references quoted here are in Appendix II.

¹²³ C. McClelland, 'Ombra and Tempesta', in D. Mirka's *The Oxford Handbook of Topic Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 279. See also fig. 1.

From my research, this topic usually occurs where the directorial intentions intend to anticipate that a threat/beast/entity is approaching; the protagonists may feel its presence, but they may not identify where the danger is coming from.¹²⁴ Typical features of this topic are:

- Short phrases in the low register of the orchestra, prevalently chromatic
- Low drums hits and short percussive patterns (often alternated with short melodic phrases)
- Prevalently sustained chromatic/dissonant/atonal harmony to suggest threat, danger, unease
- Aleatoric gestures, very frantic and fast-moving, in short bursts; often generating dissonant clusters
- Prevalent low register
- Extremely wide dynamic swells (from pp to ff)
- Percussive elements usually (but not always) placed at the beginning of each gesture

These features are quite evident in the temp music used, which belongs to the second movement of *Princess Mononoke's* symphonic suite, *Demon God*.¹²⁵

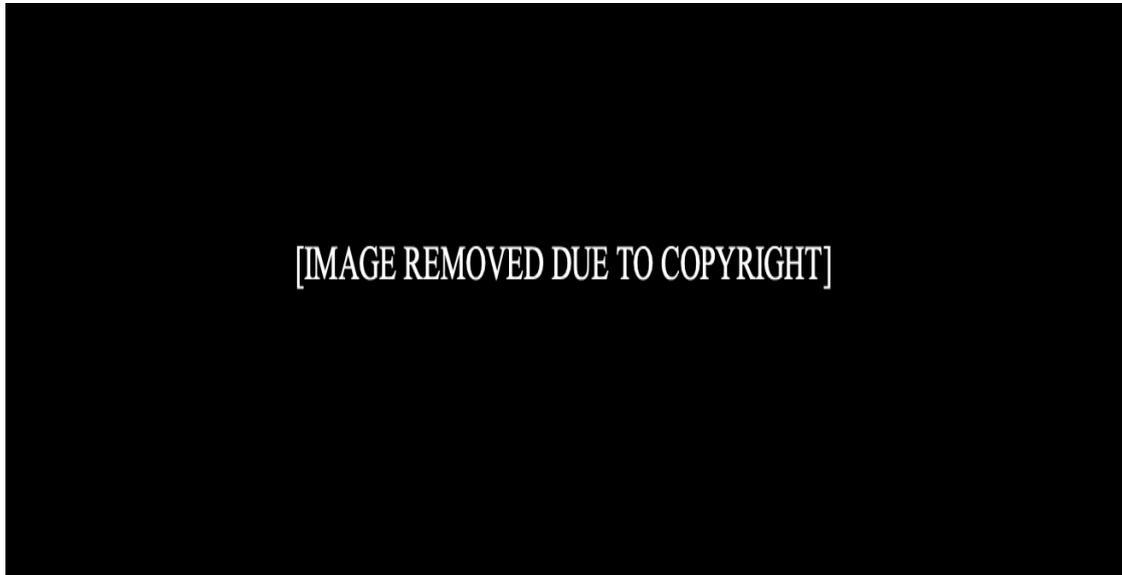


Fig. 19. Transcription of the first bars of the temp track used in the opening of the animation.

¹²⁴ This topic can be found in *Big Fish* (T. Burton, D. Elfman, 2003), *Avatar* (J. Cameron, J. Horner, 2009). See video excerpts provided as additional material in Appendix II.

¹²⁵ Interestingly, this excerpt is not present in the film but was written for the concert version.

The New Pioneers

Enrica Sciandrone

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(vi) 1/2 trem, 1/2 ord.

(Taiko Drum) mp

(bass cl, vc, cb) 1/2 trem, 1/2 ord.

(va) 1/2 trem, 1/2 ord.

mf ominously pp fp p pp

Fig. 20. *The New Pioneers*, reduction, bars 1-7.

Leitmotivic Writing

c) Mynn/New Pioneers' Theme (Main Motif)

During the initial conversation, the director asked me to create a main theme for the end credits and throughout the short. Once again, the temp track used for the end credits was taken from *Princess Mononoke* and related to the fights between Ashitaka and the Demon God, with qualities belonging to the topic of the *Epic Battle/Fighting Hero(es)*.

The short musical phrase over the title card was the first sketch composed for the episode, and it was arranged using the convention of the topic:

116 117 (brass) 118 119

mf

mf ff

Fig. 21. *ibid.*, reduction, bars 116-119.

From that, I went backwards to associate the melodic leitmotif with Mynn: she is the main protagonist, called to represent human resistance, so I felt that this original thematic idea could be further developed to fit her character. She is a strong female

teenager, small and agile. The treatment of the main theme has been modified to support her journey into the action through variations of the arrangements in each scene.

When she first appears, for instance, the 6-note theme lies on a bed of quartal harmony realised by repeated chords on uneven accents and irregular meters:

Figure 22 shows a musical score for piano, covering bars 13 to 21. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 120. The score is for piano and includes various percussion instruments. The music features a 6-note theme on a bed of quartal harmony. The instrumentation includes vc, db, vib., and mar. The dynamics range from *mf* to *p*. The meters are 5/8, 7/8, 4/4, 2/4, 5/8, 4/4, 2/4, and 5/8.

Fig. 22. *ibid.*, Mynn's theme, bars 13-21.

The unevenness of accents is effective in action-based sequences, and the light arrangement wants to suggest a scene happening in a small space. After a short repetition of the motif in the violins and violas in pizzicato (coinciding with the funny-looking Mynn's siblings still sleeping in bed), the theme is fully exposed as Mynn goes outside:

Figure 23 shows a musical score for piano, covering bars 28 to 45. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 120. The score is for piano and includes various percussion instruments. The music features a 6-note theme on a bed of quartal harmony. The instrumentation includes ww, vl, pno, taiko, tamb, claves, and pno, va, vc, cb, vib. The dynamics range from *ff* to *mf*. The meters are 7/8, 4/8, 5/8, 4/8, 3/8, 5/8, 4/8, 3/8, 4/8, 5/8, 4/8, 7/8, 4/8, 3/8, and 4/8.

Fig. 23. *ibid.*, Mynn's theme complete exposition, bars 28-45.

Deliberately, in this rendition of the *Epic Battle/Fighting Hero(es)* topic, I preferred to give importance to the concept of agility over strength; the orchestration, for instance, excludes the brass section, except for the crescendo at bars 43-45. Mynn's theme expands soon into representing the entire efforts of humans versus the beast, as it happens in the first battle scene: here is where her theme develops to represent her community, united against the beast:

The musical score for Figure 24 consists of two systems of music. The first system covers bars 50 to 56. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. Bars 50-55 show the 'Beast' motif in the bass line, with instruments (bsns, vc, db). Bar 56 features a violin and viola (vi+va) entry with a forte (f) dynamic and triplet patterns. The second system covers bars 57 to 58. Bar 57 shows the 'Main Motif' in the piano with instruments (hns) and a fortissimo (sf) dynamic. Bar 58 shows the 'Beast' motif in the bass line with instruments (tbn, tu, timp) and a fortissimo (sf) dynamic. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Fig. 24. *ibid.*, further use of Mynn's Theme/Main Motif.

During her solo mission (bars 68-84), her theme is used in a variation that expands the concept of agility, by further varying the metre and incorporating Mickey-Mousing gestures to match the kinetic flow of her climbing, as will be further described in section 3.

d) The Beast's Theme

This short theme, introduced at the very beginning for the beast, has a peculiar journey in the score: from carrying the ominous quality derived from the topic of *Lurking Dangerous Presence*, and as such the primary agent of disruption, the antagonist of the Mynn/New Pioneers theme, to representing a curious, fragile creature, rejected by humans. Section 3 will describe, in detail, how this change is achieved.

The narrative arch resulting from the relationship between these two themes could be considered tragic: the defeat of a transgression (the Beast's theme) against an order-imposing hierarchy (Mynn/New Pioneers' theme).

e) Another Thread (for the next episode)

Finally, a melodic phrase emerges from bar 95 in the choir: this is further expanded at bars 106-113 with violins and solo clarinet. Its presence is intertwined with that of the other main themes: between bars 95-105, it is punctuated by the first three notes of the Beast’s Theme, while at bar 106 it is complemented by the first motif of Mynn/New Pioneers’ Theme. In both instances, it serves to present the beast as a not-so-dangerous character. The new material introduces a different plotline: following the typical mechanism of series episodes, this pilot animation builds interest towards the next episode, and it seems logical that the music should do the same.

Editing and Montage

Overall, the events unfold with the animated pace typical of the action genre: cutting short the unnecessary parts and focusing on the most active moments of the battle. The rapid succession of events forced me to establish short recognisable leitmotifs I could fit throughout. In particular, the passage at bars 43-45 (1’14”-1’17” into the film) is quite relevant in witnessing how the contraction of time affected the writing. In this scene, Mynn and her friend’s dialogue is interrupted by the electrified sound of the dome holding against the beast’s attempt to enter. In a previous cut, the scene was longer, and Mynn’s theme could keep the same Leitmotivic melodic rhythm:



Fig. 25. Melodic rhythm of Mynn’s theme in the original version, piccolo part, bars 29-45.

With the final cut, I lost a few seconds, which allowed me to end the phrase in sync with the two looking at each other in apprehension (bars 45, 1’17” into the film). To solve the matter, I ended up modifying the melodic rhythm at bar 42 to be able to re-sync the music properly:

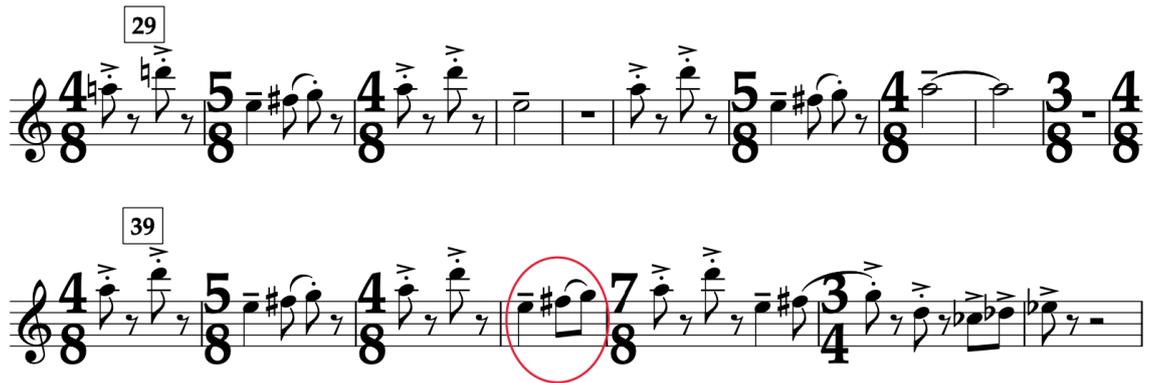


Fig. 26. Melodic rhythm of Mynn's theme in the final version, piccolo part, bars 29-45.

This solution was more effective in adding a sense of instability to the otherwise predictable melodic rhythm; in turn, it mirrors the bafflement of Mynn and her friend, whose dialogue is interrupted by the dome's noise. If the battle is compressed in time, there is, however, a significant moment where time is expanded, as when Mynn faces the beast's intense gaze. In my opinion, the corresponding musical pause contributes to emphasising this pivotal moment, representing Mynn's thoughts.

In my experience, scoring action sequences is often prone to excessive fragmentation and a lack of direction if the composer becomes overly focused on matching the fast editing without considering the overall narrative arc. In this sense, the battle sequence in section 4 (bars 56-67) exemplifies how I managed to avoid the risk of a fragmented score while pacing the music with different shots. Firstly, the musical topic of *Epic Battle/Fighting Heroes* provides unity by offering a specific texture over which the actant themes are layered (Mynn/New Pioneers Theme and the Beast's Theme). In particular, the pattern of quavers used throughout in the background shifts a third up at each significant change of editing: at bar 59, over the wide shot of the archers, and at bar 62, in correspondence with the fast zoom-in over two soldiers. These shifts create a sense of intensification and directionality to a passage that, without them, would likely have felt jarring or even redundant.

A Case of Internal Focalisation

The New Pioneers offers a good example of how focalisation affects music choices. During the individual battle between Mynn and the Beast, there is an eyeline match sequence (bars 95-103, 2'55" - 3'04") where the girl notices the Beast's green eyes. As the animation's bible explains, these eyes are used to signify positive feelings, such as curiosity. For a moment, time appears to stand still with her thoughts, and the close shots emphasise this moment of internal focalisation. The score reflects this by cutting back from the intense pace of the battle to stay with her thoughts, literally: the Beast's motif is played in a higher register by the harp, stripped of the dark

character it was initially associated with, and resting on a static harmonic pedal. My aim here is to suggest that, as Mynn has recognised the positive side of the Beast, the Beast's theme is also imbued with that understanding.

Here, I could have chosen two other approaches:

- a) introducing a new theme for 'green eyes/curiosity'
- b) still interrupting the pace, but suggesting other emotions (fear, horror, awe, etc.)

In the first case, although introducing a new motif or theme would have clearly reinforced the change in interpretation, I thought it was too distracting. As this is a short pilot episode, presenting a new musical element almost at the end, and for the same character, would have gone against my aesthetics of music continuity, which is already challenged by the goal of keeping it isomorphic with the narrative. Furthermore, the idea of de-naturing the Beast's theme was more intriguing and multifaceted: would this variation represent Mynn's interpretation, the true nature of the Beast, or both? In the second case, suggesting other emotions was not a sensible choice: Mynn does not look scared or mesmerised, and afterwards she casts doubt on the actual danger of the Beast. We are therefore assuming this is the revelation moment for her, and music can help clarify it, however subtly and subconsciously.

The New Pioneers, while continuing the research on integrating, in a cohesive whole, musical topics, Leitmotivic writing and narrative archetypes, also offers a particularly important example of internal focalisation, and gives a closer look into the difficulties of editing changes and how to adapt to those. In para-cinematic works, while the composer is ultimately both the musician and the director of the programmatic work, such editing changes still occur, as the example of *The Three Little Piggies* will demonstrate.

Rudy Valentino – the Black-and-White Sequence

1. Context and Description

Rudy Valentino is an Italian feature comedy film released in 2017, directed by Nico Cirasola and starring Pietro Masotti and Tatiana Luter as Rudy Valentino and Natacha Rambova respectively, with Claudia Cardinale portraying Rudy's aunt. The story begins in Castellaneta, Rudy's hometown, where an amateur theatre company is staging a play about Rudy Valentino. They are unexpectedly visited by the real Rudy and Natacha in an absurd, magical-realistic tale where the past merges with the present, and theatre intertwines with reality. The excerpt analysed here is a tongue-in-cheek parody of a black-and-white film, in which Rudy and Natacha reunite after a breakup, facing the villain of the story, the Baron, before reaching the end credits of the silent film. The sequence is supposedly made by the director of the film himself that, through the words of the actor impersonating the impresario, homages Rudy and his legacy. The end credits of the black-and-white sequence merge with the end credits of the overall film; to separate the two moments, the grand finale of the sequence ends on the title 'Fine', followed by a reprise of the main theme for the credits. My aim here was to pay homage to the art of music for silent films and its attentiveness to detail. This sequence had an important role in the conception of the score, because I firstly elaborated the Baron's theme after watching it. For the soundtrack, I chose a chamber ensemble consisting of piano, violoncello, violin, Bayan accordion, classical and battente guitar, trumpet, as well as electronics and samples. This choice was mainly because the story is told in an intimate setting, often depicting episodes on a modest theatrical stage or featuring only a few characters. The characters are also very simple and plain, speaking with an obvious Puglian accent. This inspired me to incorporate folkloric instruments alongside the piano trio and guitar. The battente is, in fact, a folkloric double-string guitar used in several regions of Southern Italy, including Puglia, with a specific tuning and construction, producing a very distinct, resonant, and bright sound that I felt was ideal for certain narrative elements of the film. It also allowed me to work closely with Francesco Loccisano, a renowned performer of battente in Italy and currently the leading advocate for rediscovering this instrument in both classical and popular music. Regarding the Bayan accordion, the choice was slightly less authentic and motivated by musical considerations. In Italy, the most common folkloric accordion is the piano accordion, which is a limited instrument mainly capable of melody and accompaniment, with a standard set of traditional chords on the left hand, often of poor construction. I also wanted to collaborate with a performer I had known since my time at the Conservatoire of Frosinone, Adriano Ranieri, who specialises in the Bayan. I recorded the main ensemble (Gilda Buttà at piano, Luca Pincini at cello, Rosario Genovese at violin, Ranieri at accordion, and Stefano Alberti at trumpet) at Digital Records in Rome, while guitar and battente were recorded remotely by Salvatore Schiano and

Francesco Loccisano, respectively. Placed at the end of the film, the sequence displays most of the themes and motifs of the soundtrack, using them to tell the story as in the old times of silent cinema.

2. Musical Storytelling

	<p>Bars 1-3: The silent film opens with an iris-in, and this is matched with a short introduction in crescendo.¹²⁶</p>
	<p>As the iris-in is completed, we see Rudy riding a horse. Musically this corresponds to the solo cello playing the main theme at bars 4-8.¹²⁷ The solo cello is often associated with Rudy during the movie, and here especially.</p>
	<p>Close-up on Rudy; over the change to his inquisitive expression (intentionally exaggerated by the actor) the piano plays a short descending motif at bar 8.</p>
	<p>Rudy turns his eyes to the right, in correspondence to the same motif, varied, at piano an octave up in bar 9.</p>
	<p>Cut on Natacha, corresponding to a variation on the Theme - Part B in D minor, performed at the violin – often associated with her throughout the film – with accompaniment of cello, accordion and piano. The written card 'I lost forever my Rudy' clarifies this dramatic variation of the theme.</p>
	<p>Over Rudy's close-up, where he gets back to his inquisitive expression again, the cello performs a short motif (bar 17)</p>

¹²⁶ Permission to reproduce images from the film granted by Bunker Lab srl. An iris is 'A round, moving *mask* that can close down to end a scene (iris-out) or to emphasize a detail, or that can open to begin a scene (iris-in) or to reveal more space around a detail.' (in https://www.westga.edu/academics/university-college/writing/glossary_of_film_terms.php, accessed on 02/09/2025)

¹²⁷ Please cross-check paragraph 3 for a clarification of the thematic material.

	<p>On his surprised expression, the cello plays another short motif (bar 18)</p>
	<p>Rudy runs with his horse. The guitar plays fast arpeggios, over which the accordion performs the melody from Theme - Part B. Harmonically, this is a double pedal of E and A (A being the dominant of D minor).</p>
	<p>The dominant harmony is finally reached at bar 24, in correspondence with Rudy and his horse passing over the camera angle. This is also where the violin solo comes back to bring the attention to Natacha.</p>
	<p>Bars 24-28: over the shot of Natacha, the solo violin plays Theme - Part B in D minor. The last melodic twirl ends exactly on her looking up to Rudy (bar 28).</p>
	<p>Bars 29-31: over the close shot on Rudy, the cello plays a short phrase with the same melodic twirl at the end. This is the first sign of a reconciliation between the two, visually and musically.</p>
	<p>Bars 32-35: back to the close shot over Natacha, the violin plays another melodic phrase, derived from the Theme - part B specially in the use of repeated notes:</p>
	<p>Bars 34-38: on the close shot over Rudy, the cello answers with the same identical phrase introduced by the violin in the previous two bars, doubled with accordion. This is more evidently a sign that the two characters are reconciling, as the two instruments representing them are interacting and 'listening' to each other rather than performing in separate sections.</p>

	<p>Bars 39-42: Rudy put his hands over Natacha’s shoulders. The cello performs a solo over the dominant (A), alternating between augmented and major triad.</p>
	<p>Bars 42-44: the piano is now taking over and plays Theme - Part B, in D major. The scale leading to it is over the written card 'Natacha' (Bars 42), so that the downbeat lands over the shot of Rudy.</p>
	<p>The short hesitation at Bars 44 is timed with Rudy’s change of expression. As agreed with the director, in this sequence it was important to highlight, within reason, any facial expression to the point of almost Mickey-Mousing any of the actions.</p>
	<p>Bars 45-46: another facial expression is synched with another melodic phrase at piano:</p>  <p>The musical score for bars 45-46 is shown. It includes parts for Violin (Vln.), Cello (Vc.), Flute (Fisa.), and Piano (Pno.). The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked '05:13:30:05'. The dynamics are marked 'p' (piano) and 'con pf.' (con più forza). The score shows a melodic phrase in the piano part that is synched with a facial expression in the film still.</p> <p>Fig. 27. bars 45-46.</p>

	<p>Bars 46-47: Natasha smiles over another repetition of the previous musical phrase.</p>
	<p>Bars 47-52: the third repetition of the musical phrase leads to a coda of this section, in correspondence with the two characters holding hands.</p>
	<p>Bars 53-61: the Baron appears from a hut, with a threatening look. The battente performs the motif associated with him and in general with all the unsettling moments of the story. The phrasing goes, as usual, with the editing, culminating with the last chord at battente at bar 60 on the wide shot over him moving towards Rudy.</p>
	<p>Bars 62-64: the accordion plays the main motif for the fight, characterised by an iambic rhythm (semiquaver + dotted quaver) over the shot of Rudy leaving Natacha to fight the Baron.</p>
	<p>Bars 65-72: the camera in wide shot shows the Baron and Rudy ready to fight. The battente is added together with a sampled frame drum - the latter inspired by the Loccisano-Piccioni duo featuring these two folkloric instruments - and the rest of the ensemble in rhythmic function.</p>
	<p>Bars 73-76: climax over the moment where the Baron is pointing his gun towards Rudy, covering the card "your time is up" and the shot of Natacha looking worried.</p>
	<p>Bars 77-85: Rudy overcomes the Baron, in correspondence with the most important cello solo of the soundtrack, with fast quartal arpeggios of guitar as accompaniment. Each phrase identifies a different moment: (1) Bars 77-78: Rudy getting closer (2) Bars 78-79: Rudy grabbing the Baron's gun (3) Bars 80-82: Rudy hitting the Baron, and cut to Natacha looking over them (4) Bars 82-84: Rudy throwing the gun away and going back to Natacha, while a card says "you were right, my time is up!"</p>

	<p>Bars 86-90: over the card, the violin plays the incipit phrase of Theme - part B in D major, landing with the downbeat on the shot over her.</p>
	<p>Bars 91-95: Rudy and Natacha are reunited, and so are the two instruments representing them, violin and cello, performing the same tune in octave until Bars 92.</p>
	<p>Bars 95-100: the two share a kiss, whilst the piano takes over with a motif derived from the thematic material. At Bars 99 both look into the camera and only the bass line is left. The accented chord in upbeat into Bars 101 marks their nodding at each other.</p>
	<p>Bars 101-105: Rudy goes towards the camera and winks, whilst the sampled vibraphone plays thematic material, and pizzicato strings and guitar accompany.</p>
	<p>Bars 106-110: Rudy covers the camera with his hat, over the tutti of the chamber group ending in fortissimo.</p>

3. Conveying the Narrative

This sequence has been included in this portfolio to focus on the role of editing and *mise en scène* combined, and the Mickey-Mousing technique applied. Mickey-Mousing, as discussed in chapter 1, has been effective in conveying elements of the story and sound effects, and the fact that the sequence is a homage to silent cinema authorised me to delve deeper in details, as noted in paragraph 2. This score embodies my efforts to ensure that the technique of Mickey-Mousing does not end in slapstick / non-thematic scoring, but rather integrates seamlessly with the established thematic material.

Editing and *mise en scène*

In terms of timings, a clear tripartition of the score can be noted: the first two minutes (from 17'' to 2'17'' into film) dedicated to the lovers, a minute and a half for the duel (2'17''-3'42'') and about another minute for the lovers again (3'42'' to 4'44''). These

three sections correspond to three different scenes that have the peculiarity of being fairly 'modern' in terms of length – according to David Bordwell, between 1'50" and 3', whereas before the 1960s the average length of a scene was between 2' and 4' – but covering very few actions that could have been represented in a much more condensed, quicker, way.¹²⁸ This characteristic may be due to the fact that the sequence shows some traits of parody – the exaggerated performances of the actors, the 'acted' slow-motion of the duel, and the breaking of the fourth wall at the very end are clear clues – although overall it mainly concentrates on the shifting feelings between the two lovers. Yet the editorial tripartition already hints neatly at the dichotomy between Rudy, Natacha and the Baron. In this regard, the use of black-and-white is more than a technical feature here: narratively, it reflects the clear opposition between the lovers (Rudy and Natasha) and the villain (the Baron). For the many shades of emotions occurring between Rudy and Natacha, I used elements of the main theme, which are analysed in detail in the next sub-paragraph: these consist of strongly articulated musical phrases, which I varied texturally, harmonically and melodically, as it would be typical in an old-fashioned score. For the villain and consequent duel, I only used the theme that I label below as 'Unsettling Feelings', which is, conversely, very static harmonically, and relies on certain timbres and textures, and so is strongly opposed to the theme dedicated to the lovers. The contrast between these two elements is also underlined by stylistic traits: whilst the music used for the lovers is manneristic, intentionally targeting the exaggerated performances of both characters, 'Unsettling Feelings' is conversely quite modern and a-thematic.

Leitmotivic Writing

As said before, this sequence was particularly important for defining the core elements of the entire film. When conceptualising the score, I firstly elaborated Rudy Valentino's theme for the opening credits, then I applied and varied it to the black-and-white sequence, where I established and found the traits of the Baron's theme ('Unsettling Feelings').¹²⁹

a) Rudy Valentino's Theme

The theme is shown firstly in the opening cue, 'Overture'. The first period (bars 2-13) is where the main thematic material lies, and it is followed by a four-bar answer on the cello.

¹²⁸ See note 57.

¹²⁹ As typical in my scoring approach, in a feature-length movie, I often establish the main components based on the narrative agents of the story rather than on the chronological unfolding of the plot.

Rudy Valentino

1m1v5 - Overture

Enrica Sciandrone

8 CLICKS IN

Ironico (♩=102)

(accelerando scritto: da eseguire molto fluidamente)

mf

(Ped. simile)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

Detailed description: This figure shows the piano part of the first 13 bars of the 'Ironico' section of Rudy Valentino's Overture. The music is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 102 beats per minute. It begins with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The score features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and sixteenth notes. Pedal markings include 'Ped.' and '(Ped. simile)'. The tempo is marked as 'accelerando scritto: da eseguire molto fluidamente'. Bar numbers 1 through 13 are circled above the staff.

Fig. 28. Rudy Valentino, Overture, bars 1-13, piano part only.

Vc.

mf in risalto

Pno.

14 15 16 17 18

Detailed description: This figure shows the piano and cello parts for bars 14 through 18. The cello part (Vc.) is in the upper staff, starting with a dynamic marking of *mf in risalto*. The piano part (Pno.) is in the lower staff. Both parts feature complex rhythmic patterns with triplets and sixteenth notes. Bar numbers 14 through 18 are circled above the staff.

Fig. 29. *ibid.*, bars 14-18, piano and cello part only.

The four-bar answer is then used and developed later in the piece, becoming a proper B section in Tango style:

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vc.), Cello/Double Bass (Cb. (sample)), Flute (Fisa.), and Piano (Pno.). The score is divided into two systems, each with five numbered bars (48-52 and 53-58). The first system (bars 48-52) includes markings such as 'arco', 'mf, "tangheiro", ben cantando', and 'con vl.'. The second system (bars 53-58) includes markings like 'quasi f. emergendo', 'mf', and 'pizz.'. A large handwritten '2' is written over bars 53 and 54. The score is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature.

Fig. 30. *ibid.*, full score, bars 48-58.

For practicality, I will define this theme as Theme - Part B. it has been used in connection with Rudy's actions and with Natacha, his counterpart in the story. Both are "strangers", visiting and unsettling the quiet routine of the city of Castellaneta; therefore, their bond is reflected by sharing the same thematic material.

b) Unsettling Feelings

Throughout the film, the town people and Rudy's close family, although warmly welcoming him and Natacha, do not fully cope with their diversity. In turn, Rudy is fixated on old enemies and feelings from his past as a boy, such as his hatred towards the Baron, who used to humiliate his father, or his resentment against his brother who sold their family house to the Baron. I used the battente guitar to depict this tension because of its unusual timbral quality. When talking with Loccisano, we often referred to the battente as 'the instrument of sun' for its bright sound; but after some thought,

and almost to challenge myself, I decided to use it for all the dark, mysterious, tense moments in the film. The battente, in these contexts, usually plays a chromatic pattern in rubato, as in the following examples.

Rudy Valentino

1m7v5 - Fratelli

Enrica Sciandrone

5 CLICKS IN

Moderato (♩=101)

01:20:07:10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Chitarra Battente

rubato (come esempio audio)

mf minaccioso, da solista

rubato (come esempio audio)

♩ = 98

Piano

Fisarmonica

p *mf*

Monocordo

L.v.

Fig.31. Rudy Valentino, "Fratelli", bars 1-8.

Rudy Valentino

3m2 - 3m3 Il Barone fa paura - Silenzio tra fratelli

Enrica Sciandrone

3m2

03:01:11:03

1 2 3

Moderato (♩=60)

Violino

sul IV, tasto

p intenso

Violoncello

p

Esempio realizzazione:

Esattamente su IV quarto di battuta rubato

Esattamente su IV quarto di battuta

Chitarra Battente

mp minaccioso

mp minaccioso

Glassarmonica (sample)

Synth

Fig. 32. Rudy Valentino, 3m2-3m3, bars 1-3.

Throughout the score, the Unsettling Feeling idea represents the transgression that is defeated by Rudy's Theme, in a typical romantic narrative.

Summing up, the Black-and-White Sequence is an opportunity to show at the same time

- How the parodic editing and *mise en scène*, so clear in distinguishing the lovers/villain dichotomy (as black and white as the sequence itself) implies an equally radical distinction of the narrative themes
- How the themes coexist with an exact Mickey-Mousing technique, which in this particular case was rather challenging and satisfying at the same time.

The Saint – WSA Finalist Piece

1. Context and Description

This piece is a re-score of the 1960s TV show *The Saint*, starring Roger Moore. The title sequence was submitted for the 2016 Sabam Best Young Composer Awards in Ghent, part of the globally renowned World Soundtrack Awards programme. The contest is considered one of the most significant in film scoring and also one of the most demanding, requiring the preparation of a realistic mock-up, a full score, and parts for the specified orchestral line-up. Each year, only three composers are chosen worldwide as finalists. The three pieces are performed during the award ceremony by the Brussels Philharmonic Orchestra. My piece did not win, but I received high praise from Dirk Brossé, the conductor and head of the jury, as well as all the jury members. This title sequence is a peculiar case because it involves no storytelling. The animated sequence depicts a stylised cartoon figure with a halo walking, climbing, and running through different environments, finally sitting down on a chair over the opening titles. I also consider this opening title a good example of music synchronised with the animation's kinetics, in a Mickey-Mousing, old-school scoring style. As part of my initial approach, I gathered information about the original TV show, a mystery series with elements of fantasy and irony. Main title music should 'establish the overall tone and attitude of the film or prime the audience's expectations of what will follow'. It often requires saying things 'very simply and very quickly' and maintaining a strong sense of consistency (i.e., by keeping the musical material in the same key and overall tone). Looking at the original score by Edwin Astley, it struck me how he established two contrasting ideas: the first, most prevalent, in a symphonic jazz style, and the second, a concise B section, with a more romantic flavour, apparently written by Leslie Charteris for the American radio adaptation of *The Saint* based on Simon Templar and re-arranged by Astley in this version. The original scoring does not follow the animation too closely in favour of establishing a pleasant earworm that summarises the overall narrative of the series. My approach in this regard was different: although I opted to use a symphonic jazz style as well, I wanted to score the animation more closely whilst maintaining consistency throughout. The outcome is less of a strong title theme and more of a symphonic divertissement, closely synced with the animation using Mickey-Mousing techniques based on two complementary ideas. The first is built around a short four-note motif, over which I applied various motivic and rhythmic developments. The second is a cantabile theme used in the central part of the sequence. One compelling goal in my score was to bring life and rhythm to very static 2D images, where very often the stylised man remains motionless. This is why there is almost constantly a quaver motor throughout the score.

2. Musical Storytelling

In order to efficiently describe the Mickey-Mousing technique used throughout, I divided the table between visual and musical events.

INTRO	Bars 1-36
Close up on Roger Moore	Flutes and clarinets play trills in pianissimo
He looks up	Runs at flutes, clarinets, celesta and harp (bar 4). The celesta is added to suggest both magic and light ¹³⁰
The animated halo appears	Pizzicato and vibraphone are in sync with the halo's appearance. The shimmering texture at flutes and clarinets, together with arpeggios at celesta, represent the almost magical, dream-like moment
Fade to black	Bars 6-7 - texture continues
The halo floats around	Bars 8-12: flutes and clarinets move by one step up and down; the arpeggio figure matches the floating movement
Crossfade	Held harmony, cymbal roll swelling through (bar 12)
Staircase	End of cymbal roll, held chord - wider range given with the introduction of cellos and basses (bar 13)
The halo bounces down the stairs	Harp and pizzicato in hard sync with the halo in a descending gesture (bars 13-19)
A stylized man (the saint) slides on the handrail, then stops and stands up the stairs	<p>No gesture has been given to the sliding, but the clarinet's exposition of motif A is in sync with where the Saint stops (bar 21)</p> <p>The overall gesture of falling down the stairs (both the halo and the man) is also symbolised by the stepwise descending harmony from bar 13 to 19, landing on a dominant chord with</p>

¹³⁰ See p. 137 for more details about the topic of *magic* and the traditional use of celesta associated to it.

<p>The Saint comes down the stair very slowly, picks up the halo and puts it on his head</p>	<p>omitted 3rd</p> <p>Double bass in pizzicato in hard sync with the Saint's steps playing motif A in augmentation, followed by a section where motif A is introduced repeatedly at pizzicato and solo clarinet; from bar 32 a dominant pedal leads the crescendo into the next section</p>
<p>TITLE CARD</p> <p>The title card appears</p> <p>Colonnade</p> <p>The Saints disappears behind a column</p> <p>...and reappears further down, moving swiftly between the columns, putting back the letter 'O' of Roger where it should be</p> <p>The Saint lands over a bookshelf</p> <p>Zoom in, the Saint hides</p> <p>...and peeps again</p>	<p>Bars 37-57</p> <p>Orchestral tutti over the opening rhythmic gesture</p> <p>The last note of the opening gesture lands on the colonnade card (bar 40, last quaver)</p> <p>Horn swells and timpani upbeat into bar 42</p> <p>Clarinets and piano play motif A, opening gesture when the 'Roger Moore' credit is finally stable (bars 42-47)</p> <p>Clarinets and piano play motif A, second phrase (bars 48-51)</p> <p>Snare roll (bar 51)</p> <p>Opening gesture to highlight the 'Fiction-makers' card (bars 52-57)</p> <p>The title card section is structured as an alternance of motif A and the opening gesture; this is also reflected in the orchestration, favouring orchestral tutti when performing the opening gesture, and reduced forces when playing motif A (clarinets and piano). Visually, the motivic-timbrical alternance matches that of the Saint's actions (hiding between the columns, wiggling hands in the bookshelf) versus the different credits (titles, 'Roger Moore' and 'Fiction-Makers')</p>

<p>BAR</p> <p>The Saint in a Bars</p>	<p>Bars 58-69</p> <p>Motif A in another variation, choreographing the different moves of the character, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bar 60: he is held back by the halo; - Bars 61-62 beat 1: he gets rid of the halo; - Bar 62 beat 2: he makes a gesture with the hand to show that he placed the halo on the stool
<p>The Saint in free fall</p>	<p>The quaver pulse pauses, and the free fall is represented by runs at woodwinds over a bed of string tremolos and brass holding an E major seventh chord</p>
<p>THE ROSE, THE SWORD, GREEN SEQUENCE</p> <p>The Saint lands over a rose in a woman's dressed bosom</p> <p>A sword suddenly appears from the left and impales the halo</p> <p>Green sequence: the Saint walks towards a public phone cabin</p> <p>The halo stops over the cabin and the Saint stays still inside</p> <p>The Saint gets out from a house</p>	<p>Bars 70-100</p> <p>High strings play Theme B, low strings play motif A in augmentation, motif A is used in accompaniment, the motor of quaver is reinstated (bars 70-76). In my interpretation this shot seemed to assume that the show will have some romantic elements. In the original scoring, there was also a romantic B theme - in fact, the re-arrangement of Charteris' theme - playing over this part of the sequence.</p> <p>Timpani rolls at bar 77 mimic the sword's movement, the hit point at bar 78 highlights the impaling of the halo. This is further marked by motif A being used in middleground (as answering phrase) at bars 78-81, in <i>mezzoforte</i></p> <p>Repetition of motif A + talea 2 in a higher, different texture (harp and vibraphone only)</p> <p>Theme B consequent (bars 85-88) over a quaver gesture in background</p> <p>Theme B consequent continues; the quaver gesture heads to motif A talea and contrary motion (bars 90-91)</p>

<p>New titles are formed, the Saint makes a gesture to stop them where they are</p>	<p>Theme B antecedent repeats, motif B <i>divertissement</i> in background</p> <p>After this moment I thought that the romantic vibe of theme B was no longer necessary, therefore it gradually subsides until relegated to middleground or background element</p>
<p>RED SEQUENCE</p> <p>The Saint stands over a typewriter on a red background, moving quickly over different letters</p> <p>..he sits, seemingly exhausted</p> <p>A horn instrument over red background, the Saint now reduced to a small white ball travelling through the horn's tube until thrown with notes</p> <p>The Saint sits still, seemingly more exhausted or annoyed (he scratches his head like if he banged it in the fall)</p> <p>He kicks the notes and hurts his feet</p> <p>He stands still while the background changes again</p> <p>The Saint switches on the first spotlight</p> <p>He continues with the other two spotlights</p>	<p>Bars 101-132</p> <p>Low double reeds (bassoons and cor anglais) play motif A (bars 101-103)</p> <p>Theme B antecedent in foreground, motif A <i>divertissement</i> in background (bars 104-107)</p> <p>2 horns play motif A with a different conclusion (bars 108-110)</p> <p>Theme B antecedent over a different harmonisation (bars 111-114)</p> <p>Talea of motif A in contrary motion (bars 115-117) followed by motif A and different conclusion (bars 118-121). To realise the idea of anger I wrote random clusters in the piano part.</p> <p>At bar 121 the phrase and clusters end on a chord of A minor</p> <p>Swells at bar 123 (cymbal rolls, harp glissando and flutes and clarinets runs)</p> <p>Motif A (now theme A) plays from bar 124 to 128, ending exactly when he finishes with the lights</p>

<p>BLUE SEQUENCE</p> <p>A light on the top left corner appears</p> <p>New credits fall down suddenly, the Saint, dodges them swiftly</p>	<p>Bars 133-141</p> <p>Sync with the triangle semiquaver figure at bar 133 Theme A continues in tutti</p> <p>Cymbal rolls at bar 135 Theme A continues in tutti</p>
<p>RIVERSIDE</p> <p>The Saint stands over the riverside wall. Credits appear, he pushes them further away</p> <p>He falls on the floor</p>	<p>Bars 142-159</p> <p>Prepared by cymbal rolls before, hit point at bar 142. The orchestration here temporarily scales down a bit for variety. Clarinet playing motif A is followed by cor anglais playing the antecedent of theme B (bars 145-152). In the background, the quaver figure at bars 148-149 mimic the Saint pushing away the credits and moving again</p> <p>Clarinet plays motif A, followed by trumpet playing material derived from theme B. The phrase at the trumpet is contracted (in four bars rather than 5) because of the next sync point</p>
<p>LAMPLIGHT</p> <p>The Saint is up on a lamplight, and switch it on</p>	<p>Bars 160-167</p> <p>Bar 160 signals the new scene, whilst the quaver gesture ending at bar 161 is in sync with his gesture of switching on the lamp.</p> <p>Theme A follows in quasi-orchestral tutti.</p>
<p>PHONE and ENDING</p> <p>An old phone appears, the Saint walks towards it and spins the phone wheel</p> <p>The card revealing the producer's name appears</p>	<p>Bars 168-184</p> <p>Crotchets in marcato highlight the Saint's walking pace. The spinning gesture is partly mimicked by the harp glissando in bar 171</p> <p>Swell to hit the card appearance, theme A in tutti (bars 172-177). Conventionally, producer's and director's credits are at the end</p>

<p>The halo swiftly moves around, the Saint appears sat on a chair outside. The halo stops over his head and the Saint points at the director's credit</p>	<p>of the opening titles, so I thought to give some special importance to those with the orchestration</p> <p>The thematic scale at bars 178-180 syncs well with the fast, scatty movement of the halo. The landing note (Bar 181) is in sync with the director's credit</p>
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3. Conveying The Narrative

More than in any other piece of this portfolio, *The Saints* demonstrates a continual effort to utilise Mickey-Mousing while maintaining musical coherence. To achieve this, the Leitmotivic writing involves a complex interplay between a very short motif and a more developed theme, while the most prominent feature through the score is what I defined as the musical topic of *Cartoonesque Flamboyance*.

Musical Topic of *Cartoonesque Flamboyance*

In the programme notes to his *Chamber Symphony* (1992), John Adams stated that he borrowed from 'the hyperactive, insistently aggressive and acrobatic scores for the cartoons', a kind of music that 'was at once flamboyantly virtuosic and polyphonic'.¹³¹ But what are the musical gestures responsible for such qualities? After due research – mainly consisting of analysing music by Scott Bradley for the *Tom and Jerry* series and John Adams' score – I could discern the following recurring musical traits. These, according to Gabriellsson and Lindstrom, are also used to express gaiety, amusement, excitement:¹³²

- Frequent intervallic leaps
- Fast tempo
- Syncopation
- Frequent changes in timbre, structure, tempo and meter
- Short values, often in staccato¹³³

¹³¹ Programme notes to John Adams' *Chamber Symphony*. Accessed 3 October 2015. <http://www.boosey.com/cr/music/John-Adams-Chamber-Symphony/3670>

¹³² Patrick N. Juslin, and John A. Sloboda. *Handbook of Music and Emotion. Theory, Research, Applications* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), table 14.2.

¹³³ I excluded jazz harmony from the list of qualities for the music topic of *Cartoonesque Flamboyance*, as I believe it is a trait much less universal than the others; in fact, both Scott Bradley and John Adams' use of twelve-tone techniques prove that the topic could be equally effective by using different techniques / harmonies / styles.

Here, for instance, is a comparison between two different scores. The first is a short transcription of the twelve-tone pattern used by Scott Bradley to represent the 'grotesque and funny' scene of Jerry the mouse 'running around with the mask of a dog over his head' in *Puttin' on The Dog* (1944).¹³⁴

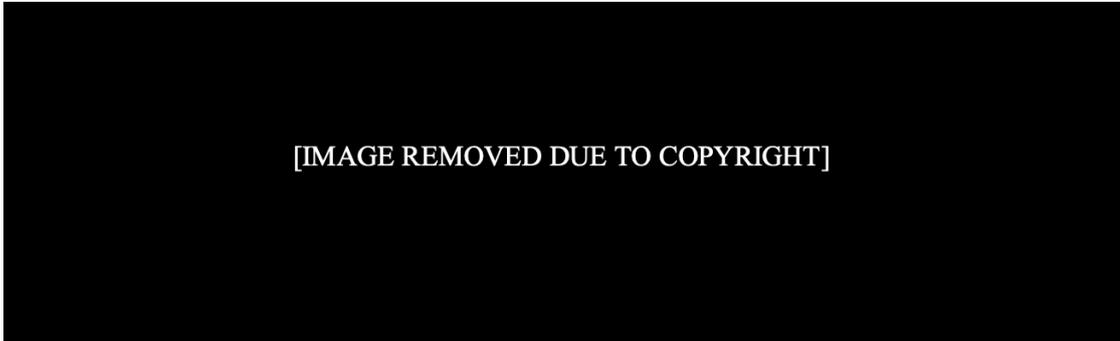
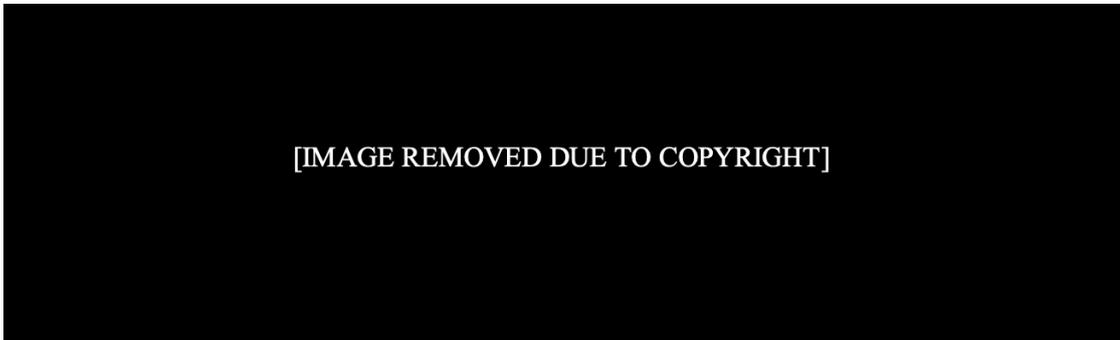


Fig. 33. Twelve-tone motif in *Puttin' on The Dog*; transcription.

Fast, staccato notes with frequent melodic jumps are characteristic of this example and of the entire soundtrack, whose main theme has jazz influences in its harmony and use of syncopation.

The following example is taken from John Adams' *Roadrunner*, the final movement of his *Chamber Symphony*, where the consistency with the main features of the musical topic is particularly evident, also given the fast tempo of the composition (152 BPM).



¹³⁴ Daniel Goldmark, *Tunes for 'Toons* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 2002), 118.



Fig. 34. J. Adams, *Roadrunner* (1992: 76)

The melodic contour, pace, syncopations, and texture in this score reflect the main qualities of the topic.

Cartoonesque Flamboyance is a topic that originated within film music; in fact, when trying to compare it with topics in the 18th and 19th centuries, the similarities ended at a generic level. The closest style (or topic, for Agawu) in instrumental and vocal music is the *scherzo*, which defines a fast-paced piece with unexpected contrasts in dynamics, orchestration and character.¹³⁵ *Cartoonesque Flamboyance* however appears to rely upon the consistent use of Mickey-Mousing, suggesting that there is limited merit to finding antecedents in longer traditions of instrumental and vocal music, where (as explained in Chapter I) the use of onomatopoeia was very sporadic.

Leitmotivic Writing

a) Motif A

Motif A features a melodic contour from the I to the V in A minor, characterised by the raised 4th degree typical of the blues scale. It essentially comprises the first four notes

¹³⁵ Agawu mentions it in *Music as Discourse: Semiotic Adventures in Romantic Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 47-48, in relation to Mahler.

of the blues scale in A minor. Its talea consists of three quavers followed by a syncopated and accented crotchet.



Fig. 35. *The Saint*, motif A talea.

This motif or its talea is used throughout the score either on its own or as the matrix for differently ending phrases, applying various motivic treatments that can be traced back to contrapuntal techniques. In the *intro* section, for instance, there are several quotes of it disseminated in bar 21 (clarinet solo), bars 28 and 29 before leading into a short phrase at bars 30-32, as shown in fig. 36. Later, over the *Title Card* section, the motif is followed by a different conclusion (bars 42-46), while its talea is used for the phrase at bars 48-51 (fig. 37). In bar 58 (*Bar* section), the talea is applied over the four notes of the motif in a different order, followed by a more extended conclusion (fig. 38). From bars 70 to 83, the motif and its talea serve as the accompaniment to motif B. Fig. 39 also shows the introduction of a new rhythmic cell, the transposition of the motif over the 5th degree, and the augmentation of the motif's colour over the bass line (bars 70-74). For practical reasons, I have named the treatment of the accompaniment in bars 70-76 as 'Motif A *divertissement*'; this is repeated at bars 93-99 and 104-110. Displacement and contrary motion are employed at bars 90-92 and 115-116 (fig. 40). From bars 124 to 142, the motif is organised into its longest thematic stretch, which will be repurposed again over the finale, beginning at bar 163. My original plan was to develop a proper theme using this motif only towards the end, working backwards to seed hints and clues, so that when the theme is fully realised, it already sounds familiar.

Piano Reduction

19

25

30

Fig. 36. *The Saint*, reduction with analysis, bars 19-36.

Musical notation for bars 42-51. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The starting dynamic is *f*. A bracket labeled "Motif A" spans bars 42-47. A second bracket labeled "conclusion 2" spans bars 47-51. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes with various accidentals, ending with a long note in bar 51.

Musical notation for bars 48-51. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The starting dynamic is *f*. A bracket labeled "Talea Motif A" spans bars 48-50. A bracket labeled "conclusion 1" spans bars 50-51. The melody continues with eighth and quarter notes, ending with a long note in bar 51.

Fig. 37. *ibid.*, motivic analysis, bars 42-51.

Musical notation for bars 58-64. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The starting dynamic is *mf*. A box labeled "BAR" is positioned above the first bar. A bracket labeled "Talea of Motif A (notes from Motif A, different order)" spans bars 58-63. A bracket labeled "conclusion 3 (longer phrase)" spans bars 63-64. The melody features eighth and quarter notes with various accidentals, ending with a long note in bar 64.

Fig. 38. *ibid.*, motivic analysis, bars 58-64.

THE ROSE Motif A *divertissement*

Musical score for 'THE ROSE' starting at bar 70. The score is in treble and bass clefs. The treble clef part begins with a melodic motif labeled 'Motif A'. This motif is then varied in several ways: 'divertissement using notes of Motif A in different order. Talea 2', 'Talea of Motif A', and 'divertissement using notes of Motif A'. The bass clef part provides a harmonic accompaniment. Dynamics include *f* and *legato, lush*. A label 'Color of Motif A, augmented' is placed below the bass clef part.

THE SWORD

Musical score for 'THE SWORD' starting at bar 77. The score is in treble and bass clefs. The treble clef part features a 'Talea of Motif A' and 'Motif A on the 5th degree'. The bass clef part has a sustained accompaniment. Dynamics include *mf*. A label 'Talea 2' is placed below the treble clef part.

GREEN SEQUENCE

Musical score for 'GREEN SEQUENCE' starting at bar 82. The score is in treble and bass clefs. The treble clef part shows a 'Repetition of melodic material in bar 78-81'. The bass clef part has a sustained accompaniment. Dynamics include *mf*.

Fig. 39. *ibid.*, motivic analysis, bars 70-84.

Fig. 40. *ibid.*, motivic analysis, bars 90-93 and 115-117.

Fig. 41. *ibid.*, motivic analysis, bars 124-141.

b) Theme B

Theme B has an opposite character to motif A and its derivations. It is a lush, *cantabile* theme that appears at bar 70, over *The Rose* sequence, and continues long until bar 100.

THE ROSE

THE SWORD

Theme B: antecedent

GREEN SEQUENCE

secondary phrase to antecedent

Theme B: consequent

antecedent phrase in middleground

Fig. 42. *ibid.*, motivic analysis, bars 78-100.

It is structured with an antecedent and a consequent, with a coda from bar 93 that restores the antecedent phrase. Not only does it differ from motif A in articulation (legato instead of staccato and accented notes), construction (more traditional statement rather than micro-developments of the motif), tala (absence of syncopations), but also in the way it is presented in the piece. While motif A is dispersed throughout the work before being finally organised into a more extended theme from bar 124, theme B does the opposite: firstly, it is presented in full from bar 70, then used only in secondary or answer phrases to motif A statements. The reasons for this choice have been explained in paragraph 2.

Reprise of Motif A *divertissement*

104 *p*

legato *mf* bring out

mf

Motif A

conclusion 5

f bring out

Theme B - from antecedent

111 *fp*

f bring out

div.

mf

Talea Motif A

Theme B - from antecedent

Fig. 43. *ibid.*, reduction of an example of theme B used as secondary/answer phrase, bars 104-115.

c) Opening/closing rhythmic gesture

This gesture is only used at the piece's opening and towards the end. It is linked with the formation of the title card and has a driving quality given using syncopations. The main rhythmic cell is as follows:

TITLE CARD

37

Opening Rhythmic Gesture - main rhythm

continuation

Motif A

conclusion 2

Opening Rhythmic Gesture - main rhythm

42

f

f

Talea Motif A

conclusion 1'

Talea Motif A

48

f

ff

52

Variation (repetition of the first two accents, displaced by a quaver)

Fig. 44. *ibid.*, rhythmic cell and its recurrence, bars 37-57 (bass clef omitted).

The rhythm comes back towards the end as an enhancer of the final climax:

The musical score reduction shows three staves (Treble, Middle, Bass) for bars 178-184. The Treble staff begins with a melodic line marked *fp* and includes a box labeled 'Opening Gesture'. The Middle staff provides harmonic support with slurs and accents, also marked *fp*. The Bass staff features a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs and accents, marked *f*. The piece concludes with a final climax marked *ff* across all staves.

Fig. 45. *ibid.*, reduction, bars 178-184.

d) Interactions Between Ideas

To simplify the way the ideas are organised - motif A leading to Theme A, Theme B, opening rhythmic gesture - here a break-down of the thematic structure of the piece:

- Bars 1-70: motif A, in dialogue with the opening rhythmic gesture from bar 37
- Bars 70-100: theme B in foreground, motif A as accompaniment or middleground
- Bars 101-114: motif A and theme B alternated, motif A *divertissement* in background
- Bars 115-123: motif A only
- Bars 124-144: theme A is formed
- Bars 145-162: motif A in foreground, theme B in middleground
- Bars 163-end: theme A in foreground, talea of theme B in the background (high strings and high woodwinds) only from bar 163 to 167. Opening rhythmic gesture comes back at bar 178 in background

The nature of motif A is very versatile, whilst theme B is more traditionally structured; the overall trajectory of the piece is the victory of the transgression (motif A) over order (theme B), in a typical ironic narrative archetype.

The Saint provides another chance to observe Mickey-Mousing in action with a quite intense score (possibly overly intricate for a title sequence). The highly

stylised animation and narrative truly allowed me to perfect my skills in this area, while maintaining thematic consistency. It is also worth noting that the topic of *Cartoonesque Flamboyance* has been applied to the para-cinematic piece *Cat and Mouse* (2015), offering an opportunity to explore how it functions away from an associated image, a question that is further pursued in the next chapter.

Conclusion

This portfolio of isomorphic soundtracks aims to demonstrate the priorities in my own practice, with a particular focus on isomorphism at one end (sub-question 1), and musical coherence at the other (sub-question 4). Isomorphism is achieved through a number of devices, which I have identified as musical topics, Leitmotivic writing, editing and montage, focalisation, and *mise en scène*.

Musical topics and Leitmotivic writing establish the main musical and narrative elements: topics are based on my initial observation of genres and musical parameters in film music (as, for instance, in Karlin and Wright's *On The Track*),¹³⁶ supported by studies on musical topics, while Leitmotivic writing closely aligns with the main narrative agents I analysed in the story, making use of Almén's approach. Both are strictly musical devices and, in this sense, are closely connected to traditional narrative devices used in instrumental and vocal music. Through analysing the main musical topics, it also becomes evident that they all have some degree of connection with topics employed in 19th and 20th-century music, with the possible exceptions of *Cartoonesque Flamboyance* and, to a lesser extent, *Fantastic Flight*. In the first case, although its roots can be traced back to comedy music and the scherzo, the distinctive feature is its quotation of a film genre. *Fantastic Flight* probably relates to the topic of *fantasia* or to impressionistic gestures from Stravinsky, Debussy, or Ravel, but its peculiarity appears to have been defined within film music.

Editing and montage affect musical form, as does the use of Mickey-Mousing (*Luminaris*, *The Saints*, *Rudy Valentino*). The isomorphism here relates to the technical question of structure. The black-and-white sequence in *Rudy Valentino* also shows that longer scenes affect thematic length and complexity. The isomorphism involved in tracking the camera movements and focalisation, which shift attention between internal states rather than external events (*The New Pioneers*, *Suckablood*), is both technical – in the sense of tracking a technical device's trajectory – and narrative, as it shifts the narration to a new point of view.

Mise en scène has proven to be a subtle yet powerful device, influencing not only orchestration but also stylistic traits and orchestral elements. The dark tones of *Suckablood* or the bright colours of *Luminaris* have corresponding renditions in my orchestration. The pixilation technique in *Luminaris* also suggests the presence of a constant motor (almost a continuous Mickey-Mousing applied to the stylistic representation of the animation), while in *Rudy Valentino* the manneristic representation affects the old-fashioned style chosen for the music.

¹³⁶ See p.18.

In this universe of possible devices, it was crucial to me to keep the music coherent and cohesive. In this sense, my work advances existing practice by unifying all these elements together, through an Almènian reduction of the narrative to two main thematic elements – if not just one, as in the piece which started my personal research, *Luminaris*.

CHAPTER III - Para-cinematic Works

The second part of the portfolio examines the applications of isomorphic narrative devices in para-cinematic works. In Chapter II, I demonstrated how these devices collaborate to shape the score (sub-question 1) and how I unify them into a coherent whole (sub-question 4); it is now time to consider how these devices can be deployed in para-cinematic compositions to amplify music's potential to convey extra-musical content (sub-question 2) and how the compositional approach is affected (sub-question 3).

The main core of this group of works is based on the Brothers Grimm's fairy tales: *Cinderella*, *Cat and Mouse in Partnership*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Rapunzel*, *Et Resurrexit (Snow White's Funeral)*, *Frog Prince* and *Bremen Town Musicians*. The focus on fairy tales – albeit not from the same source – is also found in *The Three Little Piggies*, and in *Cetreria de Reyes*.¹³⁷

Why Fairy Tales

The reason for choosing fairy tales is to provide a clear framework: all are familiar stories from our European culture (even in *Cetreria*, the characters are part of a historical context that audiences, especially Spanish ones, understand well), featuring stereotypical characters (falling into Propp's character types: the hero, the villain, etc.), and following a linear development. Simplifying the characters' personalities allows me to focus on a limited set of emotions while primarily concentrating on the story's narrative arc.

Fairy tales have been central to narratological discussions, for their simple and accessible form and for their value as a depository of cultural traditions. In narratological theory, the distinction between the syntagmatic and paradigmatic elements of narrative is fundamental, providing complementary perspectives through which language and storytelling can be analysed; it is helpful to clarify these concepts before proceeding further.¹³⁸

A syntagmatic narrative refers to the way elements within a narrative sequence are ordered in a linear fashion, focusing on the relationships and progressions between events. This can be understood as a series of connected events that follow one another causally, creating a storyline that the audience can follow. In contrast, paradigmatic narratives involve the oppositional relationships between elements that are not necessarily sequential; they explore choices among various components that

¹³⁷ As for *The Three Little Piggies*, the story appears for the first time in James Halliwell-Phillipps, *The Nursery Rhymes of England* (London and New York, c.1886). *Cetreria de Reyes* is, in essence, a fictional tale based on historical characters.

¹³⁸ See following footnotes for bibliography.

could be utilised in the narrative, highlighting underlying structures of meaning, such as cultural codes and values.

The contributions of Vladimir Propp and Claude Lévi-Strauss to narrative theory illustrate the important frameworks of syntagmatic and paradigmatic approaches. Propp's morphologies of folktales, focusing on the syntagmatic structure, categorize narrative components based on the functions of characters and the sequences of events, effectively outlining a formalized yet systematic approach to storytelling.¹³⁹ Conversely, Lévi-Strauss extends the paradigmatic approach by recognizing that narratives are structured around binary oppositions—such as life/death and nature/culture—that serve not only to create meaning but also to reflect the complexities of human societies.¹⁴⁰ This opposition is essential in Lévi-Strauss's structuralism, which seeks to uncover the universal patterns underlying diverse cultural narratives.

My approach to para-cinematic narrative takes into consideration both: the syntagmatic, through punctually following a linear structure (as represented by the imaginary editing planned for each work) and the paradigmatic, through the dichotomy suggested by narrative archetypes and then translated into recurring musical themes.

A further reason to dwell upon fairy tales is that we have a rich literature of them through Disney's productions, whose importance is hard to ignore; as Tracey Mollet noticed, although this did not go without criticisms, undoubtedly Disney contributed to forge the American rendition of traditional fairy tales, which was consequently exported worldwide.¹⁴¹ Through them, many visual and musical topics have been codified, which have influenced the way I conceived my own works.

Compositional Challenges and Common Traits

With the exception of *Cetreria* and *Bremen Town Musicians*, these works are not commissioned: this gave me more freedom to experiment, research, implement my ideas, and utilise the orchestral palette freely. For instance, in playing with cinematic conventions and concert music, I have challenged the boundaries of both: while *Cat And Mouse*, *Et Resurrexit*, *Cinderella* and *The Three Little Piggies* are written in a tonal, familiar idiom, the other works (*Hansel and Gretel*, *Frog Prince*, *Bremen Town*

¹³⁹ Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, translated by Laurence Scott, Ed. 2. Houston: University of Texas Press, 1968 (originally published in 1928).

¹⁴⁰ Albert Doja. "From Neolithic Naturalness to Tristes Tropiques The Emergence of Lévi-Strauss's New" in *Theory, Culture and Society*. 25. 77–100. 10.1177/0263276407090015.

¹⁴¹ Tracey Mollet, "With a smile and a song..." *Walt Disney and the Birth of the American Fairy Tale*, in *Marvels & Tales*, Wayne State University Press (2013), pp.109-124.

Musicians and, to a lesser extent, *Rapunzel*) attempt, in different ways, to explore a more complex musical language.

The basic plot of each story is either covered in full (as in *Cat and Mouse* or *Bremen Town Musicians*) or only partially. In the latter case, I have focused on a key moment of the story. Each piece lasts up to five minutes, reflecting the average length of a music cue.¹⁴²

Overall, this group offers a good umbrella of narrative archetypes:

- One example of tragedy (*Hansel and Gretel*)
- Two examples of irony (*Rapunzel* and *The Three Little Piggies*)
- Two examples of romance (*Cinderella*, *Frog Prince*)
- One example of comedy (*Cat and Mouse*)
- Three examples of changing narratives (*Cetreaia*, *Et Resurrexit* and *Bremen Town Musicians*) due to the multiple settings and events of the stories.

As stated in chapter I, an important contribution of my research is to propose a selection of new musical topics that are central to my compositions and which derive in various ways from conventions in previous film music and earlier classical compositions. The exploration of musical topics in my para-cinematic works has led me to identify a few more, in addition to those already covered in my cinematic works; for each, as always and appropriately, I trace any potential derivation from the musical literature of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Methodology

This section demonstrates how to create a strict para-cinematic programme in practice, how this influences compositional choices, and how this approach differs from the writing methods for both traditional programmatic music and film scoring. The process of developing a para-cinematic framework, used as a basis for composing music, has been refined over ten years, reaching its culmination with *The Three Little Piggies*. Aware of the challenges in applying isomorphism without a parallel image, I focused on creating the blueprint for imaginary animations by setting up the editing structure and camera shots in my DAW, using marker tracks. To plan the key moments of the para-cinematic programme, I create three marker tracks, assigned to the story, the editing/montage choices, and the music. In the story timeline, I input the main moments of the plot to give me an overall sense of the length and pace of

¹⁴² *Frog Prince* (6'11'') is the only exception, where I wanted to describe most of the story rather than focusing on a specific moment; in fact, as the story unfolds over different settings – the dinner, the flashback, the bedroom), *Frog Prince* can be seen as a succession of different cues. Similarly, *Bremen Town Musicians* is divided in three movements, each lasting within 5 minutes, as three different cues. Please refer to Appendix II for a short statistic on cue lengths.

the events; in the edit timeline, I establish the camera focus, type of shots, fade-outs, and cuts; in the music timeline, I note the musical gestures and choices meant to represent the narrative and the editing.

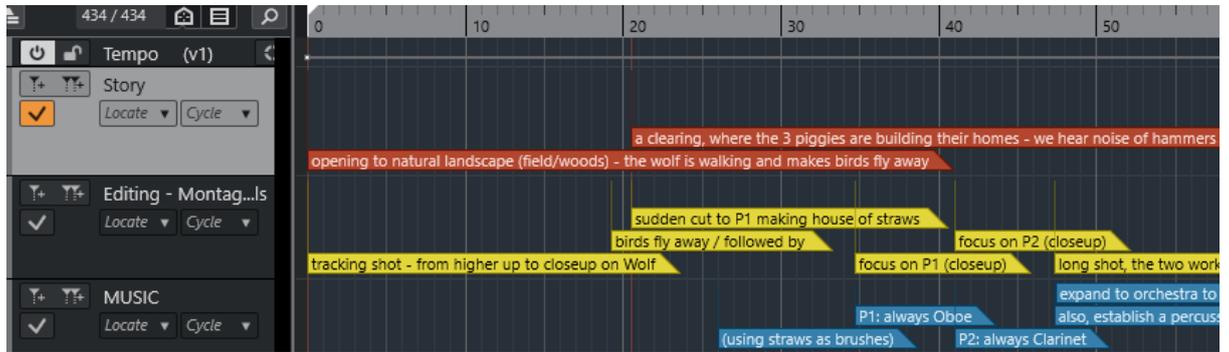


Fig. 46: a snapshot of the marker tracks in Cubase.

After the initial sketches of themes and motifs, usually created both on paper and as an approximate mockup, I generally start composing the mockup directly in the DAW, following the same principle I use in film music: the assigned syncs cannot be moved, as they define the chosen structure. The method for determining the length of a section and its relative syncs is simple but effective:

- I press play from a specific point on the timeline.
- As the cursor runs, I press a key associated with the command 'add position marker' whenever I imagine a particular camera movement, montage, or editing change.
- I repeat this process five times on new marker tracks (in older versions of Cubase, this was not possible, so I did it blindly on the same marker track). The final decision on each synch point is therefore based on the average timing with these five attempts.

There are a few exceptions to this procedure:

- in *Cetperia*, the pace of the storyline was provided by the voiceover provided, therefore a structure was already provided
- in *Bremen Town Musicians* I based some sections on the rhythmical translation of the lines written in Philip Pullman's rendition of the tale. To do that, I recorded those lines myself and then transcribed the spoken words into melodic rhythm
- in *Cat and Mouse*, the original BPM of the mockup had to be slowed down a few points for a better and more secure live performance
- in *Frog Prince* I recorded myself retelling the story from the original translation, to simplify the process.

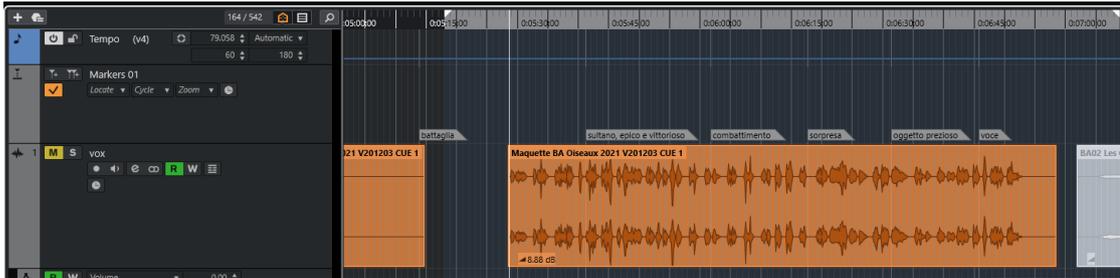


Fig. 47: screenshot for *Cetreria*, showing the V.O. audio file.

It is clear that this approach to work introduces structural para-cinematic limitations to the music: while a programmatic concert piece does not necessarily have any time restrictions apart from following the narrative arc of the story, in my para-cinematic works the editing rhythm is crucial in shaping the structure of the piece. A reduction in time would cause a developing section to be shorter, a jump cut to provoke a sudden change in orchestration, and so forth. In other words, para-cinematic compositions convey not only a story through music but also a specific way of storytelling: the cinematic language.

This approach also involves a lot of back and forth between pencil-and-paper writing and mockup production, which is quite different from traditional concert music composition. Frequently, when the music was particularly complex, I had to step away from the DAW and write the orchestration on paper: this was usually the case when a developmental section needed to fit a certain number of bars or when I wanted to ensure the mockup would work in a live recording. In *Hansel and Gretel*, for example, the ideation of the alea was initially done on paper because it was quicker than programming it into the DAW. In this respect, this methodology also differs from how I would approach a film score: very often, film music composers are drawn to the sound they hear from the mockup, which can sometimes be unrealistic or mask musical mistakes through incorrect dynamic settings. Sometimes, we even adapt to the sample libraries and computer capabilities, resulting in simplified writing. In contrast, my para-cinematic pieces required me to combine the best of both worlds: delivering refined concert scores, despite the limitations of my sample libraries, alongside clear mockups and recordings.

Cetreria De Reyes - Introduction

1. Context and Description

This piece was composed to introduce the live show *La Cetreria de Reyes* (Royal Falconry) within Puy Du Fuy Espana theme park, which opened in March 2021 in Toledo, Spain. In the show, a pseudo-historical narration is interspersed with a falconry show. Although not written for a visual sequence, this work is para-cinematic in that 1) it uses the same conventions of film music, as a prologue where the music follows a sequence of events narrated by the voice-over, and 2) the producer of the show explicitly asked me to write the music as score to an imagined movie. The story is centred around the historical defeat of the caliph Abderraman The Great in Toledo by Christian Spanish soldiers; while Salama, his daughter, was trying to comfort him, the great Spanish warrior Ferdinando Gonzalez visited the caliph's camp to return Abderraman's lost golden chainmail, in exchange of his daughter's hand.

I was part of a team of composers – Nathan Stornetta, Martin Batchelar and Samuel Pegg – and in charge of designing the musical flow for this section, in which a voice-over sums up the story behind the show. This is a perfect example of musical storytelling, as the music follows each part of the story with different colours and orchestrations.

As the show was designed for a theme park, where the target audience is wide and family-oriented, we had to make the music accessible but also specific to the story. The final score was recorded at Vienna Synchron Stage on the 9th of February 2021, except for percussion (left as sampled, except for some ethnic darbukas) and soloists (recorded remotely). The orchestration was meant to be as efficient as possible, given that all three orchestral sections would have been in the same room and allowing for the eventuality of a live concert.

2. Musical Storytelling

- a) The setting of the time and introduction of Abderramàn The Great (00'10" - 00'39")

V.O. (Voice over): "Julio de 939. Era la campaña decisiva: la victoria definitiva del califato. Él, Abderramán el Magnífico, y sus cien mil guerreros, Por fin iban a acaBars con los pequeños reyes cristianos, Con esos peleones de León y Asturias, de Navarra y Galicia."

[July 939. This is the decisive battle ... the definitive victory of the great caliphate. He, the great Abderraman, and his hundred thousand warriors were finally going to finish off the little Christian kings, with those fighters from León and Asturias, from Navarra and Galicia.]

MUSIC (bars 5- 13): After 'Julio de 939', music starts with a theme based on the harmonic minor scale in A, assigned to oud, violas and cellos:

Maestoso (♩ = 53)

Oud A w / celli&va

9

Fig. 48. Introduction, oud part, bars 1-13.

Darbukas create a percussive/ethnic support and snare drums provide the militaristic setting. These elements support the presentation of the Caliph both in terms of his cultural background and as a man of war. As a subtle nod to Mediaeval times, I used a dulcimer providing harmonic support on each bar.

b) The battlefield, where the Calif unexpectedly is defeated (00'39"-01'00")

V.O.: "Hubo combate... Seis días heroicos, cuerpo a cuerpo, rabia y sangre...Y - oh, sorpresa - el califa, el invencible...fue vencido."

[There was the battle. Six heroic days, body against body, fury and blood ... And then - oh surprise - he, the undefeated caliph ... invincible ... he lost!]

MUSIC (bars 14-21): To me, this section of the V.O. corresponds to a general crescendo towards the climactic moment of the unexpected outcome of the battle; the musical topic of *Epic Battle/Fighting Hero(es)* is applied throughout. The battle also implies fast-paced music to mirror those six days of intense and hectic fighting. This is achieved by a semiquaver pattern at viola and second violins, expanded to flutes and clarinets from bar 17 in the orchestral crescendo. The brass choir make their

heroic entrance (horns in foreground, trumpets and low brass in harmonic/rhythmic support), repeating the previously exposed theme at bars 14-15. The modulation, using the third relation (A minor to C# minor) at bar 16, coincides with the line where the v. o. describes the fury of the battle ('body against body, fury and blood' in the English translation). As Lehman explains, the pan-triadic chromaticism behind the modulations based on third relation often conveys a sense of intensification, which is indeed at the core of my intentions in this section.¹⁴³ Based on the same concept is the alternance of C# minor / C minor at bars 16-19. As the alternation becomes too predictable and needs a radical change, at bar 20 I used A min chord in first inversion (so that the bass note is C, dominant tone in F minor) with an added F#. Although this is still based on third relations, this chord creates the illusion of a minor version of the French sixth on F# (enharmonically, a half-diminished chord on F#) landing unexpectedly – like the Caliph's defeat – on F minor:

Fig. 49. *ibid.*, reduction, bars 13-21.

¹⁴³ Frank Lehman, *op. cit.*, 69 - 73

The climax is also enhanced by the time signature of 9/8 (instead of 6/8), which creates a longer wait for the resolution: this mirrors exactly the way the V.O. slows down before declaring that the Caliph was defeated, so that the F minor resolution occurs immediately after that line. Melodically, this passage features elements of the Caliph's theme (bars 14-15) and hints of the Defeat/Salama's theme.

c) The lost chainmail in the field (01'00"-01'10")

V.O.: "Tuvo que huir a toda prisa abandonando en el campo de batalla su bien máspreciado: Una cota de malla en hilo de oro."

[He must have fled in haste, abandoning his most precious asset on the battlefield: a chainmail made of gold thread.]

MUSIC (bars 21-25): In my view, the best way to move beyond the climactic moment reached at bar 21 was to implement a radical change in orchestration, pace, and timbre. While the oboe solo maintains continuity by presenting the Defeat/Salama's theme, sustained chords in the strings, trombones, and flute—along with an arpeggiator (not written in the score)—are responsible for conveying this shift. Harmonic expression aims to evoke a sense of desolation and wandering through stepwise downward shifts of minor chords (Fm, Em, Dm), ultimately landing on an enigmatic E major, which is instrumental to the modulation to Ab (again based on third relations) at bar 26.

d) The Caliph's camp in Toledo, where Salama tries to console her father (01'10"- 01'26")

V.O.: "Y aquí estamos, en la Marca Media, donde se ha montado el campamento califal. Llorando muertos y derrota Los cantos de Salama, la hija del califa, No llegan a consolar a su padre."

[And here we are in Toledo, on the road to Cordoba, where the Caliph's camp has been set up. Crying dead and defeat, the songs of Salama, the caliph's daughter, can't comfort her father]

MUSIC (bars 26-31): As a result of how I envisioned the imaginary editing in this sequence, Salama's singing has already been heard before the V.O. introduces her. The Defeat/Salama's theme employs the same harmonic device used in the previous exposition at the oboe to convey sadness, involving stepwise downward shifts of triads. The main change occurs around bars 30-31, where I guided the harmony towards F minor through a chromaticism into its dominant chord (C major, bar 31).

e) Fernan Gonzalez arrives at the camp (01'26"-01'50')

V.O.: "Cuando irrumpe el castellano Fernán González en el campamento de los vencidos."

[And now the Castilian Fernán González bursts into the camp of the defeated.]

MUSIC (bars 32-39): This section has been the only one revised several times. Initially, before the show's main theme was created, it featured a heroic musical idea derived from Defeat/Salama's Theme. Its conclusion was originally on the dominant seventh, as the following piece was to start in F minor.

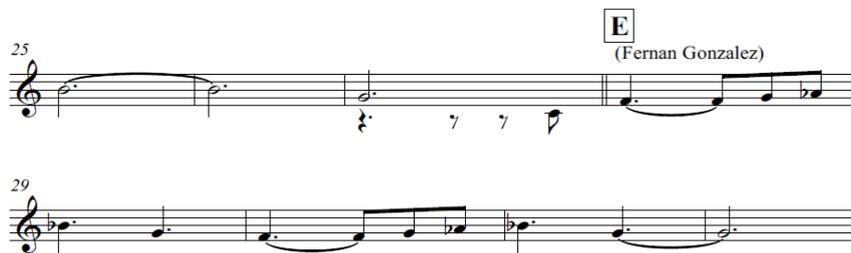


Fig. 50. *ibid.*, first draft, melody only, bars 25-32

After several changes, these last bars were expanded further and displayed three of the main motives of the show (each from one of the other composers):

The image shows a musical score for rehearsal mark D, consisting of two systems of piano reduction. The first system includes three staves: the upper staff for the right hand, the middle staff for the left hand, and the bass staff. The upper staff features 'THEME B (M. Batchelar)' with a dynamic marking of *mf* and a 'div.' marking. The middle staff features 'THEME FOR THE KNIGHT (N. Stormetta)' with a dynamic marking of *mp* and the instruction 'sneaking in'. The bass staff features 'ADDITIONAL MOTIF (S. Pegg)' with a dynamic marking of *f* and the instruction 'royal'. The second system continues the piano reduction with similar dynamics and articulations.

Fig. 51. *ibid.*, reduction and analysis of main themes, rehearsal mark D.

These last eight bars have the function of replicating the idea of the Christian knight bursting in the camp, as the V.O. says, using a sudden dynamic change (from *p* to *f* subito), a return of the militaristic vibe (given by percussion grooves and a pattern of repeated notes) and full orchestral forces. Besides bar 32, which is on a Phrygian mode like the Knight Theme, this section builds on a Phrygian dominant scale,¹⁴⁴ ending on the open fifth to allow the following cue, in F minor, to fade in smoothly.

3. Conveying the Narrative

The main aspect to focus on in this score are:

- the musical topic of *Orientalism*, which is the main idiom that permeates through the score
- the narrative archetypes resulting from the interaction between themes and Leitmotifs; in this prologue, there are three different and important

¹⁴⁴ The Phrygian dominant scale differs from the Phrygian mode for the major third.

characters, and it is therefore worth analysing how music attempts to represent them together whilst maintaining coherence

- my para-cinematic interpretation resulting from the analysis of the V. O. and musical rendition of the different contraction and expansions of time.

Another aspect that I have considered – but will not be further analysed here – is the general *mise en scène* suggested by the story: its gloomy setting (the Spanish battlefield) and the desolation of the Sultan's camp suggested an orchestral texture that is equally dark and gravitating towards the mid-low frequencies.

The Musical Topic of *Orientalism*

From Jarre's *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) through Menken's *Aladdin* (1992) and Zimmer's *Dune* (2021), film music has drawn on and consolidated tropes of orientalism previously emerging from Western classical music; as Derek B. Scott wrote in his *Orientalism and Musical Style* (1998), 'its purpose is not to imitate but to represent' because 'there is not *one* Orientalist style'.¹⁴⁵ He offers an exhaustive list of elements that define the topic, all based on the classical music examples he analysed, such as Bizet's *Carmen* (1875), Debussy's *La Soirée dans Grenade* (1903), Rimsky-Korsakov's "canto Gitano" in *Capriccio Espanol* (1887), Saint-Saens' *Samson et Dalila* (1977) and many others:

Here is a list of Orientalist devices [...]: whole tones; aeolian, dorian, but especially the Phrygian mode; augmented seconds and fourths (especially with Lydian or Phrygian inflections); arabesques and ornamented lines; elaborate "ah!" melismas for Voice; sliding or sinuous chromaticism (for example, snaking downward on cor anglais); trills and dissonant grace notes; rapid scale passages (especially of an irregular fit, e.g., eleven notes to be played in the time of two crotchets); a melody that suddenly shifts to notes of shorter value; abrupt juxtapositions of romantic, lyrical tunes and busy, energetic passages; repetitive rhythms (Ravel's *Bolero* is an extreme case of rhythmic insistence) and repetitive, small-compass melodies; ostinati; ad libitum sections (*colla parte*, *senza tempo*, etc.); use of triplets in duple time; complex or irregular rhythms; parallel movement in fourths, fifths, and octaves (especially in the woodwinds); Bare fifths; drones and pedal points; "magic" or "mystic" chords (possessing uncertainty of duration and/or harmonic direction), harp arpeggios and glissandi (Rimsky-Korsakov changes the harp's connotation of a mythical past to one of Oriental exoticism); double reeds (oboe and especially cor anglais); percussion (especially tambourine, triangle, cymbals, and gong); and emphatic rhythmic figures on unpitched percussion (such as tom-toms, tambourine, and triangle). The register of the melody can

¹⁴⁵ Derek B. Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style", *The Musical Quarterly* 82(1998), 326.

be important: for example, the *cor anglais* connotes the East more emphatically than does the oboe.¹⁴⁶

Janice Dickensheets defines the “oriental style” used by Romantic composers as a type of topical ‘dialect’, implying that those gestures *per se* represent a geographical connotation, a musical idiom where other topics (i.e., the Military) could be applied:

Evocation of the saber-rattling barbarian (representing the warrior or pirate) and the harem (sensuality and forbidden pleasure). Melody in a single mode or hovering around a single pitch with frequent melismas or undulations. Repeated rhythms, either of a Military Style or free, indicating the exotic and sensuous. Musical gestures are intended to evoke the timeless mystery of the east and desert life.¹⁴⁷

The notion of topical dialect is very appropriate for this piece, where the *Epic Battle/Fighting Hero(es)* topic is tinted by orientalism, in particular section B (battle between Christians and Muslims) and D of the score (Fernandez Gonzalez’ entry). What film music adds to the list of topic characteristics is the freedom to use instruments from other musical cultures, which was restricted in the 19th and 20th-century examples cited, due to the traditional orchestral layout. In *Cetrea*, the instrumentation was agreed upon in advance: we decided to use instruments quite obviously associated with the Middle East: oud, zurna, darbuka, to name a few. Along with the instrumentation, to reflect the cultural and geographic context, I used Phrygian and harmonic minor modes and, more generally, the augmented second, which evokes both Spanish and Arabian traditional music. Other characteristics of the topic can be observed in the use of portamento for the strings and the melismatic inflexion of the singer over the last note of her phrase. These were agreed upon during the recording sessions but not written in the score, allowing some creative input from the performers.

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 327. For further reading, see also; (1) Michael Frishkopf “Musical Journeys” in Asef Bayat and Linda Herrera’s *Global Middle East – Into the Twenty-First Century* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2021), 213-237; (2) Ralph P. Locke, “Cutthroats and Casbah Dancers, Muezzins and Timeless Sands: Musical Images of the Middle East,” in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 104–33; and (3) Richard Taruskin, “Entoiling the Falconet: Russian Musical Orientalism in Context,” in Bellman, *The Exotic in Western Music*, 202–12.

¹⁴⁷ J. Dickensheets, *op. cit.*, 130.

Fig. 52. Viola part: the definition “oriental” was explained at the session as a portamento *ad lib.* throughout.

Fig. 53. Voice part: in the instructions, I asked for some *ad lib.* melismatic inflections

Leitmotivic Writing

The main leitmotif in this piece is represented by what I defined as ‘Defeat/Salama’s Theme’, framed between an introduction (featuring ‘Caliph’s Theme’ in section A and the first two bars of B) and a coda (section D). This is isomorphic to the change of focus in the narration and the order of appearance of the main characters of the plotline: from the Caliph to his defeat and Salama to the arrival of Gonzalez. This analysis will demonstrate how the piece is organized as a narrative of romance followed by tragedy.

The Caliph’s Theme (section A, fully exposed at bars 5-13) represents the order that is challenged, in bars 14-15, by elements of the Defeat/Salama’s Theme. From the initial order, then, the theme falls into the unstable ground of the developmental section coinciding with the battlefield. Two factors represent the instability/transgression:

- Thematic ambivalence: the Defeat/Salama’s Theme is presented at bar 16 as the answer phrase of a development of the Caliph’s Theme rather than as a new, independent theme. Conversely, the Caliph’s theme disappears
- frequent pan-triadic modulations (bars 15-21), contrasting the static harmony used in sections A, C or D

The Defeat/Salama Theme starts emerging during the battle description, and it is clarified from bar 21, where it is defined by the oboe first and then by the voice, lying

on the key of F minor. This represents the 'transgression' that is temporarily in focus (romantic narrative).

Whilst the key is maintained, section D represents a radical change, again, from the order so far achieved, in that it presents new themes (associated in other parts of the show to the figure of Ferdinando Gonzalez) and a sudden reprise of the texture from *Epic Battle/Fighting Hero(es)*. In this sense, it follows the narrative of tragedy, as the transgression (Defeat/Salama Theme) is radically erased by a new imposing order.

Editing and Montage

When I was working on this prologue, I had no indication of how it would be realised during the show—whether with projected images, staged, or simply left in darkness until Gonzalez's arrival. I still do not have details of how the show has been staged. However, I believe it is insignificant because what matters in this commentary is the way the voice-over suggested a hypothetical editing of the scene—thus, a para-cinematic interpretation—at the time I was composing. Each new scene in the story – which corresponds to a cut or a new shot – triggers a musical change in the score. Here is a list of how I have reinterpreted those moments:

- The shift from the presentation of the Caliph (section A) to the battlefield (section B) is accentuated by a different texture. I imagined there were several ways to realise this cinematographically, for example, starting with a close-up of the Caliph, then switching to a wide shot to reveal the battlefield; or showcasing a radical geographical change; using a visual infographic map for the first part and a shot over the battlefield.
- When the V.O. announces that the Caliph is defeated, it is reasonable to assume the hypothetical edit would cut from shots of the wild battle to a different temporal moment on the battlefield, where the Caliph and his soldiers are retreating, wounded, or wandering among corpses. This shift is marked by a motional change (bar 21: the orchestra pauses on a sustained chord), a textural change (bars 21-25: oboe solo with a static homophonic orchestral accompaniment), a harmonic change (bar 21: reaching F minor after the harmonic variety of section B), and a dynamic change (reaching the climax at bar 21 and gradually diminuendo from there).
- When the V.O. mentions the chainmail and then begins describing the Caliph's camp, where Salama sings downheartedly, I visualised this as a camera movement or a shot of the regal object, followed by a transition and tracking shot across the camp. This transition is marked by the cymbal roll at bars 24-25 and another change in texture (bar 26).
- Over the lines describing Salama's singing, I imagined a full shot of her, which justifies the prominence of the vocal line in the score (as opposed to visualising

a continuing tracking shot over the camp while Salama's singing resonates in the distance).¹⁴⁸

- The irruption of Ferdinando Gonzalez in the camp – which would correspond to a rapid cut or camera movement on him – is marked by a radical thematic, textural and dynamic change.

In just under two minutes, this Prologue summarises the events that occurred at least six days of battle, plus a few days after the defeat and until the arrival of Gonzalez at the Caliph's camp. A significant contraction of time occurs for the battle where the six days are represented in just 20" (bars 14-21). This is where I had to focus primarily on finding a way of giving continuity to the musical flow. The battle, in the narration, stands between the presentation in the Caliph (bars 5-13, section A) and the lost chainmail, the symbol of his defeat (bars 21-25), both key elements of the plotline of the show. Therefore, given the little time to describe those six days, I decided to consider this as a developmental section where elements of the Caliph's theme (bars 14-15) are linked to the Defeat/Salama's Theme (bars 16-21) and where frequent pan-triadic modulations suggest a sense of instability. To wrap this sequence with a common feature, I used the texture of the musical topic for *Epic Battle/Fighting Hero(es)*. The contraction of time, in this case, forced me to find a non-thematic musical solution to describe the battle.

With this piece, I explore in detail the musical topic of *Orientalism*, which is here enriched by the use of non-Western instruments recorded in separate sessions and blended with the orchestra, following a typical film scoring approach. Editing and compression of time also influence the structural and orchestral choices, including the frequent use of pan-triadic modulations where the timings are too tight for slower modulation techniques. The piece differs from the general methodology of the other works in that here the V.O. has been used as the guideline for my cinematic interpretation.

¹⁴⁸ From "Guide to Camera Shots", *Psaro Loco*. Accessed 31 December 2022: 'A full shot is a camera shot in film that lets your subject fill the frame, head to toe, while still allowing some features of the scenery. Full shots can communicate the appearance, movement, mannerisms, traits, or actions of characters before focusing on their reaction or feelings.'

Cat and Mouse

1. Context and Description

The original story of Cat and Mouse in Partnership unfolds over several days before winter: a cat, after forming an alliance with a mouse to store a piece of fat for the winter, manages three times to secretly eat a slice of it by devising different excuses for its absence. Eventually, with nothing left to eat, he consumes the mouse. To me, the story and characters are reminiscent of the American animated series *Tom and Jerry*. To fit the plot into five minutes or less, I visualised the two performing in a cabaret scene. While dancing to celebrate their unusual partnership, the cat eats the fat when not seen, until he finally eats his companion. The concept of staging a performance for storytelling is not uncommon in *Tom and Jerry*, as evidenced by the award-winning short *The Cat Concerto* (1947). This piece, together with *Cinderella* and *Rapunzel*, was recorded in 2015 at Fox Newman Stage in Los Angeles by the Hollywood Studio Orchestra, conducted by Nicholas Dodd, thanks to the RMALA grant I received after attending the ASCAP Workshop in 2012. The 61-piece orchestra was recorded in the main stage, with minimal separation between sections.

2. Musical Storytelling

<p>Bars 1-5: Introduction</p>	<p>A cabaret scene. The two enter: the mouse first (bars 1-3), then the cat (bars 4-5). Musically, this is achieved by reiterating semi-phrase A twice,¹⁴⁹ with contrasting orchestrations: woodwinds and strings for the mouse and brass and piano for the cat. The different weight of sonority (lighter for the mouse, heavier for the cat) attempts to mirror the physical attributes of the two. Visually, this moment is imagined as two sudden spotlights on each character's entrance.</p>
<p>Bars 6-27: Establishing the cabaret number</p>	<p>Overall, this scene imagines the two performing their dance while holding and passing around the piece of fat. A and B are superimposed (B is in the foreground this time, bars 6 - 13), and the musical phrasing continues to follow the question-answer structure. Visually, this is imagined as a fully illuminated performance space, with alternating camera movements on each character. Semi-phrase C (bars 14-24) represents the two characters dancing together; the camera, in this case, is imagined fixed on the scene, with no sudden or alternate movements. Woodwinds at bars 21-23 represent the mouse's quicker, faster dance steps, which are counterbalanced by the awkward tuba and contrabassoon phrase at bars 24-27. In this same section, the cat</p>

¹⁴⁹ See paragraph 3 for a detailed explanation of the thematic analysis.

	is imagined eating a piece of fat, unseen by the mouse (gulping it in sync with the piano and harp quaver at bars 27).
Bars 28-44: The stumble	<p>This section develops semi-phrase A and keeps the question-and-answer structure. The high and light texture of woodwinds and pizzicato strings (bars 28-29 and 31) is opposed to the low range of cellos and brass (bars 30 and 32). As before, this contrast stands for the different physical qualities of the characters. In the imagined story, the cat here is becoming increasingly aggressive towards the mouse: he is gradually reverting to his instinctive desire to eat his companion. The short stabs at bars 36-41 are thought to be sync points for his failing attempts to grab the mouse, who conversely runs around innocently unaware of these intentions; musically, the semiquaver gestures at woodwinds and strings (bars 34-40) represent the mouse's fast movements on the stage.</p> <p>Attempting to grab the mouse, the cat stumbles with him badly. The increasing appearance of the stab gestures at bar 40, the upward scale of semiquavers and the general dynamic crescendo attempt to point towards the stumble at bar 41. As the stumble is an interruption of an established and predictable pace, musically I represented it by changing meter (the 7/8 of bar 41) and texture, leaving only ratchets and celesta over the confused faces of the two while recuperating from their tumble.</p>
Bars 45-50: back to business	This section mimics the slow movement of the two characters getting back to standing on the scene after their fall by reiterating a four-note rising gesture, counterpointed by semi-phrase A.
Bars 51-88; dance reprise	As the two characters are ready to perform their number again, so the music returns to developing and expanding ideas from bars 6-27, with more intensity and variety. As before, the section plays with alternating textures as a means for different dance numbers between the two. Additionally, in this section I expanded the contrast between the mouse's agility (represented by fast passages on woodwinds and strings, for instance) and the cat's awkwardness: this was only hinted at bars 21-23, whereas now it is constantly embodied in the background.
Bars 89- 100: the end	After the dance reaches its climax, I imagined the cat revealing his true intentions (gesture at bassoons, tuba and piano as in bar 90) while the mouse tries to escape (bar 91, strings, harp and woodwinds) in vain.

3. Conveying the Narrative

The unfolding of the story, here condensed in a few minutes, implies a fast flow of different actions, closer to slapstick animation à la *Tom and Jerry* rather than a musical, film musical or pantomime. The original mock-up had a BPM of 140, then changed to 136 to make it easier to play for the orchestra.

This piece emphasises the importance of focalisation as a key device in my writing. Furthermore, the use of the musical topic of *Cartoonesque Flamboyance*, with its focus on closely mimicking gestures and sounds, poses a question on how to regard inherent associations in a para-cinematic work. The commentary also clarifies the narrative archetype of the piece through a close analysis of its musical themes.

Inherent Associations

Using Mickey-Mousing techniques for imaginary actions poses some challenges. Without specifying the exact choreography of every moment, I could only estimate where the music might synchronise with the imagined movements. As explained before, Mickey-Mousing can only literally be identified in the presence of moving images: if this condition does not exist, it is better to use different terminology, such as inherent associations or onomatopoeic effects. In this regard, I followed what every screen composer knows well: a fast pace will, statistically, allow more syncs than a slower pace.¹⁵⁰ However, if this piece were to be turned into an animation, the choreographer's work would need to be quite creative in aligning with the musical structure, reversing the usual dynamic.

Leitmotivic Writing

For *Cat and Mouse*, the 25-bars theme mainly consists of a thirteen-note semi-phrase (A), a stepwise, syncopated one (B) and a third (C) derived by inverting the main cell of semi-phrase B:



Fig. 54. *Cat And Mouse*, semi-phrase A, cello part.

¹⁵⁰ I am talking of *pace* and not *BPM*: a fast pace could happen by writing in demisemiquavers on a medium BPM, as well as writing quavers on a fast BPM.



Fig. 55. *ibid.* semi-phrase B, cello part.



Fig. 56. *ibid.*, semi-phrase C, violin I part.

A and B are thought to be complementary so that they can be used together in counterpoint:



Fig. 57. *ibid.*, A and B in counterpoint, clarinets and bassoons, bars 6-7.

Harmonically, *Cat and Mouse* pays homage to the jazz and music hall style frequently used by Scott Bradley in his works. Its overall narrative follows the archetype of comedy (victory of transgression over order), where the 'order' is represented by the main theme and transgression by all the unusual non-thematic elements, such as stabs and ominous gestures in low instruments that ultimately interrupt the final climax.

Focalisation

As discussed in chapter 1, the omnipresent camera determines focalisation in a movie. This aspect is the main difference when writing for a specific para-cinematic sequence as opposed to the theatrical stage, which this choreographed programme could otherwise easily be compared to. Through the imaginary camera, I could focus on particular moments unseen on stage (such as bars 23-27) and quickly change perspective. These moments were marked in the timeline of my DAW after setting the overall BPM of the piece.

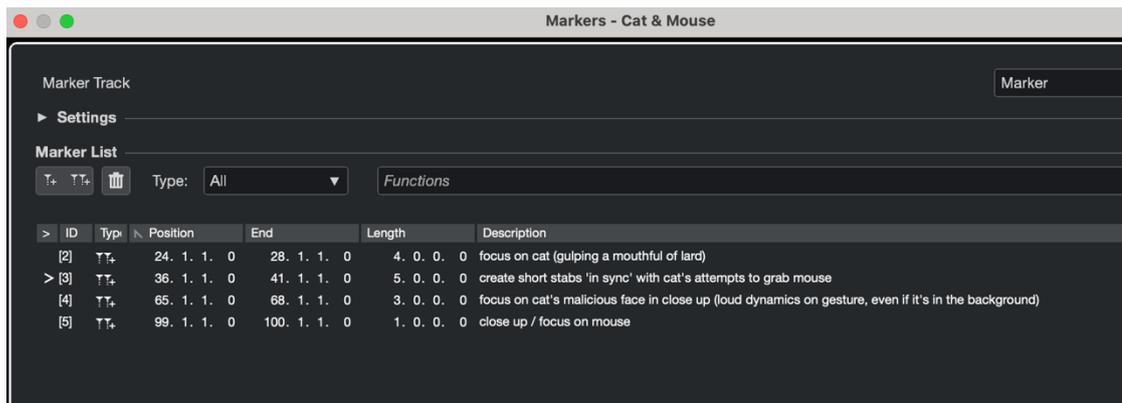


Fig. 58, marker track window for *Cat and Mouse*.

In the figure above I show the selected moments where focalisation is in place: these were planned ahead of the writing, as specific moments where I imagined the camera in close-up on the cat. These passages have in common a remarkable singularity in the way they are orchestrated: they all create an incongruence with the preceding or overall texture. Here is a breakdown:

- Bars 24-28 and 99: radical textural change to a few low instruments from full orchestral forces
- Stabs at bars 36-41: incongruity with the main texture (sampled piano, harp, and Bartok pizzicato); furthermore, the sampled piano is mixed a bit louder to facilitate a shift of attention
- Gestures at bars 65-68 (in particular, the first at bar 65): sudden interruption of the main established motif A and predominance of low range

Had my programme notes not indicated those particular shifts in focus, would my writing be different? I believe it would have. At the very least, this approach allowed me to develop creative ways of referring to extra-musical content, creating an element of disruption (the 'transgression' that is part of the narrative archetype of comedy) within the predominant texture and style. The fact that I actively intend these gestures to respond to a series of close-ups, forced me to find a musical equivalent in the use of a few, but loud, instruments: this, to me, and in this context, corresponds to the focus on a single element that is implicit in the use of a close-up.

Cat and Mouse highlights one main limitation and one main strength of paracinematic writing. Regarding its limitation concerning the applicability of Mickey-Mousing as a key element of the topic of *Cartoonesque Flamboyance*, it should be noted that, while onomatopoeic gestures may substitute for the aim of matching the editing shots and main movements of the characters, some visual elements will inevitably be left unrepresented and open to interpretation: this is the case with the exact choreography of the two characters, which is not explored in greater depth by the music and my programme planning. However, the strength and originality of this work, especially when compared to ballet or concert music, lie in how the paracinematic programme shapes orchestral and structural choices: the incongruities and sudden changes in orchestrations mentioned earlier would not be so prominent if this were a piece for ballet or a programmatic work. Even if 'hectic' was the overall direction of it, the determination of the points of incongruence would have been the result of either the composer's free choice or the choreographer's requests. It could be argued that, ultimately, the programme I chose is due to my own selection: this is objectively true, as I am both the 'imaginary director' and the composer of this paracinematic piece. However, the main difference is that, once established, the programme and its timeline have not been altered, thereby preventing me from revising it – a flexibility still possible in concert and ballet music.

Cinderella

1. Context and Description

My personal adaptation of the story has been enriched with more emotional content. Since the tale of Cinderella is too lengthy to be fully told in five minutes, I chose to focus on the key moment when she is magically dressed for the ball. In the Grimms' version, this scene takes place in a graveyard where Cinderella's mother is buried; beside her grave, a magic hazelnut tree grants her wishes with the help of other creatures. While Cinderella mourns her misfortune, her mother's ghost (which is implicitly behind the magic tree) appears before her and influences the magical transformation. As an extra liberty, I imagined the ghost warning her to return by midnight; although this detail is almost universally accepted, it does not appear in the original Grimms' tale.

My chief cinematographic reference, in this case, has been the short format, 2-D animation, which can be found in Disney/Pixar animations such as *The Little Matchmaker* (2006) or *Paperman* (2012).

2. Musical Storytelling

Bars 1 – 7	Motif/topic of <i>Magic</i> . Programmatically, this should correspond to the opening of curtains in a window overlooking the graveyard; the gesture mimics the volatility of fairy dust, acting as both a sign for the topic of <i>magic</i> , and as inherent association/ onomatopoeia.
Bars 8-15	The tonal indeterminacy of the motto is now clarified with this introduction to the theme, based on tonic and dominant chords. The pace is that of a calm andante, which ideally should match the slow approaching of Cinderella to her mother's grave.
Bars 16-37	Cinderella's main theme. Visually, this is a static moment describing Cinderella staring at the grave. I opted to use a solo instrument (oboe) to represent the protagonist.
Bars 38-43	In the programmatic notes, this musical bridge follows the camera's point of view, showing little creatures (birds, squirrels) approaching and observing Cinderella. On the one hand, this part is derived from the accompaniment of the main theme for reasons of coherence. On the other hand, the timbral contrast between the previous section and the feeble, mysterious atmosphere created by col legno strings, harp and triangle should suggest the cut change towards a much smaller

	subject. The gestures are inherently associated to the little creatures creeping in.
Bars 44-69	Second period of Cinderella's main theme. This section is intended to be choreographed as appropriate. The use of the entire orchestra represents how Cinderella's sorrow is amplified and shared by the little creatures that have approached her.
Bars 70-76	Reprise of the musical bridge; in this case, the common element in the story between the two bridges is the cut towards a small, mysterious subject. However, in this specific case, the focus is now on the grave and its mysterious glowing. The magical element is limited here to the timbre of the celesta, doubled by harp, and to the use of the vibraphone with the bow.
Bars 77-84	Motif/topic of <i>Magic</i> and crescendo towards main theme reprise. Visually, this should correspond to the appearance of the ghost of Cinderella's mother.
Bars 85-104	Theme reprise for full orchestra. It coincides with the magical transfiguration of Cinderella into a beautifully dressed princess. Similarly to the first appearance of the theme, this section is meant to be choreographed but more fantastically and imaginatively.
Bars 104-109	Musical bridge based on the accompaniment of Cinderella's main theme. This arrangement is particularly different from the others. The melodic material has been assigned to low-range instruments (bass clarinet, bassoons, trombones), and the entire texture is much darker and ominous. Narratively, it represents the warning given by Cinderella's mother about the midnight deadline (symbolically represented by the twelve hits of tubular bells, starting at bar 104 and ending at bars 124).
Bars 109-127	Coda of the piece. Through a visual crossfade, Cinderella is seen entering the royal palace. Musically, I have represented the visual crossfade with interlocking dynamics: whilst tam-tam, low woodwinds, brass, and low strings perform a diminuendo, celesta, harp, violins, and violas creep in gradually. Flutes and clarinets performing the twelve-tone motto and brass' air noises relate to the topic of <i>magic</i> previously heard.

3. Conveying The Narrative

Cinderella presents two well-established topics – *Magic* and *Once Upon A Time in a Fairy Tale* – within a three-part structure directly linked to the way I intended the imaginary animation. The *mise en scène* is also in focus here, especially in relation to the 2-D animation references I had in mind. Although there are some inherent associations, they have been encompassed in the thematic elements of the score to provide a coherent musical flow.

Musical Topics

a) *Magic*

The topic of *Magic* – also referred to as *Fairy Music* – seems to be fairly well codified, both in film and concert classical music.¹⁵¹ Scores considered include John Williams' *Hedwig's Theme* from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (2001), Felix Mendelssohn's *Overture* from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1826), Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy* from *Nutcracker Suite* (1892) and Bernd Alois Zimmermann's *Metamorphose Lunaire II* from *Un Petit Rien* (1964). The musical traits that recur in these scores, when addressing magical or supernatural events, are:

- Fast gestures, in medium or high frequencies with a varied melodic contour - almost as if music imitates the intangible and airy quality of supernatural forces (in this sense, they can be intended as inherent associations)
- Light orchestration, with limited use of the brass section and a rich palette of high percussions (celeste, glockenspiel, marimba, vibraphone, crotales)
- Frequently changing / undetermined harmonies and unusual melodic contours
- Unusual orchestral doublings, resulting in undetermined timbres and disguised instruments

¹⁵¹ See J. Dickensheets, *op. cit.*, 122-123.



Fig. 59. excerpt from J. Williams' "Hedwig Theme" from *Harry Potter*.¹⁵²

In *Cinderella*, the musical topic has been used, for instance, in the short motto of twelve notes at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the score.

The motto is built on two twelve-tone series superimposed, both landing on B:

¹⁵² John Williams, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, Suite for Orchestra (Hal Leonard, 2002), 8.



Fig. 6o. *Cinderella*, flutes and clarinets, bars 1-2.

The motto sits on a major seventh interval (F-E) played by mallets (xylophone and vibraphone), harp and strings, contributing to the tonal indeterminacy I wished to achieve. At the same time, the note B acts as a pivotal tone towards tonal harmony, shifting its function from the conclusive note of the motto to the dominant in the key of E minor. The entire brass section has been used here to provide air noises: this is another example of ‘disguised instruments’ as seen in Williams’ score.

b) *Once Upon A Time in a Fairy Tale*

Sharing qualities of the topic of *Hauntingly Beautiful*, this has a more positive connotation, as the harmonic ambiguity and complexity are either absent or significantly reduced. In film music, it is often found at the beginning of a film to set the tone, either as main themes or opening credits, or to introduce the time and place of the story. The detailed definition aims to capture the core qualities of the theme: nostalgia (*Once Upon a Time*)—or some form of distance from the story’s setting and period—and magic, or more generally, the exceptional plot that makes the story worth telling (*Fairy Tale*). It could be seen as originating from the 19th-century topics of *Aria* and *Fairy Music*.¹⁵³ Here the principal traits:

- Chant-like melody, usually step-wise or in narrow intervals
- Long melodies, inclined to reiterations
- Simple/diatonic harmony
- Slow or moderate pace, without rhythmic complexities
- Usually orchestrated for strings, woodwinds, piano, harp, celesta/music box, choir (reducing the relevance of the brass section)

Leitmotivic Writing

The piece is based on a central theme – ‘Cinderella’s Main Theme’ – predominantly based on the topic of *Once Upon A Time in a Fairy Tale*. In terms of reiterations, the prevalent melodic rhythms of *Cinderella’s* theme are either three crotchets or dotted

¹⁵³ See J. Dickensheets, *op. cit.*, 108-109 and 122-123.

crotchet-quaver-crotchet per bars. As for melodic structure, the theme is an A (bars 16-19) – A' (bars 20-23) – B (bars 24-27) – C (bars 28-31) – C' (bars 31-36). However, both B and C semi-phrases are derived from motifs contained in A:

The image shows a musical score for the first period of Cinderella's main theme. The score is in 3/4 time, marked Andante (♩ = 110), starting at bar 15. It features a 'SOLO' section starting at bar 16. The melody is divided into sections A (bars 16-19), A' (bars 20-21), B (bars 24-27), C (bars 28-29), and C' (bars 31-36). Motif 'b' is identified in bars 17-19. Sections B and C are highlighted in yellow and labeled 'from motif b, inverted'.

Fig. 61. *Cinderella's* main theme, first period, with melodic analysis.

Considering the above analysis, the second period of *Cinderella's* theme seems more like a short development of previous motivic material:

Fig. 62. *Cinderella's* main theme, second period, with melodic analysis.

According to Almén's concept of musical narrative, given how the main theme evolves and expands as the musical piece unfolds, this composition follows the archetype of romance (victory of order over transgression, where the 'order' is represented by the theme and the 'transgression' is the confusing atmosphere generated by the motto/topic of *Magic*).

Editing and Montage

In the initial planning, I was very precise in visualising how to enter and exit the sequence, which influenced how to write the piece's intro and outro. The animation should begin with curtains opening, crossfading into an extreme long shot of the scene. This crossfade should correspond to bars 4-5, where air noises at brass in diminuendo give way to a two-note melodic leap of a major seventh by the cello, at bar 5. The two consecutive melodic leaps by the cellos (bars 6-7) match exactly with the first wide shot and then the full shot over the graveyard. For the outro, I envisioned a crossfade to the carriage in a long shot heading towards the palace; this is represented by the interlocking dynamics previously described for bars 109-127. I wanted the short animation to have a realistic pace until the moment of transformation, when time expands during the magical moment.

Mise en scène

For this piece, I envisaged a 2D animation with pastel colours, set between mid-afternoon (at the moment of the transformation) and early evening (during the cut to the carriage reaching the palace). This is reflected in the light orchestration that, aside from the influence of the topic of *Magic* and of *Once Upon a Time in a Fairytale*, very rarely pushes its limits to a low register. The *mise en scène* is meant to suggest a positive environment: even though the main scene happens in a graveyard, this never has horror-like tones in my imaginary setting, but it rather resembles a clearing where Cinderella's mother's tomb was erected. In this regard, the onomatopoeic gestures of *col legno battuto* that stand for the creeping little creatures (bars 38-43) do not aim at creating any harm: firstly, their aural weight is soft, and secondly, they repeat a well-established accompaniment, therefore staying in the familiar despite the different timbral quality. The only moment where tones are a bit more intense and darker is towards the end of the transformation (bars 104-108) where I did want to suggest the warning given to Cinderella.

Cinderella makes use of two musical topics that are part of the common traits of fairy tales: *Magic* and *Once Upon A Time in a Fairy Tale*. The piece does not particularly advance the current literature on either, but rather enjoys and explores them. In particular, I observe how the pastel-like *mise en scène* imagined implies a lighter orchestration.

Rapunzel

1. Context and Description

For this score, I chose to focus only on the most dramatic moment of the story. In the forest, the prince calls Rapunzel until he reaches the tower. He hears her voice coming from the building, but it's nothing else than the sorceress disguising Rapunzel's voice. After the sorceress has let down Rapunzel's hair and the prince has climbed up, she reveals her mighty anger and confronts the prince, who falls down the tower.

In *Rapunzel*, I wanted to challenge the musical language by expanding the harmonic choices to modal, quartal harmony, and atonality. The piece, recorded together with *Cinderella* and *Cat and Mouse* in 2015 at Fox's Newman Stage by the Hollywood Studio Orchestra, was then used for an experimental animation show by animator Noriko Okaku, displayed during the Suspense Festival 2015 in London.

2. Musical Storytelling

Bars 1-17	<p>Programmatically, this corresponds to the tracking shot from above the forest down to a long shot of the walking prince.</p> <p>The melody and the bass line rely upon a B Mixolydian b6 mode (also known as Hindu or melodic major mode), made ambiguous because it does not ever rest on B but on its supertonic (C#). The ambiguity is also enhanced because the "flying gesture" of the background is in an F# Aeolian mode.</p> <p>This poly-modality hints at a quartal harmony, given that the three most gravitational pitches of the entire section are B, F# and C#.</p>
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Fig. 63. *Rapunzel*, bar 8, string section.

The only harmonic changes happen in bar 12 and 17, where the background gesture lies on, respectively, F# Locrian and B Phrygian (in fact, the same pitches but with different hierarchy). Mainly, I wanted to create brief harmonic glitches, which I expect to contribute to subconsciously suggest the idea of a mesmerising and uncertain setting in the listener.

Fig. 64. *ibid.*, bar 17, strings and celesta section.

Bars 18-32

In this section, the orchestral crescendo and melodic doubling at cellos and bassoon, together with the harmonic clarity that appears from bar 22 (D major in first inversion at bar 22 and then the dominant pedal in

	<p>D at bar 24) are meant to suggest the approaching of the prince to the tower, imagined standing in a clearing in the middle of the forest. As in <i>Cinderella</i>, the entire forest seems to participate to the excitement of the prince, hence the doubling of the main theme in unison first – bar 21, cellos and bassoon, bar 24 viola and bars 25-29 horns – and then an octave higher from bar 25 by second violins, followed by first oboe at bar 28. The flute’s entry, with a short quote of the main theme, stands for the sorceress’ disguise of Rapunzel’s voice, answering the prince’s call.</p>
<p>Bars 33-43</p>	<p>Harmonically, the previous dominant pedal in D major lands unexpectedly on F# Aeolian with added E flat, to create more tension and unsettlement. Violas are introducing a new accompaniment in quavers that musically adds movement while programmatically represents the prince’s motion in climbing the tower. For the sorceress’ disguised voice, I chose to play every single phrase of the theme by different doublings in unison. To enhance the mystery and subtle sense of threat, I picked some specific timbres: muted horns and trumpets, vibraphone in soft mallets, and harp harmonics. Cellos and double basses from bar 38 add more depth to the texture and give a neat sense of constant pace as the climbing progresses.</p>
<p>Bars 44-60</p>	<p>The harmony from here becomes more dissonant, vaguely hinting at an A Dorian mode (with several altered notes) up to bar 52. From bar 53, through the German sixth on Gb in third inversion, this section finally lands in the key of Eb major at bar 55, holding the dominant pedal on a suspended fourth, hinting at quartal harmony, leaving this conclusion uncertain. Thematically, the short quotes of the theme between woodwinds / first violins and solo cello represent a dialogue between the sorceress/Rapunzel and the prince. Their love song reaches its climax when both voices are playing together, as in bars 52-60:</p>  <p>Fig. 65. <i>ibid.</i>, dialogue sorceress/Rapunzel – prince, bars 46-60</p>

	<p>Summing up, the reunion between the two characters is conveyed harmonically by landing towards a clear tonal centre, melodically by merging the two voices in a two-part counterpoint and motion-wise by ending the quaver accompaniment started in bar 33 (representing the end of the climbing). It is important to consider that the sorceress is still hidden in the imagined animation.</p>
<p>Bars 61-84</p>	<p>Programmatically, this section corresponds to when the sorceress reveals herself and throws the prince from the tower. Here I wanted to represent different camera perspectives and points of view.</p> <p>Bars 61-65 are simply echoing the quaver accompaniment distortedly, as if the sorceress is mocking the prince's efforts and quietly laughing. Cinematically, that would correspond to a close-up of the sorceress. The following aleatoric bursts and crescendo at bars 66-68 represent swift movements of the sorceress, as the prince would perceive them first; in this case, the camera will point at a long shot of the chamber, as to look at what the prince is seeing (eye-matching). The crescendo at bar 69 is where the sorceress reveals herself, angrily shouting at him (bar 72, distorted quotation of the theme's incipit in an orchestral tutti) and finally throwing him away (downward gesture at bar 75). What follows next (coda, bar 76) is imagined as a tracking shot and fade to black from the tower's window, looking down where the prince lies still till where the forest begins. The harp gesture is meant to recall the opening, while the dissonant low D represents the story's tragic ending.</p>

3. Conveying the Narrative

This piece stages two contrasting topics, whose interaction explains the elaborate harmonic journey of the piece, through the basic equation diatonic/calm and atonal/tension. Within the narrative, there are also interesting shifts of focalisation, the planning of which was influential in the way I have shaped and conceived the music.

Musical Topics

The contrast between consonant harmonies and dissonances is at the heart of film music as a way of expressing, respectively, calm and tension, or, more broadly, familiarity and unfamiliarity.¹⁵⁴ In this regard, the harmonic journey of *Rapunzel*

¹⁵⁴ 'Generally speaking, an increase of dissonance equates with an increase of tension': in Fred Karlin and Rayburn Wright, *op. cit.*, 267.

follows this convention, moving from an initial modal context through harmonic complication and finally to an aleatoric and dissonant conclusion. As Lerner wrote,

Repetitious drones, clashing dissonances and stingers (those assaultive blasts that coincide with shock or revelation) affect us at a primary level, perhaps instinctually taking us back to a much earlier time when the ability to perceive a variety of sounds alerted us (as a species) to approaching predators or other threats.¹⁵⁵

As J.K. Halfyard states, 'by using atonal music, the destabilising threat that the character [the monster, or the evil presence] represents gets coded in audible terms, even when the audience is unable to decode it or is not consciously aware that it is happening'.¹⁵⁶ The diatonic opening of the piece is part of the topic of *The Beautiful Forest*, whilst the dissonant harmony is related to the already encountered *Lurking Dangerous Presence* or *Ombra*.

a) *The Beautiful Forest*

As the forest is a complex environment, I aimed to create a musical equivalent that captures the beauty of the landscape. This explains the decision to feature a main fast-paced melodic pattern scattered across the orchestral palette, accompanied by trills and near onomatopoeic bird-like figures to embellish the Aeolian mode used for most of the first section of the piece. Here is a list of the main features of this passage:

- Shimmering gestures (rapid patterns, trills, ornamental notes) at various entries and instruments, inherently associated to busy creatures or swirling leaves stirred by the wind
- modal harmony, almost static
- light orchestration (limited use of the brass choir, mainly as harmonic pedals and doubling)

This formula shares many elements with the topic of *Magic*, but with a significant difference in the use of harmony, which tends to stay static throughout, in a much broader frequency spectrum, and in the busier texture resulting from different entries.

¹⁵⁵ N. Lerner, *op. cit.*,7.

¹⁵⁶ N. Lerner, *op. cit.*,22.

The image shows a page of a musical score for the opening of *Rapunzel*. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with staves for Flute 1, Flute 2, Oboe 1, Oboe 2, Clarinet 1, Clarinet 2, Bassoon 1, and Bassoon 2. The first three measures are numbered 8, 9, and 10. A red circle highlights a complex, shimmering melodic line in the Flute 1 part in measure 9. Another red circle highlights a similar shimmering effect in the Clarinet 1 part in measure 8. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *ppp*, *ppp marc.*, *ppp leggiero*, and *ppp bright*.

Fig. 66. Main gesture for the opening of *Rapunzel* (circled), together with other shimmering effects (trills and short ramps).

The definition of this topic is drawn from a passage in *Frozen II* (2019) where it is used when Elsa exclaims 'This forest is beautiful!' while entering the enchanted forest.¹⁵⁷ The features of this topic inherit much from the musical impressionism of the 20th century; in fact, the score I had in mind for this passage was *Lever Du Jour* from Ravel's orchestral Suite *Daphnis et Chloe*, in particular the orchestral crescendo that describes the gradual sunrise and natural awaking (section 156).¹⁵⁸

b) *Lurking Dangerous Presence*

This topic, already described in relation to its use in *The New Pioneers*, is here explored with more emphasis on aleatoric and contemporary effects. Here is a reduction of cue 6m1 from J. N. Howard's score for *King Kong* (2005), as an example, to confront a similar approach at Bars 66-72 of *Rapunzel*.

¹⁵⁷ Please refer to Appendix II.

¹⁵⁸ Ravel, *Daphnis et Chloe Suite n.2* (Mineola, New York: Dover Miniature Score editions, 1999), 4-7.

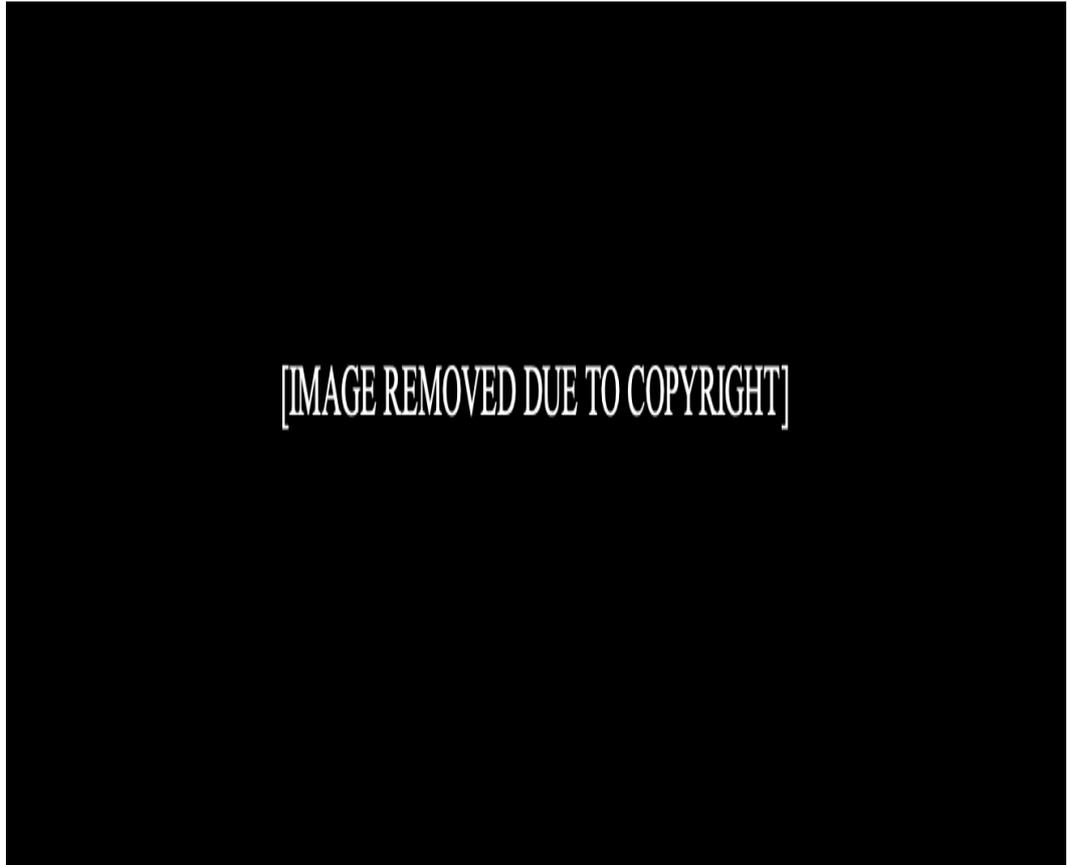


Fig. 67. reduction from J.N. Howard's "Lizard", from *King Kong* (2005).

Leitmotivic Writing

The main theme's incipit is built upon the original German words used by the prince to call Rapunzel:

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Laß mir dein Haar herunter."¹⁵⁹



Fig. 68. Original draft for the main theme in *Rapunzel*.

After the initial exposition at the cello, the theme goes through a developmental section and timbral/harmonic changes until the last atonal statement at bar 77. The decision of working with only one theme allowed me to better represent the gradual transformation of the story from idyllic to horrific, whilst maintaining thematic

¹⁵⁹An English and German version of the tale is accessible at the following link: <https://www.grimmstories.com/language.php?grimm=012&l=en&r=de>.

coherence; as the sorceress is represented by dissonances and aleatoric gestures, the overall narrative arch of the piece can be considered ironic, as the theme (order) succumbs to chaos and disruption (transgression).

Focalisation

This piece demonstrates how the planning of specific focalisations can influence writing and production decisions. Firstly, the story's beginning is imagined cinematically as a tracking shot: from above down to the deep forest, narrowing the camera angle, ending with a close-up of the prince; the camera then is envisioned to do eye-matching shots, emphasising that we are experiencing the prince's perspective. To represent this, I associated the character of the prince with a solo instrument—the cello—and placed the solo recording slightly closer and louder in the mix than the rest of the orchestra. I then chose to maintain this subjective focalisation so that the sorceress would be heard through the prince's ears. To achieve this, instead of giving her a distinct musical identity, I integrated her into the main theme: between bars 33 and 60, she acts as Rapunzel, responding to her lover using the same thematic material. The prince must have heard her from a distance, which is why her responses are not represented by a single solo, but by unusual doublings—serving a dual purpose: creating a disguise and conveying the indistinct sound of her voice from afar. At the same time, the harmonic transformation that follows gradually signals a shift in focalisation: when the prince is climbing, we are back to a medium shot, or external focalisation, and the music hints that something is not quite right. The close-up to the sorcerer's quiet cackling (bars 61-65) ends the external focalisation, and when the topic of *Lurking Dangerous Presence* is finally exposed, I imagined going back to the prince's perspective: in the darkness, he can only hear mysterious creeping noises, and we are experiencing his sense of fear. Once she has finally revealed herself, throwing him from the tower, the focalisation now moves back to be external perspective, with a tracking shot that gradually moves upwards and away from the tower.

Rapunzel plays with the conventions of film music in associating positive concepts with tonal/diatonic music, and negative ones with atonal music. This has been achieved on different levels:

- On a macro-level, through the overall arc journeying from tonality to atonality
- On a conceptual level, through the use of two contrasting topics (the diatonic *Beautiful Forest* as opposed to the *Lurking Dangerous Presence*)
- On a micro-level, through the modification of the tonal main theme into atonal (as in bar 72)

The use of one theme only is also a way to keep the isomorphism coherent: when originally planning the structure of the piece, I was particularly concerned about how

to transition from a tonal context to a non-tonal one; this led to different sketches around the main theme, after which I realised that having the main theme as subject of the change was key to keep the piece cohesive. *Rapunzel* also shows the importance of focalisation in shaping the musical journey of the piece: in doing that, mixing practice derived from film music emerges as an important additional tool to enhance the focus (i.e. the solo cello upfront as opposed to the orchestral flute).

Hansel and Gretel

1. Context and Description

With *Hansel and Gretel I* focused on using a non-tonal harmonic language in a para-cinematic context. Due to its large scale and limited recording resources, this project could only be recorded with sampled orchestra and a few live soloists. This piece depicts the part of the story when Hansel and Gretel wake up at night in the forest, only to find that they are truly lost, up to the moment they begin following the snow-white bird that will lead them to the witch’s house. In this context, each character of the story is represented by a specific timbre: clarinet, violin, and piano represent Hansel, Gretel, and the bird, respectively.

2. Musical Storytelling

<p>Bars 1-22</p>	<p>Intro/The Forest</p> <p>The “imaginary movie” starts suddenly from black (marked with the upbeat of harp and cymbals) to show a tree branch in close-up, at night. A different shot (bar 4) reveals another detail, and from the third shot (bar 12), I imagined a gradual passage from close-up to wide shot over the forest. To accomplish that, I created four harmonies as such:</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;"> </div> <p>Fig. 69. <i>Hansel and Gretel</i>, reduction, chord progression at bars 12-17.</p> <p>The contrary motion between the extreme parts and the crescendo is isomorphic with the idea of a widening angle. Except for chords 1 and 2, which have only two notes in common, chords 3 and 4 only differ by one pitch from the previous chord (chord 3 has G#, chord 4 has A natural and it is made of 4 pitches rather than 5 as the others). Over these static chords, the disturbing alea at celesta, violins II and violas add movement and unease. To help that, trombones and piano play F#, the only tone excluded from both the sum of tones in the chord sequence and the alea’s octatonic scale. I wanted to make the alea a subtle addition rather than a predominant element; this explains why its weight is thinner compared with the way the four chords are orchestrated. Tam-tam with bow ends this</p>
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	initial section, and that should ideally correspond to a camera movement from the forest to the moon in the sky, and subsequent camera movement to the two brothers waking up (bars 22-23).
Bars 24-60	<p>This section follows the wandering of Hansel and Gretel in search of the crumbs that would lead them home. After a couple of false starts (bars 24-28) Hansel seems to have found the way (bars 29-39), but he is confused (bars 40-43). Gretel asks him for help (bars 45-51), and he finally admits they are lost (bars 56-60).</p> <p>To describe the slow and inquisitive walking of the two siblings, I opted for a syncopated accompaniment over a bass line made of intervals of major sevenths (A and G# from bar 25, Eb and D at bars 36-38, and so on). Key clicks, pizzicatos and col legno randomised effects convey instead the mischievous environment the two kids are in.</p>
Bars 60-72	Here, chord 4 with superimposed alea appears again in a different orchestration. Visually, this would correspond to a swift move from the close-up on Hansel towards the wide angle of the forest. The system of the alea is now not only limited to the aleatoric parts (celesta, harp, violin II and viola) but embedded in other instruments' gestures (woodwinds, trumpets, trombones).
Bars 73-94	<p>This section was imagined as a montage of different moments of their search for the way home. In the original tale, they wandered the entire night and the next day, falling asleep the second night of exhaustion and hunger.¹⁶⁰</p> <p>The montage is translated musically in a short developmental section. Woodwinds are used here to clarify the harmony (bars 74-80, then bars 88-94) and to double both foreground and syncopated accompaniment (bars 81-87). The brass section provides the syncopation and bass line used to represent the two siblings' walk (bars 74-80). However, from bar 81, part of the syncopation is delegated to low winds to make space for the first three notes of the main motif, reiterated mechanically to build up into the chords at bar 88. Strings carry on the foreground and accompaniment/bass line in dialogue with the soloists.</p> <p>Harmonically, whilst bars 74-88 repeat the syncopated pattern and harmony used at bars 25-38, there is a transformation from bar 88 into 91, where chord 4 is reached, transposed and cleared from any superimposed alea. This part corresponds to where I imagine the change from the night to the morning of the third day, through a gradual change (pitch by</p>

¹⁶⁰ 'They walked through the entire night and the next day from morning until evening, but they did not find their way out of the woods. They were terribly hungry, for they had eaten only a few small berries that were growing on the ground. And because they were so tired that their legs would no longer carry them, they lay down under a tree and fell asleep' (<https://sites.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm015.html>, accessed on 15/02/22)

pitch, highlighted in red in the reduction below) from one chord to the next.



Fig. 70. *ibid.*, reduction, bars 88-91.

Melodically, there is a first “encrustation” (as I like to define it) towards a specific pitch, B, briefly, at bars 81-83, then E from bar 86. This is a direct consequence of how answer 2 is shaped (a fast gesture downward and upward starting and ending on the same tone) and will be particularly important later in the piece.

MELODIC ANALYSIS BAR 73-90

Fig. 71. *ibid.*, reduction and melodic analysis, bars 73-90.

<p>Bars 95-129</p>	<p>Cadenza Narratively, this part corresponds to the second morning in the woods, when the two</p>
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	<p>siblings wake up and keep wandering, until seeing a mysterious bird.¹⁶¹</p> <p>The solos (violin, clarinet, and piano) during the entire section are written without any specific system in mind, but they gravitate towards the pitch B and neighbouring tones. The melodic contour for both violin and clarinet is mostly based on answer 2. Piano is onomatopoeically attempting to sound as a bird tweeting. The orchestral support is limited to enhance the resonances (i.e., woodwinds and strings at bars 101-108), to create echoing effects (harp, viola and double bass at bar 106) and to offer an harmonic texture (chord 3, used in the string section from bar 110, with the addition of F#).</p> <p>At bar 119 piano performs a solo, which corresponds to when the children stop to listen and look at the bird. Harmonically, chord 1 is introduced at strings, trombones, clarinets and bassoons, whilst flutes and oboes amplify the pitch B and neighbouring tones. The overall idea of the texture at strings from bar 110 is to create a mesmerising, hypnotic feel resulting from polyrhythmic writing.</p>
<p>Bars 119-135</p>	<p>At bar 130, things shift considerably in the melodic contour of violin and clarinet, in favour of a more evident reduction and gravitational pull towards the pitch B. This wants to translate musically the idea of being hypnotised by the bird. The melodic movements of the two instruments become less frequent, at odds with the intense tweeting of the piano part throughout this section.</p>
<p>Bars 136-160</p>	<p>Visually, this section corresponds to a zoom-out from the two siblings following the bird, till losing them in the distance. The idea from bar 136 was to let the solos fade naturally by both their encrusted gestures and by consequence of the more prominent role of the orchestra. The orchestra plays several roles. Onomatopoeic effects to describe the deep forest (bars 136-145) are intertwined with the role of carrying on the main motivic material, given the fading importance of the soloists. In this regard, answer 1 appears at first violins and flute (bars 137-139), answer 2, with its downwards contour, at oboe (from bar 140). The polyrhythmic texture used before is reintroduced, harmonically based on chord 2 (from bar 142), chord 3 (from bar 145) and chord 4 (from bar 156).</p>

3. Conveying The Narrative

The way I conveyed the imaginary editing suggests a shortening of time during the two days when Hansel and Gretel are lost in the woods: this would be achieved through the use of montage, which is musically represented by an orchestral development of the primary thematic materials. Conversely, a realistic pace is employed when the two siblings first realise they are lost and when they meet the

¹⁶¹ 'They started walking again, but managed only to go deeper and deeper into the woods. If help did not come soon, they would perish. At midday they saw a little snow-white bird sitting on a branch. It sang so beautifully that they stopped to listen.' (<https://sites.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm015.html>, accessed on 15/02/22)

snow-white bird: both moments are longer than the development/montage section. This organisation was particularly strategic because it allowed me to emphasise the key moments of the story: the lost siblings and the encounter with the magic bird. The idea of using a non-tonal harmonic language suggested a deeper reflection and research into musical narrative and perception: once the harmonic context is unfamiliar, what kinds of musical choices and cinematic devices could assist the narrative? In *Rapunzel*, the atonal language was used in contrast to diatonic harmonies, and that – *per se* – granted a way of using an established narrative opposition. Musical topics, as seen in Chapter I, have largely been determined in a traditional, tonal context, without which their interpretation may be more difficult. The strategies I adopted, which are analysed below, are:

- Reliance on inherent associations
- Using focalisation as a way to describe the interaction between the main characters and the environment
- Re-creating a meaningful harmonic and conceptual opposition to clarify the narrative archetype of tragedy

Inherent Associations

A specific gesture is employed to imitate the rustling of leaves that Hansel and Gretel hear while exploring the forest: the key tapping at winds and brass, along with pizzicato and col legno effects on strings, establish an auditory link that might trigger a subconscious association with the environment I aim to depict. The other gesture replacing natural sounds is the frenetic, virtuoso piano writing from bar 103, representing the bird's tweeting. Initially based on a system of nine pitches, it was later abandoned in favour of more independence through three- or four-note clusters. These gestures tend to gravitate towards B, the tone that gradually envelops Hansel and Gretel's phrases, suggesting they are almost hypnotised by the magic bird and follow it unresistingly. Among the inherent associations, I will also include the melodic contour used to depict basic emotional expressions. The theme representing the two siblings searching for their way home consists of an incipit and two contrasting answering phrases.

The figure displays a musical analysis of a theme from *Hansel and Gretel*. It begins with a 'MAIN MOTIF' in treble clef, marked *mp*, consisting of a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. This motif is followed by three variations: 'Answer 1' (G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4), 'Answer 1 expanded - v1' (G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4), and 'Answer 1 expanded - v2' (G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3). Below these, 'Answer 2 - insistence on a tone' is shown, featuring a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, with triplets of notes (G4, A4, B4), (C5, B4, A4), and (G4, F4, E4) indicated by a '3' below them.

Fig. 72. *Hansel and Gretel*, motivic analysis.

Answer 1 and its expansions have all the same characteristics of a downward contour, which has been used in the clarinet solo to match Hansel's sense of desolation after finding out they are lost. Answer 2 has a melodic contour that starts and ends on the same note. This is isomorphic with the insistent sense of desperation (a fixed idea which musically is translated with the recurrence of a single pitch) that Gretel develops in my interpretation of the story, in which Hansel tries to keep calm while Gretel is much more prone to panic. In turns, the intent of representing the main characters' emotions clarifies the internal focalisation explained above. Both these melodic contours follow the 'doggy theory' formulated by Kivy and Davies, according to which we tend to anthropomorphise our environment; the theory, as Robinson and Hatten wrote, 'seems to assume that there is a significant degree of *natural* resemblance between musical expressive gestures and human gestures that are expressive in real life.'¹⁶² For this aspect, I have also taken account of previous studies about melodic contour and perception of basic emotions such as sadness or happiness, including the experiment described in Gerardi and Gerken (1995), where ascending melodies were perceived more positively than melodies with a descending contour.¹⁶³ The musical topic of *Lament*, with its bass schema, follows the same principle.¹⁶⁴

Arbitrary Associations

- a) Replacing the function of the tonic with a recurrent chord

To represent the vastness of the forest, I established a diatonic chord – simplifying, an E minor chord over A – and its recurrence is used to replace the gravity that a chord on the tonic would accomplish in a tonal harmonic context.

¹⁶² J. Robinson and R. Hatten, "Emotion in Music", *Music Theory Spectrum* V.O.l 34 n.2, Oxford University Press, p.75.

¹⁶³ Gina M. Gerardi and Louann Gerken, "The Development of Affective Responses to Modality and Melodic Contour", in *Music Perception*, 1995, V.O.l 12, n.3, University of California.

¹⁶⁴ It goes without saying that the analogy with the musical topic of *lament* ends in the downward contour: the *lament* appears statistically quite heavily relying on a descendent bass, whilst the examples presented are melodic. For more literature about the *lament*, see William E. Caplin, "Topics and Formal Functions: the Case of the Lament", in D. Mirka, *op. cit.*, 415-452.

CHORD 4 - vastity of the forest

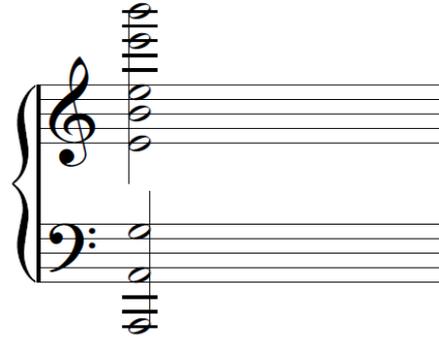


Fig.73. Preliminary sketches of *Hansel and Gretel*, chord 4.

The chord is numbered 4 because it is the fourth chord of the harmonic progression starting at bar 12. It is placed during key moments of the story: at the end of the description of the forest (bars 17-22), after Hansel and Gretel discover their crumbs have been eaten by birds (bars 60-71), before the cadenza where they fall into despair (bars 91-94, transposed a fifth down) and at the end where the two disappear into the forest following the white bird (bars 148-160).

b) Superimposition of systems to represent a disturbing element in the story

Unlike the lush description of the forest in *Rapunzel*, here I wanted to describe a daunting, intimidating setting. To accomplish that, I used what I defined in my sketches as a 'disturbing alea', a double alea based on a defective octatonic scale:

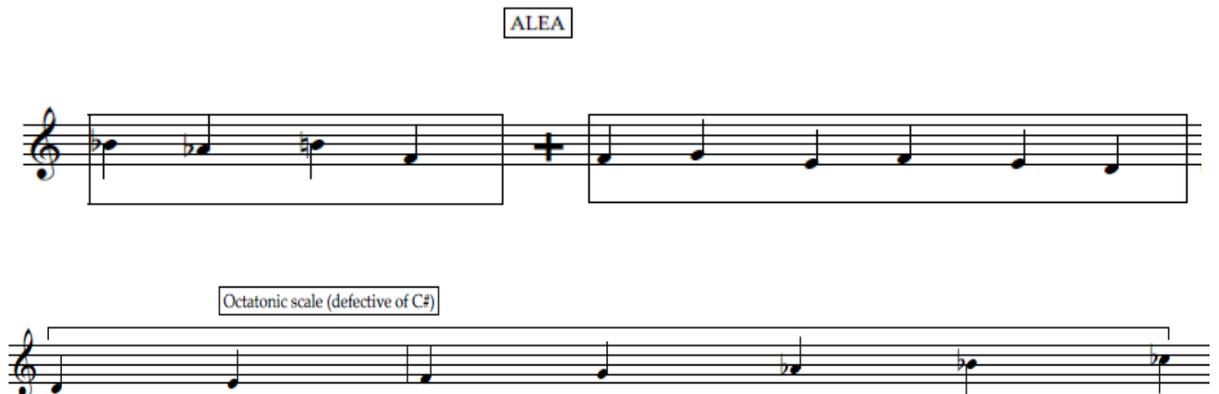


Fig.74. *ibid.*, alea.

This alea has been arranged differently each time, with varying degrees of doubling depending on how much weight I wanted to give to create a daunting setting, whether just as a shadow as in bar 12, or more prominent as at the end of the piece.

Leitmotivic Writing

The piece has two main Leitmotivic ideas: the main thematic group related to Hansel and Gretel, as described before, and the recurring chord 4, 'Vastity of the Forest'. According to Almén's theory of narrative, *Hansel and Gretel* belongs to the narrative archetype of tragedy (defeat of transgression by another imposing hierarchy), where the transgression is embedded in the siblings' melodic motifs, and the imposing hierarchy is given by the recurring chord 4 and the pitch B towards which their motifs are gravitating at the end of the piece.

Focalisation

Focalisation here is more developed and nuanced than in *Rapunzel*, although both pieces use similar techniques to distinguish the main characters (Hansel and Gretel) from the bird and the environment. As with the cello in *Rapunzel*, both clarinet and violin have been recorded separately and placed in the mix closer than the rest of the orchestra to favour the idea of internal, subjective focus. In the piece, each musical phrase assigned to them, therefore, signifies a close-up of the respective character. This makes more evident, by contrast, the placement of the bird, which is represented by a piano mixed within the orchestral forces, sounding more distant from the other solos. This is an auditory way of saying that the bird is heard through the ears of the two siblings, rather than being followed by an omnipresent camera (through, for instance, a close-up or a closer sound source). The effect of focalisation on the mix is also particularly significant towards the end, where, to convey how the forest 'swallows' the children, I increased the wet signal on the reverb for both clarinet and violin whilst decreasing their volume. It goes without saying that, as an essential narrative device for the story, the auditory focalisation (equivalent to the visual focalisation) would need to be maintained in the concert hall through necessary amplification of the two solo instruments.

With *Hansel and Gretel*, I explore the potential artistic implications of para-cinematic writing: being not entirely film music nor entirely concert music, a para-cinematic piece may share the best elements of both. On one hand, the language chosen in *Hansel and Gretel* challenges conventional harmonic choices and traditional film music writing, implying a reflection on which strategies to use to represent narrative archetypes on a macro level and the specific story on a micro level. For the former, the interplay of diatonic and chromatic textures creates the main elements for representing tragedy; for the latter, the use of onomatopoeic and anthropomorphic gestures (such as the downward melodic contour discussed above) hints at specific moments and characters' feelings. On the other hand, the structure, focalisation, and narrative refer to how cinematic language would present the story: in particular, the

specific mixing choices reflect isomorphically the camera focalisation. One further consideration regarding this piece is that I never intended it to rely on established musical topics: the example of the melodic downward contour for Gretel's desperation instead of using the *Lament* is emblematic. As this was my first attempt at using an atonal language in a para-cinematic context, I felt the need to employ much broader signifiers than culturally-established devices: this explains the heavy reliance on inherent associations. As discussed below, in *Bremen Town Musicians*, this creative limitation was further challenged.

Et Resurrexit (Snow-White’s Funeral)

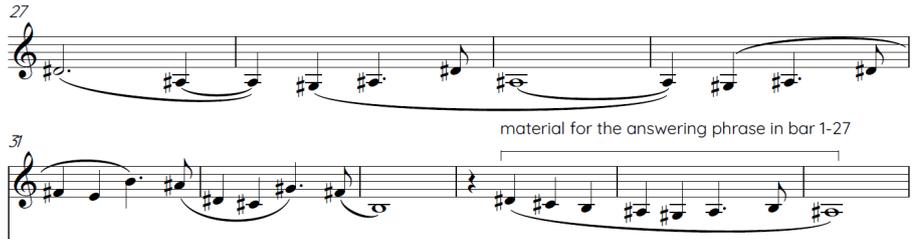
1. Context and Description

The piece begins mid-story during the funeral procession, with the prince, the seven dwarfs, and the prince's servants carrying Snow White’s coffin. In the original story, the servants carrying the coffin stumble, dislodging the poisoned apple from the girl’s throat, after which Snow White awakens. The stumble is a key moment in this work, as it completely interrupts the calm flow of the march. Afterwards, I imagined the camera shifting from a full shot of them to a wide shot upwards, with a blurring effect in a fade-out.

2. Musical Storytelling

Bars 1-27	I wanted to open the imaginary movie directly during the funeral march, while the prince and the seven dwarfs are mourning for Snow White.
Bars 27-38	<p>From bar 27, the piece shifts to the key of G# minor. The accompaniment (mainly at second violins, violas, oboes and clarinets) contains several chromatisms to hint that something is off. The indication of using half violins and violas in ponticello has the same purpose.¹⁶⁵ This corresponds to the moment when the procession is reaching an uneven terrain, causing the servants to struggle in carrying on the coffin. I wanted to extend the theme to more elements of the orchestra at bars 27-33, to signify that the attention is on the procession itself rather than any specific character. By making this part more choral, the subsequent reduction to eight players at bars 34-36 has the aim of bringing back the visual focus on the prince and dwarfs only. Ideally, should this be animated, I would like to see the eight characters pausing for a bit during this moment, mourning.</p> <p>Formally, this second melodic period reveals also that the answering phrase exposed in the previous section (bars 1-27) is part of the main theme itself:</p>

¹⁶⁵ In the first drafts, the shift to pont. was for all vl II and va, but I then opted to halve the number because it would make it too apparent; I did not want to convey a sense of danger, but rather a sense of unease.

	 <p>Fig. 75. <i>ibid.</i>, motivic analysis, bars 27-36.</p> <p>The procession resumes at bar 36 with the reinstatement of the bassline; its different rhythm at bars 37-38 suggests that the pace is losing its steadiness, literally mimicking men losing balance.</p>
<p>Bars 39-50</p>	<p>The stumble at bar 39 is represented quite onomatopoeically in my score: a sudden hit and burst of random notes in diminuendo and slowing down. Visually, the coffin falls, and so do some of the servants. After a short pause (visually, this could correspond to dust settling or the camera moving to a wider angle), music resumes in an apparent randomised manner. Strings are in the background, offering and clarifying the harmonic sequence described in the previous chapter. The different solos, with their hectic contour, represent the mumbling of the people gathered around the open coffin, staring at the gradual transformation in Snow White.</p>
<p>Bars 51-67</p>	<p>Snow White is now awake, and a short dialogue with the prince follows. This corresponds to the alternating short thematic phrases at piccolo and bassoon at bars 51-61. The use of piccolo in its lower range is intentional, as I wanted a fragile sound. From bar 61 I imagined a fade to black whilst the camera pulls away from the scene.</p>

3. Conveying the Narrative

This piece's main elements of interest are:

- the integration of inherent associations within a highly symbolic and structured piece
- the use of a variety of arbitrary associations, among which the musical topic of *Funeral March*, for conveying the overall narrative
- the use of harmony for narrative purposes (harmonic fluidity)
- a realistic, almost documentary-style pace for the most part of the piece, established using the methodology explained at the beginning of the chapter.

Fig. 77. *ibid.*, reduction, bars 34-36.

Seven are the entries accompanying the bassoon's last phrase at bars 62-63:

Fig. 78. *ibid.*, reduction, bars 61-63.

Harmonically, the two moments of gradual change in the imaginary film - the slow awakening of Snow White and the progressive dissolving effect at the end - are marked by seven chords each. The first event (bars 43-50), especially the initial five chords, is constructed on a specific framework, as illustrated in the diagram below. The first chord is a superimposition of progressively expanding intervals, beginning with a major second on E. The subsequent chord follows the same concept, from a minor third to the fifth chord. In the sixth chord, I had to choose a compromise for

harmonic variety (the interval of a minor 7th in bold should have been a major 6th), and the final chord deviates entirely from this framework.

RESULTANT HARMONY

Bar 43-44	Bar 45	Bar 46-47/1	Bar 47/2-48/2	Bar 48/3-4	Bar 49	Bar 50
4th aug 4th 3rd M 3rd m	5th 4th aug 4th 3rd M	6th m 5th 4th aug 4th	6th M 6th m 5th 4th aug	7th m 6th M 6th m 5th	7th M 7th m 7th m 6th m	
2nd M	3rd m	3rd M	4th	4th aug	5th	

Fig. 79. Analysis of the harmonic progression from bar 43 to 50.

The second event (bars 57-61) does not follow any architecture other than the contrary motion between the top and bottom note of the seven chords sequence:

Fig. 80. Analysis of the harmonic progression from bar 57 to 61.

b) Harmonic Fluidity

The language of this piece is heavily indebted to Ravel, especially in the use of modality and polymodality.¹⁶⁷ I wanted to rethink the common diatonic practice, to be able to switch fluidly between diatonic harmonies, used for the first part of the procession and the ending, and chromaticisms, used for the final part of the march and the consequent stumble. For the opening (bars 1-26) I chose a system relying on two centres: A for the bassline, and B for the thematic material. It all could be simplified as happening in the mode of B-Aeolian, although the C natural in the first phrase of the theme (B-Phrygian) and in the secondary motifs adds to the ambiguity, especially when coexisting with C# in the accompaniment:

¹⁶⁷ In addition to that, one of the main inspirations for this piece was the calm accompaniment of Ravel's *Pavane Pour Une Enfante Défunte*, especially in the quaver pattern and bass line.

Fig. 81. *Et Resurrexit*, reduction, bars 3-7.

The stumble is atonal, whilst the moment of transformation follows the seven chords described earlier. Following these seven chords, the piece ends on a chord derived from a superimposition of perfect fifths from Db and the mode of Ab Dominant Aeolian:

Fig. 82. *Ibid.*, final chord and mode.

c) Musical Topic of *Funeral March*

As Dickensheets wrote in regards to the qualities of this topic in 19th-century music:

Little needs to be said on the specific symbolism of this topic. It features a ponderous duple meter, evocative of the procession of a funeral cortege, which is usually enhanced by a dark minor mode. Dotted rhythms frequently prevail in the melodic material, and the repetition of these melodies, especially when paired with a repetitive bass line, can create a sense of inevitability. Dramatic intensity is often achieved by a thickening of the melodic lines and changes of register. Perhaps the single most famous example of this style can be found in the third movement of Chopin's Sonata in Bb minor, Op. 35. Mahler also uses this topic in the first movement of his Symphony No. 5 (see Example 6). Dotted rhythms appear in the first trumpet, and repeated notes continue in the tuba in the ensuing measures.¹⁶⁸

In film music literature, not only are there examples of well-known funeral marches re-arranged and re-adapted for screen – from Mahler's 4th movement from *Symphony No. 5* used in *Death in Venice* (1971), to Beethoven's 2nd movement from *Symphony No. 7* used in *The King's Speech* (2010) – but the topic is also quite established in examples like Howard Shore's "Lament for Gandalf" in *The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001) or the last section of John Williams' "Anakin's Dark Deeds" in *Star Wars – Revenge of the Sith* (2005). My main source of inspiration for this piece, however, was Maurice Ravel's *Pavane Pour Une Enfante Défunte* (1899), particularly with regard to harmonic choices. Among all those arbitrary associations, it is my belief that, while the first two act on a symbolic and structural level, the musical topic is the one that mainly contributes to clarifying the narrative of the piece.

Leitmotivic Writing

This piece has two main thematic ideas: the first is the prince's sorrow ('Main Theme'), and the second is the dwarves' answer. The two are alternated throughout the first half of the piece. The theme for the prince's sorrow is exposed at the bassoon, alternated with the dwarves' short choral answers at strings and flutes. These answers use clusters of seven pitches moving in parallel motion, with an orchestration that gives more weight to the top and bottom notes. The theme follows a traditional structure of 8+8 bars (antecedent at bars 3-10 and consequent at bars 16-23), with a gap of 5 bars between antecedent and consequent, to wait for the answering phrase to finish.

At bars 23-27, the bassoon plays the orchestral answering phrase in diminution, as if the prince is joining the dwarves' mourning. The doubling at cellos has the role of helping the solo's phrase.

¹⁶⁸ J. Dickensheets, *op. cit.*, 104.

Bassoon solo

mf mournful, bring out

Fig. 83. *ibid.*, bassoon solo part, bars 3-26.

Structurally, the two thematic ideas are developed in bars 27-37, abandoned at bars 39-53 (where narratively the stumble and subsequent chaos happen) and reprised from bar 54 to end. The stumble marks the division of the piece into two distinct narrative archetypes: irony ('defeat of order by transgression') and romance ('victory of order over transgression').

Editing and Montage

Except for the dolly moving away from the scene at the end of the imaginary animation, camera movements here follow the characters; the editing would combine shots from different angles, with a quicker pace in how frequently the cuts occur in relation to the stumble and subsequent confusion.¹⁶⁹ I intended to represent the sequence without any contractions or expansion of time; this is consistent with the events described, which unfold in the arch of a few minutes. The only exception is towards the end, where I have shortened the dialogue between Snow-White and the

¹⁶⁹ 'A dolly shot refers to the camera movement when a camera is mounted on a dolly. In a dolly shot, the camera moves towards, away from or alongside your subject'. Carles Yeager, "The Dolly Shot: How It Works and Why It's Powerful", *The Beat* (August 2019), accessed October 5, 2022.

prince, which in the original tale would have been much longer.¹⁷⁰ Instead of focusing on them, I wanted to adapt the music to follow the camera movement. The primary attention, both musically and narratively, has been given to the funeral march, accounting for 36 bars (bars 1-36), against only 4 for the stumble (bars 39-42), 10 for the dust-settling moment (bars 43-53) and 13 for the epilogue (bars 54-67).

Et Resurrexit explores the para-cinematic programme in a factual, documentary-style shooting. Its harmonic fluidity is the result of an ongoing interest in harmonic signifiers, as established in film music. Belonging to concert music practice, instead, is the symbolic use of the number 7: this functions purely on a theoretical level, and does not possibly affect the representation of the story. From these conclusions, it can be once more appreciated how para-cinematic works inherit and assemble different aspects of film and concert music.

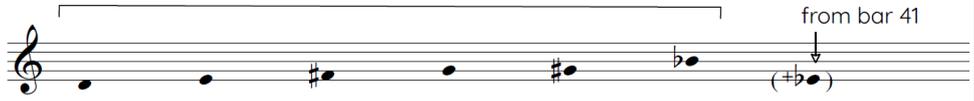
¹⁷⁰ In the original tale, the prince declares his love: 'The prince said joyfully, "You are with me." He told her what had happened, and then said, "I love you more than anything else in the world. Come with me to my father's castle. You shall become my wife."' (<https://sites.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm053.html>, accessed on 23/02/2022).

Frog Prince

1. Context and Description

The story in this piece begins with the princess and the king having their dinner interrupted by a frog's croaking. After explaining why the persistent frog wants to stay with the princess, she reluctantly agrees to keep her promise. However, as she goes into her room and listens to the frog's requests, she snaps and throws the creature against the wall, breaking the spell and allowing the frog to transform into a prince. The ending scene is imagined to be a sequence of events where, after the transformation, the two are in a carriage and disappear in the distance.¹⁷¹

2. Musical Storytelling

<p>Bars 1-36</p>	<p>The imaginary scene happens in a regal dining room, where a string quartet plays a classical piece, and the King and Princess are having dinner. The frog's croaks and knocking at the door are onomatopoeically represented. The woodwind choir amplifies the hint of the Princess' Theme at the flute solo. The fast repeated notes and their overall texture are meant to contrast the peaceful and steady pace of the quartet, casting some hints that the princess is nervous. As the bass sax starts playing its tune, this unsettling fear is expanded further and culminates into the first climax at bar 22. Following the king's questions (bars 26-34), the princess starts narrating why the persistent frog is there.</p>
<p>Bars 37-52</p>	<p>Crossfade (cymbal roll at bars 35-37) to a blurred flashback. The princess starts telling her father what happened and how she first met the frog. The accompaniment – except first violins, which play the princess' theme in augmentation – is entirely based on this series until bar 49:</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>accompaniment bar 37-49</p>  </div> <p>Fig. 84. Series used in bars 37-49.</p>

¹⁷¹ In the original tale, this part was of importance. In fact, the tale goes also under the name of "The Frog Prince, or Iron Heinrich". Heinrich was the servant who, saddened by his master's transformation into a frog, had placed three iron bands around his heart. When he then escorts the Prince and Princess in the carriage, the bands start springing from his heart for happiness. In Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, "Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich", *Kinder und Hausmärchen* n.1. Translated by D. L. Ashliman, 1999-2002, <https://sites.pitt.edu/~dash/grimmoo1.html>, accessed 20-03-2014.

	The polyrhythmic texture provides a mesmerising atmosphere for the sequence of past events narrated by the princess, almost as the musical equivalent of the blurred visual effect I imagined at each main stage of the story. ¹⁷²
Bars 53-80	Segue a sudden cut to current events, where the frog insists that the princess should maintain her promise, and the princess is gradually more distressed. The musical dialogue (or, rather, altercation) is amplified by the orchestra that mainly expands and reinforces the princess' anxiety (fast-repeated notes) whilst a raising gesture provides the direction to the next climax (bar 68). As before, the king intervenes, but this time angrily declaring that his daughter shall keep her promise (horns in <i>fortepiano</i> at bar 79).
Bars 81-118	The following passage (bars 81-202) describes the princess obeying her father's orders and watching the frog at dinner in disgust (a distorted rendition of the theme previously exposed at the string quartet). Cinematographically, this should correspond to a scene with close-ups of the frog (at bars 85-87 and 94-96) and grotesque details of its disgusting mess, whilst the princess is increasingly upset and turns away her sight from the scene (Bars 100). To make clear that the princess watches the 'grotesque dinner', her instrument is in tacet until she cries in despair (bars 103-112). The king's reproach follows (bars 113-116).
Bars 119-162	This part of the story, where the princess brings the frog up into her room and finally throws it to the wall, is scored as a passacaglia based on both the melodic contour of the frog's theme – for the repeated bass line – and the princess' theme – at bassoons and clarinets. Over the orchestra, the amplified flute is performing an increasingly nervous solo, culminating in the cadenza at bar 155, whilst other instruments replicate the frog's croak. From bar 147, the passacaglia's bass and the chordal pattern at clarinets and bassoons are doing a written accelerando, mirroring the princess' mounting anger.
Bars 159-179	Starting quietly underneath the flute's cadenza, this is the section where the magical transformation of the frog happens. The fast-moving violins and celesta replicate the sense of magic and wonder, whilst ascending chords starting with trombones – derived from the raising gesture at bars 61-67 – converge gradually to a more consonant, tonal writing. Over this, vibraphone plays the frog's theme in a high texture: I did not want any further doubling in support of this tune as the idea was to have it almost as a ghostly yet audible presence.

¹⁷² For an excellent excursus on the cinematic representation of flashbacks, please refer to H. Sterner, *Flashbacks in Films*, <https://vimeo.com/99139322>, accessed on 20-4-2019.

<p>Bars 180-216</p>	<p>The frog's theme is now sweetened by the instrument change (Baritone sax), a slower pace and the overall sense of the key of E major. Regarding the harmony used here, I wanted to avoid being too tonal, but rather diatonic, so to speak. The overall key is often "stained" by quartal harmony, for instance, although there is a clear sense of tonic and dominant throughout. In this regard, the final chord is not a clear E major but rather a diatonic cluster rooted in E. The pattern keeps the excitement introduced in the previous section started at bar 179, runs and fast gestures at high woodwinds. The raising gesture starting at bar 186 leads to a significant change in orchestration (from bar 191), where the high strings play the tune more triumphantly, and both soloist instruments tacet. This corresponds to the montage of prince and princess getting in the carriage and disappearing in the distance. The final salutation of the two (bars 208-212) should come just right at the end of the sequence, whilst the last diatonic cluster should land of the classical "the end" card.</p>
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3. Conveying the Narrative

This piece, written when my research was at its peak of development, presents several aspects of interest, each one carefully thought out and analysed. Aside from the exploration of a new musical topic (*Elegant Dinners and Troubled Diners*), *Frog Prince* offers a specific focus on editing and focalisation, together with explicit onomatopoeic effects coexisting with Leitmotivic writing.

The piece adds an extra challenge with the on-stage (or pre-recorded) quartet: this element is functional to the story, acting as the diegetic music we would find in an actual film or animation. In the recording, this is easily achieved by placing the quartet fairly close and central, while in a live concert it might suggest either a specific setting (if feasible, the quartet should be separated from the orchestra) or the use of a sound system that could play the quartet from the speakers.

Onomatopoea / Inherent Associations

The frog's croak is onomatopoeically reproduced in the score in the following passages:

- Bars 8-16: by the combination of guiro, bass sax slap tongue and strings in pizzicato/col legno
- Bars 126-154: by the combination of snare drum, guiro, bass sax in slap tongue and col legno strings

Additionally, to replicate its knocking at the door, I used surdo and frame drum (bar 15 and 51).

Musical Topics

a) *Magic*

Already described in *Cinderella*, this topic has been used to represent the magical transformation of the frog in prince in bars 159-177. The fast, agile gestures used by violins and celesta reminds of a similar passage used in John Williams' *Hedwig's Theme*. The progression based on quartal harmony initiated at trombones also belongs to the topic in conveying the sense of transformation.

b) *Elegant Dinners and Troubled Diners (Biedermeier Style)*

In film literature, I have found that classical concert music or classically sounding original scoring is often used diegetically to create a certain elegant, sophisticated setting. The narrative purpose is to establish the environment, whose elegance and tranquillity may serve to highlight, through contrast, some of the diners' peculiar behaviour or sense of estrangement. One particularly striking example is in *Spencer* (2021), where the composer Jonny Greenwood starts the topic and gradually twists the music atonally to describe Diana's feelings.¹⁷³ The equation of Classic style with establishment and order parallels how romantic composers conceived the Biedermeier Style in the 19th century, which was

used to signify an old-fashioned elegance linked with a proper middle-class sense of propriety. While evoking a comforting nostalgia for an earlier time, it brings to mind the coffee-house musical styles of a Vienna just a few years (or decades) in the past, creating an overriding mood of restrained Apollonian charm. Its musical gestures, including symmetrical phrases (frequently four bars long), lyrical melodies, largely diatonic harmonies, strong cadences, and the occasional use of an Alberti-like bass line, bear a close resemblance to traditional Classical styles.¹⁷⁴

The elements that define this topic can be summarised as such:

- Diegetic music whose source is visible (i.e. a chamber group playing) or not

¹⁷³ Please refer to the videography provided: 1) the dinner scene in *Pretty Woman* (1990), where Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* is playing in the background, at odds with Vivian's awkward behaviour and uneasiness. 2) the dinner scene in *Hannibal* (2001) where J. S. Bach's Variation n.25 from *Goldberg Variations* plays from an invisible source. The contrast here lies in the elegant setting and the gruesome dinner. 3) the dinner scene in *Shrek 2* (2004), magisterially scored by Harry Greggson-Williams to sound like a Viennese classical waltz, playing cheerfully throughout against the increasingly upset and crossed diners. 4) the dinner scene in *Spencer* (2021). See also Carlo Cenciarelli, "Dr. Lecter's Taste for 'Goldberg', or: The Horror of Bach in the Hannibal Franchise", *Journal of the Royal Music Association* 137 (2012). Another reference, omitted in the videography, is Handel's *Hallelujah* in the beggars' banquet scene in Bunuel's *Viridiana* (1961).

¹⁷⁴ J. Dickensheets, *op. cit.*, 115.

- Music that presents as 'period music': pieces belonging to or inspired by Western musical history, with a predilection towards the XVII-XIX century (Baroque, Galant, and Classical styles seem to be mostly prevailing)
- suggesting a sense of establishment, calm, and elegance through the use of predictable meters (waltz, sarabande, binary meters), avoiding any overly fast tempo
- exclusively acoustic (chamber or orchestral forces)

This is the main reason for writing a string quartet in Galant style at the piece's opening.

c) *Fate/Plot/Determination-Revealing Counterpoint*

The Passacaglia used from bar 119 is a two-part counterpoint (tuba playing the Frog Theme against clarinets and bassoons performing motifs of the Princess Theme) over which the flute solo performs a gradually more nervous version of the Princess' Theme. To play with the musical topic, I decided to go against the main quality of this Passacaglia, which is its steady, slow-paced bass line, by writing an *accelerando* ending over the climax at bar 155. This is isomorphic to the events described, where the Princess, initially set to honour her word, eventually loses her temper.

Leitmotivic Writing

As in *Rapunzel*, the main theme is based on the words of the frog's speech in the original text.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, "Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich", *Kinder und Hausmärchen* n.1. Translated by D. L. Ashliman, 1999-2002, <https://sites.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm001.html>, accessed 20-03-2014.

The Frog's Theme

YOUN-GEST DAUGH-TER OF THE KING O-PEN UP THE DOOR FOR ME

5
DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT YES-TER-DAY YOU SAID TO ME, DOWN BY THE WELL?

Fig. 85. Preliminary work for shaping up The Frog's Theme.

When the frog first appears, the bass saxophone is not only playing a musical theme but is also conceptually representing the frog's thoughts – albeit, only on a theoretical level. The theme has been used as a leitmotif throughout:

- hinted at bars 17-20 (bass sax)
- Fully exposed at bars 53-69 (bass sax)
- Its first motif used against the orchestra in bars 85-87 and bars 94-95 (bass sax with doubling of contrabassoon)
- Its first phrase used as *color* for the passacaglia at bars 119-155 (tuba)
- Exposed from bar 180 in a romantic, tonal version (Baritone sax, solo flute, orchestra)

The theme, isomorphic with the transformation of the frog into a prince, goes through a series of changes: from the accented, brisk performance at the beginning and the raucous sound of the bass sax, to the gentler version from bar 180 and the warmer timbre of the Baritone sax. The main theme's narrative belongs to romance (victory of an order-imposing hierarchy over its transgression).

The other Leitmotivic idea is the Princess' Theme, which interacts with the Frog's Theme until bar 180.

The Princess' Theme

Fig. 86. The Princess' Theme, bars 37-50, with motivic analysis.

The journey of this theme is summarised below:

- Hints of its first motif at bars 12-22 (flute solo and woodwind choir)
- Fully exposed at bars 37-52 (flute solo)
- Repeated at flute at bars 54-69 in dialogue with bass saxophone (Frog's Theme)
- Motif A and B used at clarinets and bassoons in counterpoint with tuba, whilst developed at flute solo at bars 119-155

Editing and Montage

When imagining the timing of the animation, my main focus was on the present rather than the past (the flashback) and the future (the shot over the carriage), which are significantly shortened. The current moments of the narration (the dinner, the princess climbing the stairs, and the transformation of the frog) are covered in 186 bars (bars 1-36 + 53-203), while the flashback only lasts 15 bars, and the epilogue 12. The substantial compression of time during the princess's recall of her encounter with the frog presented a challenge in how to depict that flashback. To address the issue of its brevity, I envisioned having three main shots in crossfade:

- (1) the princess at the pond (bars 37-42) while the ball ends in the water (bars 42-44)
- (2) the princess crying (bars 45-47)
- (3) the frog retrieving the ball and the two characters nodding in agreement (bars 48-50).

The use of crossfades helped me imagine a continuous musical arch as opposed to cuts, which allowed me to create a seamless musical phrase. The blurring effect is translated musically by displacing the melodic idea to strings, echoing it while supporting the flute's melody.¹⁷⁶

Focalisation

The clearest example of how organising internal focalisation within the programme influences music composition choices is in the way I handled the princess's point of view. The first instance occurs during the flashback at bars 37-52: the focalisation here is directly triggered by the crossfade into the princess's recall of past events, functioning as a perception shot because the narration is intertwined with her feeling of unease (represented by the rapid gesture in the woodwinds, as described earlier). The second example happens during the dinner, at bars 81-118, where another perception shot occurs: her feelings distort the Apollonian elegance of the quartet, amplifying it through the orchestra and, in short, taking control of the entire score. The grotesque variation of that quartet – very similar in intentions to the aforementioned example from *Spencer* – has been planned as the musical response of her feelings.

Setting aside other aspects already discussed, *Frog Prince* exemplifies how music can gracefully convey both internal states and external events: this piece combines onomatopoeic gestures and seemingly 'diegetic' elements (the frog's croak, the quartet) with distorted musical sections that depict a character's perspective. To support this, film music mixing choices provide the appropriate spatialisation for different focus points, helping to enhance the underlying narrative.

¹⁷⁶ See paragraph 2, bars 37-52.

Bremen Town Musicians

1. Context and Description

The *Bremen Town Musicians* is a chamber piece commissioned by ensemble Psappha and Curated Place performed in Manchester on the 10th of December 2015. The concept was one of the successful applications for the scheme *Moving Classics*, launched by Curated Place, to promote contemporary classical music and culture using innovative performance formats. In this case, I imagined an animation based on a literary adaptation of the story (Philip Pullman's *Grimm Tales*).¹⁷⁷ The literary text was used as inspiration for setting the imaginary programme. The nonsensical plot – four animals that decide to perform in the musical band in Bremen, but never reach their destination – made me think about surrealistic visual references, particularly the imaginative world of Disney's *Destino* (2003), realised in collaboration with Salvador Dalí. From there, I sketched the four characters as partly animals and partly the instrument that represents each of them:

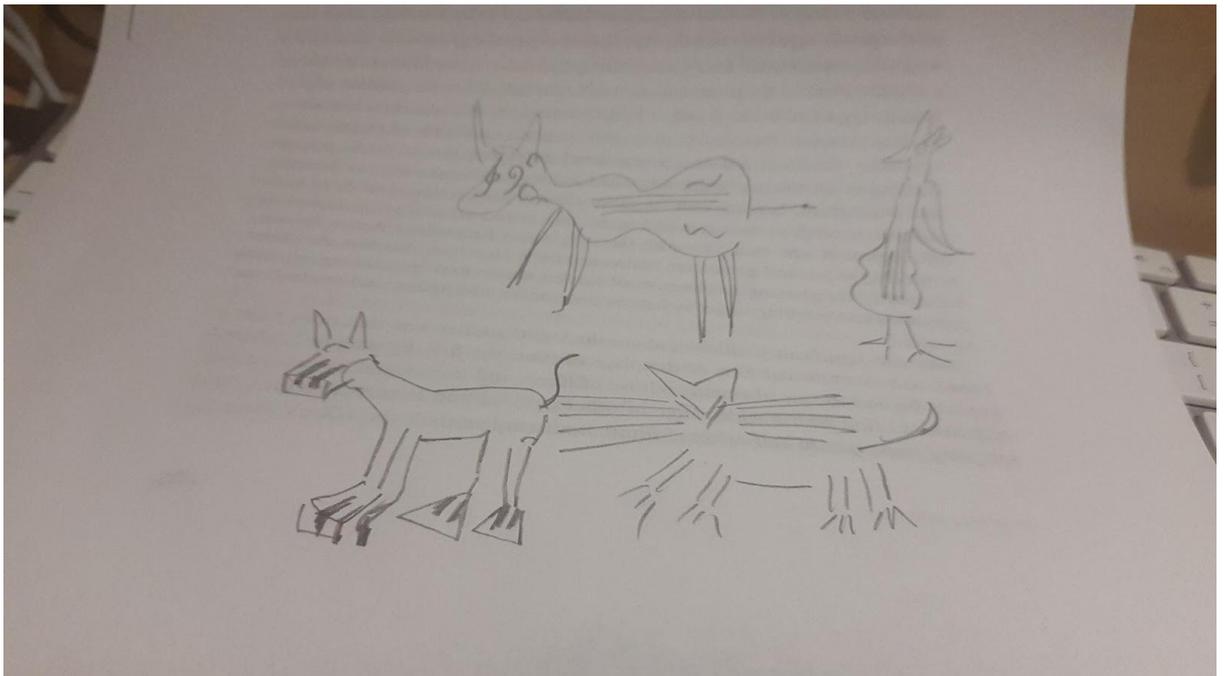


Fig. 87, visual sketches of the four animals.

Since it wasn't possible to create an animation in such a short amount of time, I requested the inclusion of live illustrations projected on screen during the performance, which artist Louise Wilde performed. The concert, presented as music with live animation, was performed at the Manchester Central Library. The story of

¹⁷⁷ Philip Pullman, *Grimm Tales* (London: Penguin Classics, 2012).

the Bremen Town Musician is followed in full, from the encounter with the four animals to the journey that will never end in Bremen. The unfolding of events is organised in three chapters:

I) How the four met and made the fellowship

II) A light in the distance and the house of robbers

III) How the four feasted in the house and decided never to leave

Each chapter of the piece is, at most, 5 minutes long, following the rules I set for myself when composing my para-cinematic works. Each is intended as a short animation, part of a series of three, separated by a mini-credit card displaying the title of the piece.

In *Bremen Town Musicians*, I set myself two main limitations: linking each character to an instrument within a chamber ensemble and composing in an atonal style. The first became quite problematic when, in the original tale, events occurred outside the characters' direct involvement. This differs from, for example, Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, where the presence of a narrating actor provides the necessary details to understand the plot.¹⁷⁸ To provide a practical example, the part focusing on the robbers' perspective, their dialogue, and their plotting had to be removed from this musical tale. The imaginary camera remains consistently focused on the four protagonists, almost in a documentary style: this results in a much simpler editing plan, with shots that are mainly medium shots and tracking shots, with no editing cuts apart from those marked at the end of each chapter. When the four are drawn to the distant light, I devised a creative idea by imagining that the light acts as a mesmerising force, 'absorbing' them: this explains the use of a different theme for the light itself, sharing it through the instruments, as if the four animals are, at that moment, entirely part of it.

The second limitation adopted in *The Bremen Town Musicians* is related to the atonal language and its 'matrixes', or pitch systems:



Fig. 88. Matrix 1. Transcription in Sibelius from manuscript sketches.

A different disposition of the same pitches originates another system used throughout the score:

¹⁷⁸ Sergey Prokofiev, *Peter and the Wolf*, op. 67 (London: Hawkes & Son, 1942).



Fig. 89. Matrix 1a. Transcription in Sibelius from manuscript sketches.

Out of matrix 1, I identified a complementary pentatonic scale (matrix 2):



Fig. 90. Matrix 2. Transcription in Sibelius from manuscript sketches.

This second set of pitches has been used to create the Theme of the Light in Chapter II, from bar 17 onwards. This motif is then gradually transposed to D# from bar 57 to 83. In this section, the harmony shifts progressively according to this gradual transformation:

MATRIX 2

MATRIX 2 TRANSPOSED (no common notes with matrix 2 in A)

Fig. 91. Transposition of Matrix 2 from A to D#, Chapter II, bars 57-83. The notes in red belong to the transposed matrix.

61 62 63

mf suddenly, as waking up

Fig. 92. Rhythm from the March Theme using matrix 2, violin part, bars 61-63.

Another permutation used in the piece goes under the name of Matrix 3; this is used, for instance, for building the fast gesture at piano in Chapter II, bar 138 onwards.

Chapter I: How the Four Met and Made The Fellowship

Chapter I introduces each character in sequence, following their appearance in the original tale. The entire section is structured with a march-like pattern, often interrupted and displaced to reflect the animals' clumsiness. The theme is fully stated only after all four instruments have been introduced. Originally, I intended for each player to appear a few bars before their part, but this was not feasible due to logistical constraints at the concert venue.

Bars 1-13	The Donkey makes his entrance (cello solo on stage), playing elements of the Main Theme.
Bars 14-22	Dog interrupts the march-like pattern started at Bars 7 and later at bar 13. A dialogue follows (bar 15).
Bars 23-33	They march together; period 1 of the Main Theme is exposed at piano (bar 26) and then quoted by the cello at bars 33-34.
Bars 34-35	Cimbalom (the cat) interrupts the two.
Bars 36-50	A dialogue follows, using material of the Main Theme and a very short hint of the Fellowship Theme at bar 49, at cimbalom.
Bars 51-71	The three march together (Main Theme) and they spot the cockerel (hint of salutation formula, bars 69-71).
Bars 72-77	A short dialogue follows between violin (cockerel) and the other three instruments.
Bars 78-93	The cockerel tells his story. While cimbalom, piano and cello use material of the Main Theme, violin exposes bits of the Fellowship Theme.
Bars 94-121	They march together; musically, Main Theme and Fellowship Theme are intertwined.
Bars 122-123	Salutation formula (title card).

Chapter II: A House in the Distance and the House of Robbers

Chapter II shows the fellowship struggling to sleep in the forest. The cockerel then invites them to follow him towards a light in the distance. After discovering the house of robbers, the four plot and decide to scare the men away.

Bars 1-14	The four try to sleep but often wake up suddenly (bars 10 and 14)
Bars 15-25	The fellowship decides to go and have a look at the source of the light.
Bars 26-52	The four walk toward the light; the Theme of Light makes its appearance at the cimbalom.
Bars 53-83	Violin and cello set a new motor - another binary, march-like pattern - to signify their walking towards the light. In this section, symbolically, the movement from the forest to the house is represented harmonically by the transposition of matrix 2 from A to D#.
Bars 84-92	In my interpretation, after losing their identity, the four animals return to their senses. To remark on this, I decided to literally score the dialogue written in Pullman's version. ¹⁷⁹ Each instrument has a written text and indicative melodic/rhythmic phrases. The performers should therefore play the melody with the rhythm of a spoken phrase, as colloquially as possible. This was not well interpreted, in my opinion, by the performers. In hindsight, however, I believe that the Psappha ensemble could have delivered a better rendition of my intention with a different notation.
Bars 93-116	The four plot against the robbers; musically, elements of the Main and Fellowship Theme are combined.
Bars 117-123	The animals get ready for the assault. The entries correspond exactly to the way the four stand on top of each other: donkey first (cello), dog on his back (piano), cat on the dog (cimbalom) and cockerel perching on the cat (violin).
Bars 124-146	The four animals make a terrible noise. This is marked with an aleatoric episode (bars 124-137) with some rhythmic references to the Fellowship Theme from bar 135 onwards. The sextuplets at piano are based on different permutations as illustrated in fig. 94 and octatonic scales.
Bars 147-150	Salutation formula.

¹⁷⁹ Philip Pullman, *op. cit.*, 145.

Chapter III: How the Four Feasted in the House and Decided to Never Leave	
<p>This movement is based on distorted versions of the main theme and further development of the three chords sequence used in Chapter I. Following the story, the excitement gradually leaves way to sleepiness, and at bar 120 there is a reprise of the nocturnal atmosphere of the beginning of Chapter II. After the robber disturbs the animals (bar 138), the four make a hell of a noise again (reprise of the aleatoric section in Chapter II) and make their final salutation (bars 155-157).</p>	
Bars 1-9	The four open the door; piano leads a gradual <i>concitato</i> towards the next section.
Bars 10-21	The Main Theme reappears in a variation that is meant to give the idea of the four animals 'guzzling as if they might not get any more food for a month' ¹⁸⁰
Bars 22-58	Expanding on Pullman's re-tale, I imagined the four talking at the same time (hence the close entries of the Main Theme on different systems at bars 23-28) and then getting ready for a toast (bars 50-58), the latter section being realised by interrupting the hectic polyphonic writing with a cluster of three notes (E-F#-G#) sustained or repeated.
Bars 59-100	The excitement continues. Main Theme is developed throughout this section (period 2 in bars 59-69, period 1 from bar 70 to 100).
Bars 101-119	The four friends gradually get tired and calm down their excitement. The piano leads the <i>ritardando</i> , since it carries a march-like bass line of quavers; this motor becomes increasingly unsteady (by changing meters from bar 108, for instance) whilst the melodic content, based on Main Theme's period 1, becomes more sparse and shorter.
Bars 120-137	The animals fall asleep; musically, there is a reprise of the opening bars of chapter II.
Bars 138-140	The four are awakened by the robber, and so the calm reached at bar 137 leaves way to a more hectic, aleatoric section.
Bars 141-154	The animals scare the robber away; the aleatoric section continues.
Bars 155-157	Salutation formula.

¹⁸⁰ P. Pullman, *op. cit.*, 146.

3. Conveying The Narrative

Overall, the writing of this piece proved to be excitingly creative in the way I planned to combine onomatopoeic effects with Leitmotivic writing and musical topics, challenging them by using an unfamiliar language.

Inherent Associations

The decision to associate each character to an instrument implied, to me, the embedding of onomatopoeic effects in their motifs. Each animal has an onomatopoeic gesture that identifies its nature:

- The donkey's braying is performed by frequent downward glissando in the cello part:



Fig. 95. *The Bremen Town Musicians*, Chapter I, cello part, bars 9-11.

- The dog's barking is performed by small rhythmic clusters:



Fig. 96. *ibid.*, piano part, bar 14.

- The cat's meow is made by fast and short leaps in downward motion:

Cim.
ff
 Ped. _____ ^ Ped. _____ ^ Ped. _____ ^ Ped. _____ ^

Fig. 97. *ibid.*, cimbalom part, bars 35.

- The cockerel's crow is made by a specific gesture, and its clucks by frequent use of pizzicato

SOLO *freely*
 72 *ff* like crowing 3 *pp* Vc. 6
 73 Tempo
 74 *ff* freely, 2nd time more determined and forward 3 *pp* *p* arco *ff* pizz. *ff*
 75 76 77

Fig.98. *ibid.*, violin part, bars 72-77.

The aleatoric sections in Chapters II and III are also onomatopoeic in nature, as they intend to replicate the noise and chaos of the four animals.

The Musical Topic of *Cheerful Puppets/Military for Children*

Already explained in the discussion of *Luminaris*, the topic acts mainly in Chapter I, together with the exposition of the theme, described in section II-c. In this case, I was interested in ways of conveying the idea of a clumsy march by jeopardising its predictable pace. It goes without saying that a big inspiration while elaborating the march has been the first movement of Stravinsky's *Histoire Du Soldat* (1918), where the regularity of the march is maintained by the double bass undisturbed crotchet pace over two alternated notes (hinting at the tonic-dominant figure of a traditional march), despite any meter changes, with the inevitable displacement of accents that this implies. When analysing this score, I realised that what creates the displacement is the association of the stronger accent with the higher note of the bass line, because it recalls the tonic-dominant pattern of many traditional marches:

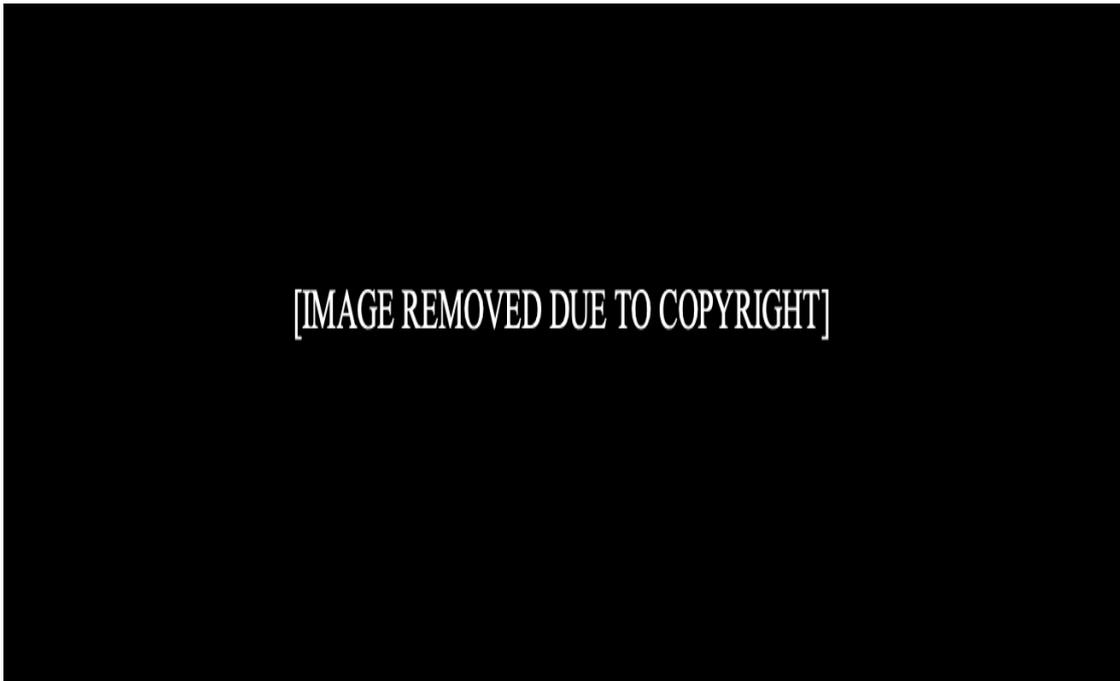


Fig. 99. Beginning of Kenneth J. Alford's *Colonel Bogey*, Hawkes & Son, 1914.

Something similar happens in my score, where the displacement is written rather than caused by a change of meter, as in the examples below:



Fig. 100. *Bremen Town Musicians*, cello part, chapter I, bars 23-30.

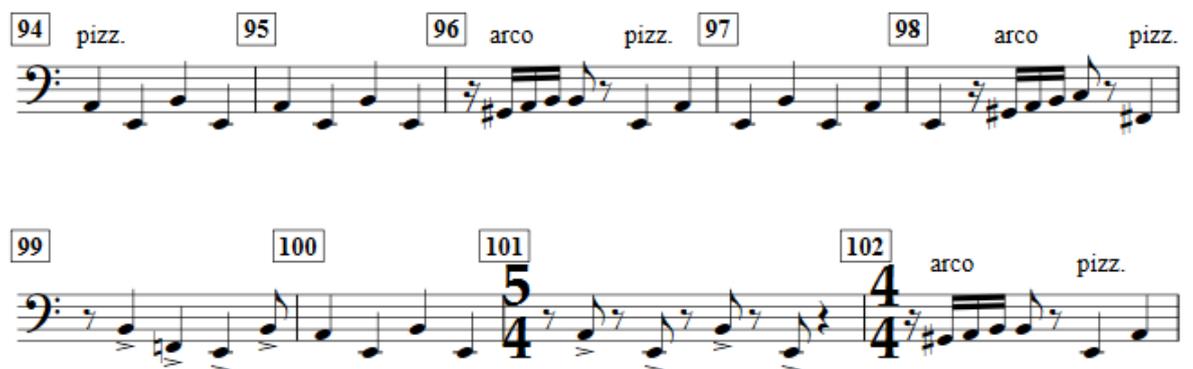


Fig. 101. *ibid.*, bars 94-102.

Leitmotivic Writing

Regarding thematic material, there are three defined themes throughout the score:

- Main Theme
- Fellowship Theme
- Theme of the Light

a) Main Theme

This theme, which I wrote first, is mainly used for Chapter I of the story and is frequently quoted throughout. The melody is primarily organised into small, stepwise motifs—something that, ideally, simple creatures like those in the story could sing easily. It also intentionally does not end properly, creating a parallel with the fact that the animals will never reach Bremen in the end. The sketch I made does not include any time signatures, but these are provided in the digitised version: the frequent alternation between 4/4 and 3/4 or 5/4 suggests the clumsiness of the four animals walking together.

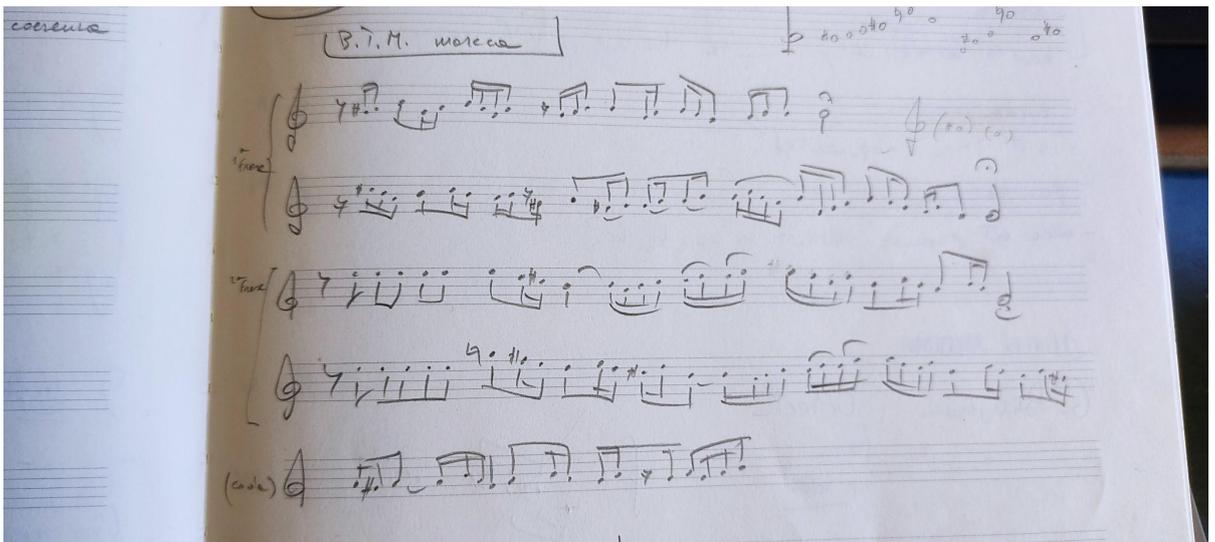


Fig.102. Original manuscript and digitised version of the Main Theme.

The theme has been then adapted to follow the different moments of the story. Very often, for instance, there are minor interruptions, rhythmic variations, changes of instrumentation, as highlighted below in blue in one of the many occasions where the theme is quoted:

This musical score page contains measures 108 through 118, featuring four staves: Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vc.), Cymbal (Cim.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Measures 108-111:** The Violin and Viola parts are marked *arco* and play a triplet of eighth notes. The Cymbal part is marked *leather sticks* and *f*, playing a rhythmic pattern. The Piano part features a complex rhythmic accompaniment with triplets.
- Measures 112-114:** The Violin part has a melodic line with a *f* dynamic. The Viola part has a melodic line with a *ff* dynamic. The Cymbal part is marked *f* and *ff bring out!*. The Piano part continues with its accompaniment.
- Measures 115-118:** The Violin part has a melodic line with *pizz.* and *arco* markings, and a *f* dynamic. The Viola part has a melodic line with *pizz.* and *arco* markings, and a *f* dynamic. The Cymbal part is marked *with fingers* and *leather sticks*, with a *f* dynamic. The Piano part continues with its accompaniment.

Time signatures are indicated at the top of each measure group: 3/4 for measures 108-110, 4/4 for measures 109-111, 3/4 for measure 112, 4/4 for measures 113-114, 3/4 for measure 115, 4/4 for measures 116-117, and 5/4 for measure 118.

The musical score is for the piece 'Bremen Town Musicians, Chapter I', covering bars 104 to 123. It is written in 4/4 time. The score consists of four staves: Violin (Vln.), Viola (Vc.), Cymbal (Cim.), and Piano (Pno.).

- Bar 119:** Features a complex texture with repeated notes and stepwise melody across all instruments. The piano part has a 'ff' (fortissimo) dynamic.
- Bar 120:** Continues the texture from bar 119.
- Bar 121:** Marked 'salutation formula'. The violin part has a 'pizz.' (pizzicato) instruction and a 'mf' (mezzo-forte) dynamic. The cymbal part has a 'ff' dynamic.
- Bar 122:** The violin part has a 'pizz.' instruction and a 'mf' dynamic. The cymbal part has a 'ff' dynamic.
- Bar 123:** Continues the texture with various dynamics including 'mf' and 'f'.

Fig. 103. *Bremen Town Musicians*, Chapter I, bars 104-123.

b) Fellowship Theme

This theme is first introduced in Chapter I by the violin/cockerel and shared by the other three instruments soon after. In my original sketch notes, I wrote that it could be merged with the second period of the Main Theme, given the similarities in using repeated notes and stepwise melody.

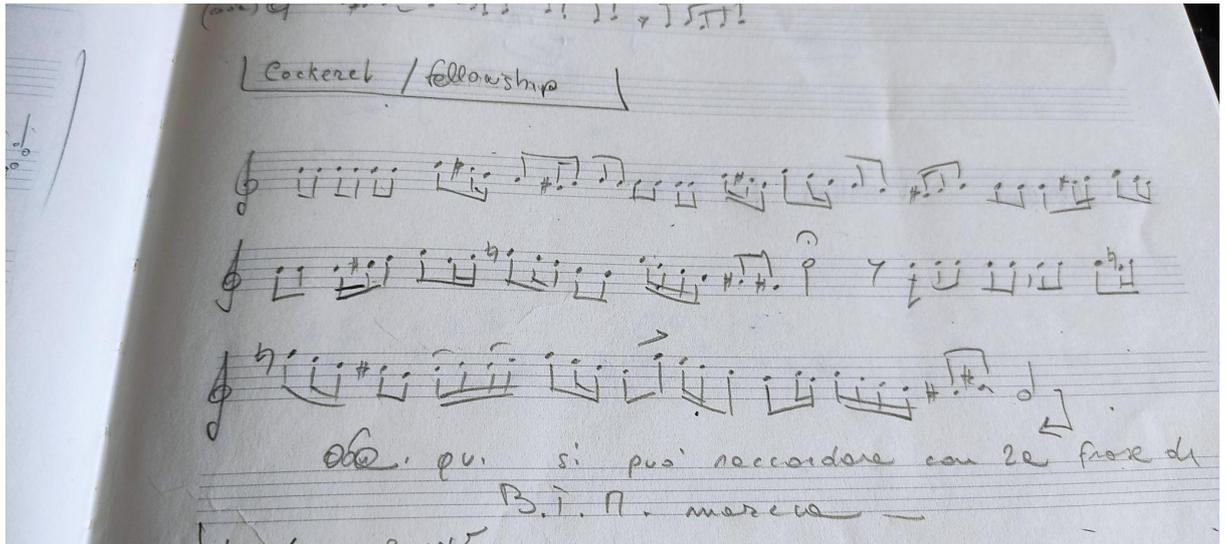


Fig. 104. Manuscript and digitised version of the Fellowship Theme. Time signatures in the digitised version show with meter changes where the stronger accents/downbeats are.

This theme is used at the end of Chapter I, to seal the beginning of the fellowship, then quoted in a few places in Chapter II (bars 22-24, 93, 97-102, 110-115). It does not appear in Chapter III.

c) Theme of The Light

Based on matrix 2, this theme appears firstly at cimbalom in Chapter II:

Fig. 105. *Bremen Town Musicians*, chapter II, cimbalom part, bars 37-52. The Theme of Light runs from bar 39 to 46, followed by a coda from bar 47.

The idea behind this theme is to provide a floating, mesmerising melody, contrasting with the March Theme as much as possible: in fact, it is based on wide intervals, irregular meters and an irregular melodic rhythm, and a set of pitches never exposed before (matrix 2).

In the piece, there are also some recurrent structural gestures that I have used as connectors between sections or at the end of each chapter.

d) Semiquaver triplet + quaver figure:

Fig. 106. *Ibid.*, piano part, bars 62-63.

This gesture appears in the following moments:

- Piano (bar 62), Chapter I: to introduce the first time where violoncello and piano are playing thematic material together
- Piano (bars 69-70), Chapter I: to present the violin solo at bar 72
- Cimbalom (bar 111), followed by piano part at bar 112, Chapter I: to introduce the final section of this chapter, which is based on the second phrase of the theme.
- Cimbalom (bar 119), Chapter II: as part of the salutation formula (see below)
- Violoncello (bar 147) and violin (bar 148), Chapter II: as part of the salutation formula
- Violin, Cimbalom and piano (bars 155-156), Chapter III: as part of the salutation formula

e) Three-chords pattern:



Fig. 107. *Ibid.*, piano part, bar 68.

The pattern consists of a B major chord, G major and a diatonic cluster of E-F# and G#. The three chords often appear as shown above; however, they have also been superimposed, and their position changed throughout the piece. While in Chapter I it has been used sporadically (piano part, bars 34, 43, 45, 65-66, 68, 114, 117, 119, and all instruments from bars 120 to 121), and omitted in Chapter II, Chapter III exposes it in several places, and different combinations.¹⁸¹ This pattern is also relevant because it originates from matrix 1.

The overall narrative conflict here arises from the relationship between the main theme and the perceived chaos generated by the aleatoric gestures based on different matrices. Chapter I and II of the story therefore follow the archetype of romance (the formation of the fellowship from the initial chaos, and the reappearance of the Main Theme over the Theme of Light), whilst Chapter III unleashes an ironic narrative, with the defeat of the order-imposing Main Theme by the transgression of the aleatoric gestures that conclude the piece.

¹⁸¹ I also included a note to the pianist to bring out the chord sequence every time it appears, as shown in the piano part, bar 34, Chapter I.

Editing and Montage

The story, which realistically unfolds over 12-18 hours, is condensed into 15 minutes, resulting in a compressed timeline. The perception of time here reflects how the four animals perceive it. This is especially evident in the extended sections where the animals shout at the burglars (chapter II, bars 124-146, and chapter III, bars 141-154), which are deliberately prolonged compared to how the events would occur in reality. Additionally, organising the story into three chapters allowed me to omit the less eventful moments. At the end of each chapter, there is a closing formula starting with a semiquaver triplet plus quaver figure; it repeats each time and clearly signals the chapter's conclusion. This would correspond to the title card stating the name of the chapter just played and appearing over a black card (hence why a minimum of a crotchet rest always separates it from the previous musical event). As Gorbman would say, this is an example of cinematic musical code (music codified by the filmic context itself, such as opening / closing credits, etc.).¹⁸²

The musical score for the salutation formula in Chapter I, bars 121-123, is presented in four staves. The score is divided into three measures, labeled 121, 122, and 123. The first measure (bar 121) features a semiquaver triplet plus quaver figure in the Violin and Viola parts, with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The Cymbal part has a dynamic marking of *f*. The Piano part has a dynamic marking of *sf*. The second measure (bar 122) is a rest for all instruments, labeled "salutation formula". The third measure (bar 123) features a pizzicato figure in the Violin and Viola parts, with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The Cymbal part has a dynamic marking of *f*. The Piano part has a dynamic marking of *mf*. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, accents, and dynamic markings.

Fig. 108. Salutation formula in Chapter I, bars 121-123.

¹⁸² Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 3.

Fig. 109. Salutation formula in Chapter II, bars 143-150.

Fig. 110. Salutation formula in Chapter III, bars 155-157.

Bremen Town Musicians represents a step forward in the treatment of unfamiliar musical language in narrative context. While *Hansel and Gretel* did not venture into encompassing musical topics, this piece aims to embrace this in the rendition of the *Cheerful Puppet* topic. The surrealistic story encourages the frequent use of aleatoric techniques, matrices and unconventional language, as discussed above. At the same time, the para-cinematic quality is maintained through the use of cinematic musical

codes (such as the salutation formula for the credits of each cue) and through the factual / documentary style adopted, similar to *Et Resurrexit*.

The Three Little Piggies

1. Context and Description

To finally reflect on the different choices that a para-cinematic approach involves, I decided to re-write the piece *Building a Nest* composed in 2024 for the upcoming production music album *Emotional Woodwinds*, published by Sonoton. It was written for a 10-piece woodwind ensemble plus piano and harp, around the musical topic of *Bustling Creations*.

Library music is, notoriously,

a contradictory phenomenon: it has to be *specific* by providing *particular* moods, scenarios and dramatic functions, but it is at the same time *generic* because those particular moods and functions must have the potential to be used at *any* suitable point in *any* audiovisual production.¹⁸³

Compared to film music, library music has even less appetite for developmental and modulating sections, because they may be too complicated to edit, cut and re-adapt for a specific media sequence. *Building a Nest* is no exception: it offers editability (achieved by having a predominant mode of E mixolydian, absence of modulating and developmental sections, similar accompaniment throughout, constant BPM and 5/8 meter), a clear structure (intro, A – B – A', coda) and one consistent mood / description (in this case, the topic of *Bustling Creations*).

The way theme A is organised, as a dialogue between clarinet and oboe, as opposed to theme B which is introduced by a bassoon, reminded me of the story of The Three Little Piggies, which presents a similar distinction between the first two characters and the third, much wiser, who built his brick house instead of using straw or sticks. In contrast to the flowing melodies of themes A and B, the question-and-answer short-motif structure is transformed in the motif of the wolf (questions), against the trembling birds flying away (answers). This re-interpretation, paired with the musical topic of *Bustling Creations*, allowed me to establish the main building blocks for an imaginary animation based on this popular fairy tale. The story described in Three Little Piggies begins with the three brothers building their houses, while, far away, the wolf is walking and chasing small prey along the way. The third pig warns his siblings about the poor construction of their houses, but they mock him and continue building.

¹⁸³ Philipp Tagg, *Ten Little Title Tunes* (New York and Montreal: The Mass Media Music Scholars' Press, 2003), 125-126.

The houses are ready at the end of the summer, just in time for offering shelter to the three scared piggies running away from the wolf, who has finally arrived.¹⁸⁴

The context of this piece explains the slightly different structure of the following subsections, with a particular focus on the differences between the original production music piece and its para-cinematic version.

Para-cinematic Changes and Leitmotivic Writing

The presence of a constant BPM and of pre-existent material made the formulation of the story, editing and musical timeline somewhat simpler compared to other works in this portfolio; at the same time, it offers a clear example of my process of composing. In the original piece (*Building a Nest*), there is a thematic idea A, followed by a short B, and a short question (Q1) - answer (A1) gesture (hereinafter referred to as Q&A) that recurs either on its own or in the background.

Fig. 111, *Building a Nest*, Theme A, bars 11-31, reduction.

¹⁸⁴ The story appears for the first time in James Halliwell-Phillipps, *The Nursery Rhymes of England* (London and New York, c.1886).



Fig. 112, *ibid.*, Theme B, bars 35-45.

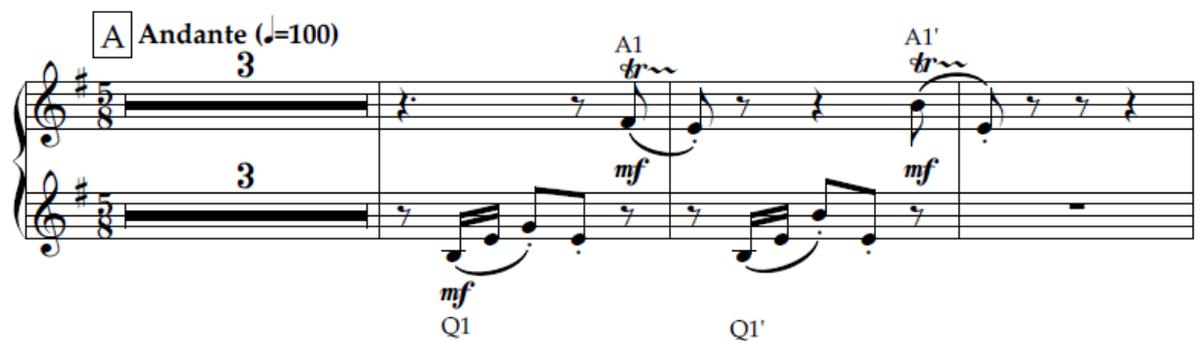


Fig. 113, *ibid.*, Q&A basic structure, bars 4-6.

The fact that this piece is an adaptation posed one main question in my research: would the pre-existing thematic material influence my para-cinematic narrative, in the way it evolves through time? I would say that, yes, in part it does, especially where some sections have identical structure. The fact that the previous piece is a library track has some advantages: the themes are conceived with a cinematic function in mind already; but, undoubtedly, the para-cinematic narrative had to shape its content through some sections of the piece and not the other way round. Through my analysis in paragraph 2, therefore, I will carefully distinguish where the previous structure imposed its timings on the narrative, and where it did not.

When adapting the original material to the para-cinematic programme, the orchestral palette became crucial to tell the story: firstly, because of the specific assignment of a soloist to a character or theme (which was not as such in the original piece), and secondly, because it offered me greater versatility in representing my planned shots and narrative. As a result of transposing for orchestra, I selected a slightly slower BPM to give cumbersome instruments – such as the very rare oktobass or the contrabass clarinet – the right pace for playing. The stage arrangement, which I have emulated in the mock-up, features the four soloists at the front, followed by a drum kit and a set of small percussion instruments, with the rest of the orchestra behind.

Given the two different places where the wolf and the piggies are imagined (the woods and a clearing), I established that the Q&A motif had to be separated from theme A and B: in the original piece, the motif was used in the background in section D (bars 58-69), whilst here is always on its own. To further strengthen the connection between music and characters, themes (and characters) were also associated with specific instruments: the wolf is always represented by an oktobass, the first pig by an oboe, the second by a clarinet, and the third by a bassoon. This also implied some musical choices that I wouldn't have made if my para-cinematic plan had been so rigid geographically. In the sub-paragraph Editing and Montage, I will revisit this with more examples.

The analysis of themes and their interaction, described here and in the next paragraph, articulate a musical narrative that follows the archetype of irony: the defeat of an order-imposing hierarchy (theme A and B, the three piggies) by a transgression (Q1 motif, the wolf). Through the piece, the motif makes further gains in terms of relevance, with reactions (answers) increasingly louder and longer, finally leading to the final chaotic gesture that concludes the piece.

The image displays three systems of musical notation, likely for a string quartet or similar ensemble. The notation includes treble and bass clefs, various note values, and dynamic markings. The first system (bars 9-12) shows a progression from *p* to *mf* to *f* in the upper voice, with a *mf* marking in the lower voice. The second system (bars 85-87) features a similar dynamic progression from *mf* to *f* in both voices. The third system (bars 88-90) concludes with a *ff* marking in the upper voice and a *ff* marking in the lower voice. The score includes numerous triplet markings and slurs, indicating complex rhythmic and phrasing elements.

Fig 114. Different evolutions of the Q&A motif throughout the score of *The Three Little Pigs* (reduction).

2. Musical Storytelling

STORY	EDITING	MUSIC	Comparison old and new structure
A wood: the wolf is shown attacking small animals	Shot from above	(bars 1 – 8) High range, shimmering gesture with three piccolos, celesta, harp	Introduction (bars 1 –13): this is a section composed <i>ex-novo</i> , where, aside the use of the pre-existent Q & A motif, the para-cinematic narrative has dictated timings. Compared to the original, the answers of the motif are differently harmonised, because I wanted to convey a sense of plurality, against the single line used in <i>Building a Nest</i> .
	Down to the wolf, birds are trembling	(bars 8 – 13) Motor of quavers at piano to establish the pace. Question & answer motif at oktobass and high woodwinds	
	Birds fly away – cut to	High woodwinds	

The two piggy's at work	Piggy 1 at work, close up	(bar 13 –25) Motor of quavers, over which oboe soloists presents theme A. The motor is now embellished with small percussions that mimic building tools (nails, bolts, hammers etc.)	Theme A: exposition (bars 13 –47) Para-cinematic narrative follows old structure
	Piggy 2 at work	(bar 26-29) Clarinet repeats the oboe's phrase	
	Longer shot to show both working	(bar 30-47) Both instruments playing together	
The third piggy arrives	Third piggy's entrance	(bars 48-57) bassoon plays the first semi phrase of Theme B	Theme B: exposition (bars 48-81) The structure is dissimilar for two details: at bars 58-67 where the truncated incipit is adapted to the entrance of the new character, and in the way I played with polytonality at bars 68-80. Polytonality (in this specific moment, the compresence of E minor, Eb major, B major and B minor) has been used here to literally 'mock' the musical theme
	Third piggy warns his brothers about the precarity of their homes.	Bassoon exposes theme B (bars 58-67)	
	The two others mock their brother	(bars 68-80) Oboe and Clarinet play together with bassoon, but the Clarinet is in Eb major – against E minor. Winds and strings join them too, with a similar polytonality	
	Slow camera movement further away	(bars 80-81) Brushes on snare drum starts here to give continuity to the next section, where the alternance may result otherwise too jarring. Symbolically, brushes represent the omnipresence of	New transition, directly dependent on the new para-cinematic input

		the camera and the passing of time.	
The two piggies at work	Medium shot on the first piggy, who completes the house	(bars 81-84) pizzicato at low strings add a bit more of motion to theme A.	<p>Alternance of theme A and Q&A motif.</p> <p>The alternance fits the structure better than a development, as the editorial decisions involve a montage of alternating scenes. This is significantly different from the original</p>
The wolf	Sudden cut to the woods	(bars 85-90) The sudden cut is mirrored by the two accented chords between bar 84-85. Q&A motif.	
	Crossfade	(bar 90) Brushes	
The two piggies at work	Medium shot to the second piggy, who completes the house a few days later	(bars 91-93)	
The wolf	Sudden cut to the woods, the wolf is much closer (a few days have passed)	(bars 94-99) Accented chords between bar 93 and 94 mirror the sudden cut	
	Crossfade	(bar 99) brushes	
The two piggies celebrate	Medium shot to both, dancing around their houses	(bars 100-115) Peak of energy to conclude this section; the full orchestration and full exposition of theme A reveals we are at a climatic point.	
Third piggy comes back; the others mock him	Medium shot, alternating between third pig and the other two	(bar 115-131) Polytonality is used for mockery (bars 121-122, 124-125, 126-127 and 130-131, all at oboe and clarinet solos and piano).	<p>Theme B'</p> <p>The first half of the theme is identical, but the second period (from bar 123) is new. The accompaniment is structurally different for the addition of polytonality. In</p>

The houses are completed through the summer	Camera in long shot and montage of scenes in different moments of the summer	(bars 132-147) The last phrase exposed at the bassoon is expanded to orchestra (bars 132-135) and conflux into coda (bars 136-147)	the original piece there was any reprise of theme B.
Autumn. The wolf has finally reached the clearing.	Static camera over the three houses, with a slow CGI effect to signal the passing of time (i.e. leaves falling, colours changing into autumn palette)	(bars 147-152) Over a diatonic quartal pedal (E-A-B) a cluster at brass slowly plays from nothing to fortissimo (when we finally see the wolf, bar 152). Glockenspiel creates a mesmerising, unregular arpeggio.	New transition
The wolf makes its entrance.	Medium / close shot	(bars 153-155)	Q & A motif The answer (cello and double bass Bartok pizzicato) is different from the original piece (melodical answer at English Horn)
Chaos emerges as the three brothers and every other animal in the area run away	Medium shot to show the prays running away	(bars 156-end)	Coda Structurally similar, but here polytonality (E minor / Eb minor) is called to represent the chaos

3. Conveying The Narrative

The central focus of this piece is the influence of the imagined editing and montage on my rewriting; other aspects of interest are the predominant topic of *Bustling Creations* and the use of polytonality to describe mockery.

The Musical Topic of *Bustling Creations*

The topic often involves describing either people building new settlements or objects with a certain (positive or negative) impact on the community or themselves, or the

construction of those objects over time. There are two examples of this trope in *The Painted Veil* (2006), where Walter imagines a system of aqueducts to transport clean water to the community, and in the very recent *The Brutalist* (2024), where a time-lapse shows the construction of the Van Buren Institute.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, *Building a Nest* echoes similar characteristics of other production library albums, such as KPM *Curiosity – Light Tension I*, and it stresses the importance of intense positive activity, either mental or physical.¹⁸⁶

Common traits of the examples quoted are:

- A constant motor and/or minimalistic patterns to suggest intense activity
- Moderate/fast pace
- Inclusion of percussive-melodic timbres such as mallets, piano, or even onomatopoeic sounds mimicking construction tools (nails, bolts, hammers)

Most of the examples I gathered, except *The Brutalist*, have a positive quality, leaning towards diatonic harmony (be it modal, tonal, quartal or defective).¹⁸⁷ This topic has also similar qualities to minimalism, which in film music tends to be linked to machine and technology and rational/mathematical thoughts.¹⁸⁸

Polytonality as Mockery

The simultaneous sound of two or more different tonalities has been used in film and non-film music for various purposes. Surprisingly, the first use of polytonality has roots in the Classical era: Mozart, with his *Musical Joke* (1787), left the audience with two final bars where five different chords play at the same time, meta-ironising about incompetent musicians and their habit of not playing in tune or making mistakes. Similar irony, this time directed at tonality as a parameter to expand and revisit, appears in Prokofiev's *Sarcasm* for piano, whilst Milhaud, describing polytonality as 'amusing', was actively involved in promoting it through his works and articles.

In film music, it is usually associated with sci-fi and adventure films (*The Matrix*, *Star Wars*) or used to add further tension to a sequence (as in *The Gladiator*); it has also ironic purposes, especially when quoting well-known melodies, as Scott Bradley did for the *Tom and Jerry* franchise.¹⁸⁹ In this piece, the use of polytonality is to mock a formerly exposed tonal gesture (theme B), and to add a sense of uncontrolled chaos (answer phrase of Q&A motif), without steering away too much from the overall

¹⁸⁵ Please refer to video examples in Appendix II.

¹⁸⁶ <https://open.spotify.com/album/3yxcMctAhSAuluEj4klqgT?si=rtjavlhoQpSgBgRVyS8Zow>

¹⁸⁷ "Construction" from *The Brutalist* is made by different layers of percussive sounds, most of them echoing the noises of nails and bolts in a construction site, and the pattern used is chromatic.

¹⁸⁸ See Rebecca M. D. Eaton, "Marking Minimalism: Minimal Music as a Sign of Machines and Mathematics in Multimedia", *Music and the Moving Image*, 2014, 3-23.

¹⁸⁹ To read more about the quoted examples, see Karlin-Wright, *On The Track* (Routledge, New York, 2004), 233. For an example of Bradley's use of polytonality, listen to this rendition of the tune *Yankee Doodle* available here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KBNey4upFKE>, 0'53" into clip.

tonality. The different keys are, in fact, always a semitone apart, which produces an effect of being out of tune, rather than creating a complex diatonic polytonality. Mocking theme B is a simple way of creating a musical parallel with the two brothers making fun of the third pig; as for the Q&A motif, polytonality only intervenes towards the end of the piece, where the orchestra is split in E minor and Eb minor.

Editing and Montage (and *mise en scène*)

Considerations related to editing and *mise en scène* influenced a number of significant revisions in this work. In an earlier version of bars 41-45, I had the oktobass reinforcing the bass line of that conclusive section; however, this conflicted with the fact that during that segment, we are still meant to be in the same geographical space as the three pigs. For coherence, although the choice was aurally appealing, I removed that oktobass phrase entirely: it would have undermined the rationale of my programme, as the wolf is only intended to reach the three houses at the end of the story. It is important to note that I chose not to compromise my original plan. In hindsight, I could have justified that phrase by imagining a crossfade to the woods; however, firstly, it would have been too sudden, and secondly, it felt too connected to the previous section: to make the crossfade work, I would have needed to change the musical direction of the phrase, perhaps reintroducing the answer motif from Q&A.

Another case study could be the alternate shots I established at bars 82-99. The way I envisioned them involved a sudden cut between the clearing and the woods, followed by a fast drone-like camera movement from the woods back to the clearing. The first editing technique is reflected by a sharp dynamic change (as seen with the two chordal stabs in forte between bars 84 and 85), while the second is represented by the brushes on the snare (starting at bar 89). In the programme, the alternate shots follow this sequence: clearing – woods – clearing – woods – clearing. During the revision process, I realised that in an earlier version of this passage I missed the second sudden cut, and as a result, the effect was entirely absent from the music. These kinds of mistakes occur for a very technical reason: when composing directly in the DAW, I tend not to keep my editing marker track open, as my priority at that moment is the accuracy of the sound, notes, MIDI controllers, and the overall mix and balance.

Having a variation of theme B towards the end of the piece responds to the need to conclude the summer events and provide a sense of closure. Instead of creating entirely new material for this, I opted for a gradual modification of Theme B: the material in bars 123-126 remains related to it, while the following four bars serve as a negative response, which then continues into the orchestral conclusion of B'.

The most challenging part of the re-composition was the final transition – from B' to coda. The difficulty stemmed from not having a clear visual solution for depicting

another passage of time. In the previous section, I had already planned a compression of time in the summer montage at bars 132-147; the issue was, therefore, how to indicate another temporal contraction without employing the same visual technique. The idea of a static camera on the three houses, while the CGI effect alters the *mise en scène*, was particularly revelatory and pivotal for that segment. The brevity of this section (6 bars compared to the 15 of the summer montage) is also intentional: I aimed to symbolise the arrival of the wolf and the Autumn season in the shortest time possible, thus keeping the wolf's motif still quite unexpected when heard at bar 153.

With *Three Little Piggies*, I can demonstrate practically and in depth how the paracinematic structure has influenced modifications in the original piece. Although the original remains largely rooted in cinematic practice, it becomes clear that the paracinematic reinterpretation possesses its own distinctiveness, especially evident in the sections on editing, montage, and *mise en scène*. Furthermore, the piece pays homage to two arbitrary associations originating in concert music and later utilised in film music: the interpretation of minimalism as a symbol for mechanics and rational thought (musical topic of *Bustling Creations*) and polytonality as mockery. Lastly, *Three Little Piggies* formalises the methodology outlined at the start of the chapter.

Conclusion

In answering sub-question 2 (how the selected narrative devices can be deployed in para-cinematic compositions to amplify music's potential to convey extra-musical content), interesting findings emerge:

- As noticed in works such as *Cat and Mouse*, I found that the term Mickey-Mousing should be reversed to onomatopoeia or, more generically, inherent association. This is because, as previously explained, Mickey-Mousing can only literally be applied when there is a visual parallel. *Cat and Mouse* also shows a limitation of the para-cinematic approach, in that the music could hit the imaginary editing cuts, but the choreography of the two characters could only be roughly suggested (and not clearly envisioned) through the use of a fast pace.
- Leitmotivic writing and narrative archetypes in the para-cinematic context do not exhibit significant dissimilarities from film and concert music approaches. In my para-cinematic works, as well as in the cinematic ones, I aim to condense the musical narrative to one/two elements with the aim of keeping the composition coherent.
- Editing and montage have been applied using a specific methodology that allows me to maintain a relatively rigorous para-cinematic approach. The 'relative' qualification is due to the fact that, ultimately, I am both the 'director' and the composer, meaning that some element of subjectivity over what determines what cannot be escaped. In *Three Little Piggies*, through a close analysis of the original version (*Building a Nest*) and its para-cinematic rendition, I offer practical examples of how the programme affected the revision process in terms of structure, orchestration, texture, etc.
- Focalisation and *mise en scène* serve the same purpose as in cinematic works. In particular, the para-cinematic nature of my pieces (and, especially, the fact that most were not commissioned) granted more freedom to experiment with focalisation (as in *Frog Prince*).

The commentary on each piece aims at answering sub-question 3 (how the compositional approach is affected by integrating these devices in a concert work).

The main findings are:

- Generally, having an imaginary editing process to follow and limitations in the duration of each 'cue' imply faster development sections and frequent use of pan-triadic modulations, especially when there is a certain contraction of time in the story (as in *Cetreria*). While this is similar to what often occurs in film music, the peculiarity of para-cinematic writing lies in how much more laborious it is to realise, with several back-and-forths between writing sketches and creating mockups.

- Devices related to the cinematic language, such as focalisation and *mise en scène*, affect the compositional approach in the same way as they do in film music. In particular, focalisation affects the music mainly through adopting a different point of view on the story and through mixing choices that give more focus to a specific character. Given that most of these pieces were not commissioned, however, I could challenge focalisation further in *Frog Prince* and *Three Little Piggies*, creating a complex spatialization that is still achievable in the music hall, but requires technical support (such as amplification, or pre-recorded tracks).
- Making use of music topics in a para-cinematic context does not reveal any significant difference from film and concert music. Often, their rendition is based more heavily on cinematic examples and approaches (the use of non-Western instruments recorded separately in *Cetrea*), and for some I struggled to find a clear lineage with topics from instrumental and vocal music of the 19th/20th century (*The Beautiful Forest*, *Bursting Creations*). However, when the compositional language was particularly unfamiliar or atonal, I found it more difficult to apply musical topics: it is the case of *Hansel and Gretel*, where I opted for broader signifiers (diatonic/chromatic contrasts; downward contour instead than *lament*) to convey the narrative. *Bremen Town Musicians* manages to cover the musical topic of *Cheerful Puppets*, but the effectiveness of deploying it in an atonal language is justified by the surreal and unusual story.
- Some works retain arbitrary associations typically used, in my own practice, for concert pieces. This is the case for the number 7 in *Et Resurrexit*, or the symbolic connection of *Rapunzel's* and *Frog Prince's* theme with the original words of the fairy tales. This is inconsequential from a narrative perspective, but adds meaning and aesthetic depth to the works.

Through this process it emerges that there are significant differences between a para-cinematic work and the older tradition of programme music. From a technical, conceptual, and aesthetic perspective, para-cinematic works possess their own peculiarities. Setting aside the methodology, the mentality of scoring for film – even an imaginary one – is considerably different than the one that a composer would have if the programme were not cinematic, or if there wasn't any at all (as in the case of *Building a Nest*, re-adapted into *The Three Little Piggies*).

CONCLUSIONS

The rationale for selecting isomorphic writing as the focus of my research may now be clearer. Isomorphic writing makes the music the blueprint of the (actual or imaginary) visuals and their narrative, so that each composition signifies not only a story but also a specific (cinematic) way of telling it. I have limited the scope of my research by excluding many other ways in which music can relate to (imaginary or otherwise) moving images.¹⁹⁰ The isomorphic examples refer to (real or imaginary) visuals with little or no dialogue and no sound effects (so that music remains the sole auditory element), without any significant silence beyond the musical pauses in the scores, and without any intention of contesting the visuals with music, which would otherwise undermine the meaning of 'isomorphic'. In the case of the para-cinematic works, I have also imposed a limit of five minutes or less on the duration of each piece or movement, corresponding to the average length of a music cue.¹⁹¹ Despite these limitations, the research enquiry has generated original insights on the questions that formed its point of departure.

In order to return to the research questions, I here summarise the answers and findings for each sub-question, as a way of highlighting the contribution to knowledge made by this project.

1. What are the core devices of musical storytelling in isomorphic cinematic scores?

The storytelling techniques used in isomorphic cinematic scores consist of a combination of musical and cinematic narrative devices. Regarding the first, purely musical devices, I have highlighted how these may be inherent (onomatopoeia or Mickey-Mousing in a cinematic context) or arbitrary (musical topics, Leitmotivic writing, symbolic allusions).¹⁹² I have also demonstrated how they derive from and evolve the pursuit of extra-musical meanings in Western instrumental and vocal music. Embracing the distinction between inherent and arbitrary associations has helped me better understand how music can depict extra-musical content, allowing me to find a suitable balance between my theoretical and compositional knowledge. I realised that the major benefit of my analytical approach is the separation and independence of concepts like Mickey-Mousing techniques, onomatopoeic effects (inherent associations), musical topics, and Leitmotivic writing (arbitrary associations). While inherent associations typically describe a single feature, musical

¹⁹⁰ See pages 30-32.

¹⁹¹ In some cases, such as *Bremen Town Musicians* or *Frog Prince*, the pieces resulted in a combination of different cues, so their overall length is the result of more than one cue together.

¹⁹² See page 16-17.

topics can be viewed as an arrangement of various musical elements—such as Mickey-Mousing techniques, onomatopoeic effects, themes, and motifs—that come together to depict a more complex narrative. Similarly, a leitmotif can be filtered through different musical topics. The main advantage my research offers is that, as both composer and theorist, I am not merely interpreting my works but also basing my compositional decisions on the analytical system I have developed. The various reasons for using inherent associations in my works, and how to incorporate them in the musical form coherently, have been analysed in detail in relation to *Luminaris*, *Rudy Valentino*, *The Saint*, *Cat and Mouse* and *Bremen Town Musicians*. The specific take of my research is that, whilst most of the studies I found on inherent associations refer to classical programme music, my use of them is contemporary and strives to take account of the current sensibility of audiences. In this regard, Antovic, Stamenkovic & Figar’s study “Association of Meaning in Program Music” seems to confirm a certain link between understanding inherent associations and the cultural/temporal distance with the period of the musical piece itself: respondents were more able to understand intended associations in Wagner or Grieg compared to Vivaldi and Schubert.¹⁹³

My definition of musical topic aligns with a more contemporary interpretation of the concept, supported by, where possible, relevant music and film music literature. This research serves as a starting point for a more detailed analysis of the musical topics examined. In particular, it emerges that some of the musical topics I have defined seem to have been more solidly established in film music than everywhere else: this is the case for *Cartoonesque Flamboyance*, *Fantastic Flight*, and *Bustling Creations*, where the similarities to equivalent topics in instrumental and vocal music are less evident.

Leitmotivic writing, which has been a consistent presence in all of my works, and especially important in *Rudy Valentino*, *The Saint* and *Luminaris*, is a structural device that has allowed me to maintain a musical *gestalt* and to shape the form of the musical pieces. Recurring themes, their developments and variations contribute to determining the musical narrative, which, by isomorphism, mirrors the storytelling behind it. To make them more connected to the story, I applied Almén’s theory of narrative archetypes, which encourages a simplification of the narrative to a contrast between two main agents (motifs or themes) and thereby reduces the thematic material further, enhancing cohesiveness.

As regards the cinematic narrative devices, I follow what Deleyto suggests as being the main ingredients of film language: editing and montage, *mise en scène*, and focalisation. Chapter II gives examples of how these devices interact and affect my

¹⁹³ See footnote 34.

musical choices in the media examples selected. From the commentary, it emerges that editing and montage act consistently as the primary cinematic devices to affect the timings and the way the story unfolds through time. They are behind, to recall a few examples, the radical change of orchestration in *New Pioneers* in bars 105-106, the musical analogy between 1m1 and 1m4 in *Luminaris* corresponding to two similar morning routines, the use of counterpoint to follow the tracking shot from outside to inside the house in *Suckablood*, and the crescendo to follow the iris-in in *Rudy Valentino*.

The *mise en scène* affects mainly the overall orchestration: the rich texture and gestures in *Luminaris* reflects its colourful palette, the black-and-white sequence in *Rudy Valentino* was responsible for forging a clear thematic opposition, whilst the dark timbre in *Suckablood* pairs with the gloomy gothic grading of the media. In some cases, such as the pixilation used in *Luminaris*, given the specific type of representation adopted by the director, *mise en scène* affects also the texture, dominated in this case by a constant motor throughout the piece.

Examples of internal focalisation, such as the scene at the end of *The New Pioneers*, have been used to demonstrate how the musical narrative switches perspective accordingly.

With regard to editing, it emerges that the same editing technique can be translated, or responded to musically, in different ways. For example, a tracking shot can be translated as a counterpoint (as in *Suckablood*) or as a section based on a continuous pattern (as in *Luminaris*); a crossfade can be represented by interlocking dynamics or with a simple cymbal roll. In my view, they constitute the equivalent of punctuation in language: they do not hold meaning in themselves but contribute to highlighting the underlying narrative by creating a certain pace, pauses and inflexions to the story.

2. How may these devices be deployed in para-cinematic compositions to amplify music's potential to convey extra-musical content?

After explaining what is meant by para-cinematic in Chapter I,¹⁹⁴ Chapter III explores the challenges and peculiarities of my para-cinematic works. A para-cinematic composition can be seen as a compass with three points, each representing a different area: film narrative, film music, and concert music. The aim is to achieve a delicate balance of elements from each area. When applied in a para-cinematic context, my findings indicate that narrative musical devices are not significantly different from those used in cinematic writing. Focalisation and *mise en scène*, for instance, play largely the same role as in film music. There is, however, a tendency to favour musical

¹⁹⁴ See pages 27-30.

topics that are well established (or better established) in film music (for example, the musical topic of *Bustling Creations*). The most relevant difference is the issue of using the term Mickey-Mousing when the visuals are only imaginary; this explains my substitution with the term onomatopoeia or inherent associations. With *Cat and Mouse* I expose other limitations in trying to apply the Mickey-Mousing technique to something so specific as a choreography.¹⁹⁵

Narrative cinematic devices pose certain methodological challenges: how can editing and montage be practically applied to something that exists only in the imagination and is conceived by the same individual who will then compose the music? In the Methodology section of chapter III,¹⁹⁶ I explained how I try to create a relatively rigorous 'blueprint' of the imaginary media. With *Three Little Piggies* I also demonstrate how the para-cinematic context affects the rewriting of the library piece *Building a Nest*. In the new piece, it emerges that the mentality of thinking of a specific cinematic sequence substantially affects the composition, from its structure and timings, to its texture and the approach to harmony.

3. How is the compositional approach affected by integrating these devices in a concert work?

What emerges as a pleasant surprise is how the para-cinematic interacts with the compositional approach to concert music, the third point of our compass. It is in this relationship that I find the main advances in current practice. Since most of these works were not commissioned, I could challenge the stereotypes of film music, particularly the musical language used, with incursions into atonality or serialism that may not be feasible in a cinematic context aimed at mainstream audiences. This was not an easy journey: when pushing the boundaries of my works towards more experimental, contemporary approaches, as in *Hansel and Gretel*, I had to exclude musical topics in favour of more general musical signifiers.¹⁹⁷ However, later on, the atonal rendition of the *Cheerful Puppets/Military for Children* topic in *Bremen Town Musicians* offered a promising example of ways of renewing stereotypical formulas. It also becomes apparent that creating a para-cinematic work is more labour-intensive, involving frequent back-and-forths between hand-written sketches and mockup production. The contraction of time, as described in some pieces, forced me to either use quicker ways to convey a transition (such as the pan-triadic modulations in *Cetrea*) or, in atonal or serial pieces, to reduce the length of a compositional matrix (as in *Bremen Town Musicians*) to allow the permutations to run within the timeframe expected. As for focalisation, the main challenge results in how to represent some

¹⁹⁵ See page 131 and 134.

¹⁹⁶ See pages 115-117.

¹⁹⁷ See page 160-161.

mixing choices related to the camera's changing focus in the concert hall (i.e. soloists placed upfront in the mix, or, as in the *Frog Prince's* quartet, reproducing the 'diegetic' level of its presence). Finally, the symbolic and theoretical associations that I have placed in some pieces, as in *Et Resurrexit* (the recurrence of the number 7), clearly relate to a concert music approach more than film music, where often there is not much room, nor interest, for such finesse.

4. How to compensate for the potential fragmentation of isomorphic music writing through a coherent musical arc?

As demonstrated in both the cinematic and para-cinematic works, this question points to the primacy of Leitmotivic writing in keeping the compositions cohesive, offering a possible and satisfactory answer to the risks of fragmentation that isomorphic cinematic writing entails. Inherent associations, together with the musical representation of editing and montage, are potentially disruptive agents, whilst Leitmotivic writing and musical topics counterbalance their effects. The integration of leitmotifs with Almén's theory of narrative archetypes has proved particularly effective in achieving coherence.

5. Contribution to Knowledge and Advancement in Current Practice

This research defines isomorphism and narrative musical/cinematic devices, establishing the foundation to explore a specific type of programme music known as para-cinematic composition. This concept serves as a compass with three points, incorporating elements of film and concert music, organised through a cinematic language. Asking 'What is the potential of storytelling devices used in isomorphic cinematic scores as the basis for para-cinematic composition?', I have arrived at answers laid out above under the four sub-questions that structured my enquiry. This comprises the main contribution to knowledge of my project.

My project may create the basis for advancement in current compositional practice. Among the principal challenges I have faced is the difficulty of creating an isomorphic writing when there are no parallel visuals; this led to the specific methodology described in Chapter III. Among the advantages of this approach is the potential to bring film music techniques into contact with less conventional writing methods, concepts, and harmonies. My commentary indicates that a composer working within a cinematic programme will necessarily write differently than if he/she was not considering it. *Three Little Piggies* offers a direct evidence of this, but through my review of literature there are further examples, such as Vaughan Williams' *Sinfonia Antarctica*. My contribution is an attempt to, firstly, give dignity to the definition of

para-cinematic – a term mentioned but also criticised by Scott Paulin – and, secondly, to explore ways of merging film and concert music practice.

My project also makes modest theoretical contributions. In coupling Leitmotivic writing with Almén’s theory of narrative archetypes, I explore ways in which this theory may be taken beyond an act of interpretation (which, in his research, is necessarily posthumous) to become part of the conception of the piece itself. With regards to musical topics, my contribution aims to find a stronger connection between film music practice and established topic studies. It emerges that some topics are better explored in film music, whilst others are less film-specific; further exploration in this insight awaits a separate research project.

Ultimately, this research enhanced my understanding of music, cinematic language, and narrative: through such a long-term project, I feel I have strengthened my ability to push my writing beyond the boundaries of both film and concert music.

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APPENDIX I – Average Duration of Music Cues

The following is a chart of the duration of music cues in films that have been of relevance for the portfolio presented. For each album an average duration has been calculated, and at the end of the chart there is the calculation of the overall average duration.

ALBUM	TRACK NAME	CUE LENGTH	AVERAGE
Avatar (J.Horner, 2009)	"You Don't Dream in Cryo..."	00:06:09	00:05:44
	Jake Enters His Avatar World	00:05:25	
	Pure Spirits of the Forest	00:08:50	
	The graluminescence of the Night	00:03:37	
	Becoming One of "The People"	00:07:44	
	Climbing Up "Iknimaya - The Path To Heaven"	00:03:18	
	Jake's First Flight	00:04:50	
	Scorched Earth	00:03:32	
	Quaritch	00:05:01	
	The Destruction fo Hometree	00:06:47	
	Shutting Down Grace's Lab	00:02:48	
	Gathering all the Na'vi Clans for Battle	00:05:14	
	War	00:11:22	
	Lord Of The Ring (H.Shore, 2001)	Prologue: One Ring to Rule Them All	
The Shire		00:02:29	
Bag End		00:04:36	
Very Old Friends		00:03:13	
Flaming Red Hair		00:02:39	
Farewell Dear Bilbo		00:01:46	
Keep It Secret, Keep It Safe		00:08:54	
A Conspiracy Unmasked		00:06:10	
Three is Company		00:01:58	
The Passing of the Elves		00:02:40	
Saruman the White		00:04:10	
A Shortcut to Mushrooms		00:04:07	

	Strider The Nazgui	00:02:35 00:06:05	
Big Fish (D. Elfman, 2003) (Elfman non diegetic cues only)	Big Fish (titles) Shoes stealing Underwater Sandra's Theme The Growing Montage Leaving Spectre Return to Spectre Rebuilding The Journey Home In The Tub Sandra's Farewell Finale End Titles Jenny's Theme	00:04:33 00:00:54 00:01:53 00:02:23 00:02:41 00:02:00 00:02:12 00:01:19 00:02:10 00:01:18 00:01:17 00:11:11 00:02:41 00:01:45	00:02:44
Shrek (H. Gregson-Williams, 2001)	Fairytale Ogre Hunters Donkey Meets Shrek Eating Alone Uninvited Guests The Perfect King Welcome to Duloc Tournament Speech What Kind of Quest Dragon! One of a Kind Knight Saving Donkey's Ass Escape from the Dragon Helmet Hair Delivery Boy Shrek Friends Journey to Duloc Starry Night Singing Princess Better Out Than In Merry Men Fiona Kicks Ass Fiona's Kiss Why Wait to Be Wed? Ride The Dragon I Object	00:01:27 00:01:36 00:02:38 00:01:18 00:02:09 00:01:18 00:00:34 00:00:51 00:02:23 00:02:06 00:01:19 00:00:43 00:01:58 00:02:08 00:00:48 00:02:42 00:00:58 00:01:35 00:02:11 00:00:43 00:00:29 00:03:02 00:01:59 00:01:37 00:01:51	00:01:41

	Transformation	00:03:27	
The Brothers Grimm (D. Marianelli, 2005)	Dickensian Beginnings Shrewd Thespians Red Riding Hood The Queen's Story The Forest Comes to Life Jake's Pledge Muddy Inside the Tower The Queen Awakens The French Arrive Burning The Forest The Eclipse Begins A Slice of Quiche Would Be Nice It's You, You Know the Story Sleeping Beauties And They Lived Happily Ever After The Brothers Grimm End Credits	00:03:24 00:00:43 00:03:56 00:05:14 00:09:15 00:02:04 00:03:08 00:03:12 00:06:25 00:02:53 00:02:24 00:06:53 00:04:37 00:08:03 00:03:51 00:03:40 00:02:09	00:04:14
King Kong (J.N. Howard, 2005)	King Kong A Fateful Meeting Defeat is Always Momentary It's in the Subtext Two Grand The Venture Departs Last Blank Space on the Map It's Deserted Something Monstrous...Neither Beast Head Towards the Animals Beautiful Tooth and Claw That's All There Is Captured Central Park The Empire State Building Beauty Killed the Beast I Beauty Killed the Beast II Beauty Killed the Beast III	00:01:10 00:04:16 00:02:49 00:03:20 00:02:35 00:04:03 00:04:44 00:07:09 00:02:38 00:02:48 00:04:09 00:06:18 00:03:26 00:02:26 00:04:36 00:02:37 00:02:00 00:02:23 00:02:15	00:03:33

	Beauty Killed the Beast IV	00:04:46	
	Beauty Killed the Beast V	00:04:14	
The Lion The Witch The Wardrobe (H. Gregson-Williams, 2005) (only Gregson- Williams score)	The Blitz, 1940	00:02:33	00:04:13
	Evacuating London	00:03:39	
	The Wardrobe	00:02:55	
	Lucy Meets Mr. Tumnus	00:04:11	
	A Narnia Lullaby	00:01:13	
	The White Witch	00:05:31	
	From Western Woods to Beaversdam	00:03:34	
	Father Christmas	00:03:20	
	To Aslan's Camp	00:03:12	
	Knighting Peter	00:03:48	
	The Stone Table	00:08:07	
	The Battle	00:07:08	
	Only The Beginning of the Adventure	00:05:32	
How To Train Your Dragon (J. Powell, 2010)	This Is Berk	00:04:10	00:02:54
	Dragon Battle	00:01:55	
	The Downed Dragon	00:04:16	
	Dragon Training	0:03:11	
	Wounded	0:01:25	
	Focus, Hiccup!	0:02:05	
	Forbidden Friendship	0:04:11	
	New Tail	0:02:48	
	See You Tomorrow	0:03:53	
	Test Drive	0:02:36	
	Not So Fireproof	0:01:12	
	This Time For Sure	0:00:43	
	Astrid Goes For A Spin	0:00:43	
	Romantic Flight	0:01:56	
	Dragon's Den	0:02:29	
	The Cove	0:01:10	
	The Kill Ring	0:04:29	
	Ready The Ships	0:05:14	
	Battling The Green Death	0:06:18	
	Counter Attack	0:03:05	
	Where's Hiccup?	0:02:44	

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	Coming Back Around	0:02:51	
	Sticks & Stones	0:04:17	
	The Vikings Have Their Tea	0:02:03	
			OVERALL AVERAG E
			00:03:46

APPENDIX II – Audio-Visual Material

Cinematic Works (scores, audio, videos):

Links to Scores and Recordings were provided to the examiners.

Para-cinematic Works (scores, audio, videos):

Links to Scores and Recordings were provided to the examiners.

Music Topic links:

Epic Battle/Fighting Hero(es)

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/6axdT3JsovBl44TUh3uz6u?si=b1a6ca63df2246c3>

Lurking Dangerous Presence

Links to Videos and Recordings were provided to the examiners.

Cheerful Puppets/Military for Children

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4c4uatNYTQs9xVzPFLlqqc?si=9003bfcbae834807>

Fantastic Flight

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/oMnq3ujMNggJE5QW48qInC?si=636216e8fd6b4ad4>

The Horror Scare

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/oMlMigyaoAM5z691CgoTd8?si=2c715b285e41455Z>

Hauntingly Beautiful

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3gAZfNwC8HfXox37JdPK5z?si=7dc9c2f428264850>

Topic of Fate/Plot/Determination-Revealing Counterpoint

Links to Videos were provided to the examiners.

Cartoonesque Flamboyance

Links to Videos were provided to the examiners.

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5MQMCKbzbE6lvxtH9QlgOg?si=686f164a3bbb4da5>

Orientalism

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/1HpuuDAatVG6JFoznmizbow?si=98fbc9e0865412e>

Magic

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5zuZOEg77ycmAl1E2oISSW?si=34173c268eeb4a26>

Once Upon A Time In A Fairytale

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/7lRocHVdTo4Po5pJoWdal3?si=e7958aa69e1a4f7f>

The Beautiful Forest

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3oaJZySA4imeLB5zIHu1mC?si=o68d466e1b61420b>

Elegant Dinners and Troubled Diners

Links to Videos were provided to the examiners.

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/6HJDQntPYX8ryCEJeHu3xs?si=o554f4e9f82b408c>

Bustling Creations

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/12gnjC7fpJL7K97mls9bt9?si=b92e0faef02d4foc>

Videography:

Adamson, Andrew, dir. *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, 2005. 143'. Music by Harry Gregson-Williams.
https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/BooEU74H2Q/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Adamson, Andrew; Asbury, Kelly; Vernon, Conrad, dir. *Shrek 2*, Dreamworks Pictures, 2004. 93'. Music by Harry Gregson-Williams.
https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/Bo79HP8SY6/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Barbera, Joseph, and Hanna, William, dir. *Puttin' on the Dog*, MGM, 1944. 7'. Music by Scott Bradley.
https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/BooBNGAHo/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Buck, Chris, and Lee, Jennifer, dir. *Frozen II*, Walt Disney Animation Studios, 2019. 103'. Music by Christopher Beck.
<https://www.disneyplus.com/en-gb/movies/frozen-2/28vdy71kJrjb>

Burton, Tim, dir. *Big Fish*, Columbia Pictures, 2003. 125'. Music by Danny Elfman.
https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/BooGKXoSBC/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Cameron, James, dir. *Avatar*, 20th Century Fox, 2009. 162'. Music by James Horner.
https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/BooFZV6IIM/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Columbus, Chris, dir. *Home Alone*, 20th Century Fox, 1990. 103'. Music by John Williams.
https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/BooFYJCK4Q/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

DeBlois, Dean, dir. *How To Train Your Dragon*, DreamWorks Animation, 2010. 98'. Music by John Powell.
<https://www.netflix.com/watch/70109893>

Gilliam, Terry, dir. *The Brothers Grimm*, Dimension Films, 2005. 118'.
https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/BooFFIK2SC/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Hafstrom, Mikael, dir. *1408*, Dimension Films, 2007. 104'. Music by Gabriel Yared.
https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/Bo93K9GQ3N/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Hitchcock, Alfred, dir. *Psycho*, Shamley Productions, 1960. 109'. Music by Bernard Herrmann.
https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/BooFZC76PK/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Iwerks, Ub, and Disney, Walt dir. *Steamboat Willie*, Walt Disney Animation Studios, 1928. 8'. Music by Wilfred Jackson and Bert Lewis.
<https://www.disneyplus.com/en-gb/movies/steamboat-willie/1Lh1k4ammOG5>

Jackson, Peter, dir. *Lord of the Rings – The Two Towers*. New Line Cinema, 2002. 179'. Music by Howard Shore.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/BooQ3VSLVA/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Jackson, Peter, dir. *King Kong*, Universal Pictures, 2005. 187'. Music by James Newton Howard.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/BooFZQB1T8/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Joffe' Roland, dir. *The Mission*, Warner Bros, 1986. 125'. Music by Ennio Morricone. DVD.

Larrain, Pablo, dir. *Spencer*, Shoebox Films, 2021. 117'. Music by Jonny Greenwood.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/Bo79HP8SY6/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Marshall, Garry, dir. *Pretty Woman*, Touchstone Pictures, 1990. 119'. Music by James Newton Howard.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/BooET1JG1K/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Miller, George, dir. *Mad Max: Fury Road*. Village Roadshow Pictures, 2015. 120'. Music by Tom Holkenborg.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/Bo11651TO8/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Minghella, Anthony, dir. *The English Patient*. Miramax, 1996. 162'. Music by Gabriel Yared.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/BooHUZSWJE/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Miyazaki, Hayao, dir. *Princess Mononoke*. Dentsu Music and Entertainment, 1997. 134'. Music by Joe Hisaishi.

<https://www.netflix.com/watch/28630857>

Scott, Ridley, dir. *Gladiator*. Universal Pictures, 2000. 155'. Music by Hans Zimmer.

<https://www.netflix.com/watch/60000929>

Scott, Ridley, dir. *Hannibal*, MGM, 2001. 131'. Music by Hans Zimmer.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/BooIK6SU5I/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Sommers, Stephen, dir. *The Mummy*, Universal Pictures, 1999. 124'. Music by Jerry Goldsmith.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/BooIKBV7KI/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Spielberg, Steven, dir. *Hook*, Amblin Entertainment, 1991. 142'. Music by John Williams.

<https://www.netflix.com/watch/600346>

Spielberg, Steven, dir. *E. T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, Universal Pictures, 1982. 115'. Music by John Williams.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/BooFYO21SQ/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Tarantino, Quentin, dir. *The Hateful Eight*, Visiona Romantica, 2015. 168'. Music by Ennio Morricone.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/Bo1EoAIBQK/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Tornatore, Giuseppe, dir. *The Best Offer*, Paco Cinematografica, 2013. 131', MPI Home Video, 2014, Blu-Ray. Music by Ennio Morricone.

Vogt-Roberts, Jordan, dir. *Kong: Skull Island*, Warner Bros, 2017. 118'. Music by Henry Jackman.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/Bo6XG8RZ6Q/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Wachowski, Lana & Lilly, dir. *Matrix Reloaded*. Warner Bros, 2003. 138'. Music by Don Davis.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/BooHQFGZ3l/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

Wright, Joe, dir. *Atonement*. Universal Pictures, 2007. 123'. Music by Dario Marianelli.

https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/video/detail/Boo19531G/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

THANKS

Thanks to my mum and dad for supporting me all these years; and to Luigi for being patient with my hectic life and multiple interests. To Vasco Hexel, for cheering at my initial idea and defending it until the final stages of the DMus. To Kenneth Hesketh for his incredible mentorship in orchestration and contemporary writing, and for the inspiring conversations at the Electric Coffee in Ealing. To Dimitri Scarlato for his fresh look at the DMus in the final part of its development. To Robert Adlington for the crucial help during the last revision. To Alessandra Gonnella for clarifying the filmic terminologies used throughout the writeup. To the ASCAP Workshop 2012, Michael Todd, Jennifer Harmon and Richard Bellis, for awarding me with the RMALA grant, which allowed me to record *Cat and Mouse*, *Cinderella* and *Rapunzel*. To Sergio Miceli, whom I hope to make proud even if he is not with us anymore. To you, Sergio, the most important thanks, with the hope that your legacy continues through generations of theorists and composers.