



# Year 9 Atmosphere: MUSIC

Performers MUSIC AND SOUND: Danny Robert Elfman, John Towner Williams, Hans Florian Zimmer, Alan Anthony Silvestri



## MUSIC AND SOUND

Music and sound aren't just used in musicals. Live or recorded music can add a lot to a dramatic production.
Music and sound effects can be used to: create mood and atmosphere, build tension, strengthen an emotion or empathise the action onstage, help set the scene, indicate a change of time or location, focus attention on to a particular character
When music is played beneath a scene and used to help create mood, this is called underscoring. This can be through spooky music and sound effects to help create an atmosphere of fear.
Make sure that the music enhances your drama and doesn't detract from what's happening on-stage.
Some plays work best without any music at all so it must never be added for its own sake.
A director must consider the style of their production and select music and sound to complement that.
Some playwrights specify the music they want to be used in their scripts. The playwright, Tennessee Williams, specified the use of blues music in several of his plays.
Physical theatre often uses a lot of music to accompany the movement work onstage. As it's often closely related to dance, this is important in giving work energy, pace and rhythm.
In non-naturalistic work, music might be used ironically so that it's playing against the content onstage. For example, misery is underscored by a very happy piece of music which only serves to emphasise the characters pain through irony. This can be useful when creating comic work and employing 'black humour'.
The first film containing sound (both music and spoken dialogue) was <i>The Jazz Singer</i> , released in 1927. Since then, music has been an extremely important part of cinema.
Film composers use music to create atmosphere, sync with on-screen action, and create iconic themes associated with characters in movies.
A film composer will sit down with a director and discuss ideas for a film's soundtrack. The composer will then work on ideas for themes and other music.
Once the film has been shot, the composer will write a number of 'cues' (sections of music to be used in the film). The music will then be recorded and added to the film.

## COMPOSITION TECHNIQUES

<b>Leitmotif</b> is a German word meaning leading motif. In music it refers to a musical phrase that represents a character, place or idea.
Different musical ideas lend themselves to different types of character such as Jaws (the shark), or Luke Skywalker from <i>Star Wars</i> .
For <b>The Hero</b> , The <b>interval of a fifth</b> is two notes that are five notes apart. It is used in many leitmotifs for heroic characters.
For <b>the villain</b> , leitmotifs often use <b>chromatic</b> notes. These are one semitone apart, very close together. Villain themes can also use awkward <b>leaps</b> over long distances between notes.
How the musical material is arranged will affect how the leitmotif is heard by the listener. For example: The hero's leitmotif played on brass instruments, accompanied by fanfare-like rhythms, will suggest our hero is triumphant. The same leitmotif played by lower instruments, accompanied by eerie sounding chords, will suggest our hero is lost or sneaking
Tempo can be used to set a scene. Dynamics can be used to enhance expression and atmosphere. Composing is when you make up the music yourself.
The following techniques should be used within this unit of work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ostinato</li> <li>• Tempo</li> <li>• Pitch</li> <li>• Leitmotif</li> <li>• Dissonance</li> <li>• Pedal Note</li> <li>• Fragment</li> <li>• Layer</li> </ul>
Music technology is used to create the soundtrack.
Sequencing is a way of layering and constructing music. Composers use this in order easily sync their music with the image on screen.

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## KEY VOCABULARY



Danny Elfman



Hans Zimmer



- Rhythm** – A collection of beat
- Syncoated** – Rhythms that are off beat
- Poly-rhythmic** – Lots of rhythms
- Cross-rhythmic** – Rhythms that do not naturally fit together
- Ostinato** – A repeated pattern
- Pulse** – A steady beat within a piece
- Pedal Note** – A long held bass note
- Accented** – An emphasised beat
- Percussive** – Instruments that are hit or shaken
- Call and response** – Question/ answer
- Chord** – More than one note played at the same time
- Improvisation** – when you make it up without preparation
- Melody** – The main tune within a piece
- Bassline** – the lowest part which accompanies the main piece



John Williams



Alan Silvestri

