

A Most Precious Journey

Understanding the Music of Howard Shore's Fellowship of the Ring

By: Caitlin Wiley, Jenna Donnelly, John Eddy,
Josh Boyer, Vincent Via, and Nicole Ardovino

MUSC 224-50

Dr. Christopher Swanson





Purpose of Music in Film

- Silent Films
 - Since these films contained no sound or music the acting was over dramatized in order to help get the main idea across.
- What music can demonstrate in film. (Copland, 2002)
 - Movie music is used to help relay emotions to the audience.
 - It is also used to represent places and objects by associating them with one melody.
 - Music can help portray psychological elements to the audience such as a character's thoughts.
 - Creates and symbolizes a more convincing atmosphere, time, and place.
 - Background filler for scenes with dialogue.
 - Helps to make a movie more continuous.
- Music helps add to the overall experience and immersion of a film.

Richard Wagner + *Leitmotif*

- What is a leitmotif?
 - Translates to “Leading motive” (“Understanding the Leitmotif,” 2017)
 - A recurring musical idea that the composer has given specific semantic/contextual meaning to
 - Idea largely used in program music
- Richard Wagner (1813 - 1883)
 - Composer associated with the use of leitmotif in his operas.
 - *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1848 - 1874)
 - Musical themes represented individual characters/ideas in the opera
- Howard Shore uses *Leitmotifs* to describe important ideas in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, including the fellowship, the hobbits / the Shire, and the Ring itself
- Over 100 different leitmotifs identified within the *LOTR* films (Wikipedia, 2021)
- “During the Hollywood Golden Age, film music composers such as Max Steiner, Erich Wolfgang Korngold, and Nino Rota were adept at using Leitmotifs to create memorable audio icons for the films they have set music to.” (Wee, 2016)



Thesis

The film *The Lord of the Rings* incorporates a variety of musical themes to describe characters, locations, and emotions using the idea of Richard Wagner's leitmotif in order to enhance the movie-watching experience for the audience.



The Ring and Sauron Theme



♩ = 50 Cm Em Cm Em

The image shows a musical score for the Ring and Sauron Theme. It is written in 4/4 time with a tempo of 50 beats per minute. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score consists of two measures, each with four beats. The first measure is in C minor (Cm) and the second measure is in E minor (Em). The melody features a series of eighth notes with a triplet of eighth notes in the second and fourth beats of each measure. The notes are: C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6.



Ring and Sauron's Theme



The ring theme is the main theme of the franchise.

Minor string melody. Using chromatic half-steps instead of scales, giving the theme a sense of elusiveness.

Minor key gives the idea that the ring is dangerous. The theme also sounds very elegant representing the jewelry well. The tone of the music is tempting to those who hear as the ring wants to be taken.

Variations are present throughout the film, including Sauron's theme.

Sauron's theme is very similar to the ring theme but it takes on darker tones and is more dramatic.

Brass is more present in this theme but it still retains the same musical idea of the ring theme.

The darker ring theme represents Sauron's character as he is after the ring and is the villain in the movie.

The
LORD
of the RINGS



The Shire Theme

Violin

Andante amabile

The image shows a musical score for a violin part. The title is "Andante amabile". The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The first measure is marked with a "2" above it and a "p" (piano) dynamic below it. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. There are two fermatas over the second and third measures. The fourth measure is marked with a "2" above it. The fifth measure is marked with a "1 3 4" above it, indicating a triplet. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat signs.



Shire Theme

- Hometown of the Hobbits
- Major key - instruments vary depending on the mood/characters in the scene
 - Usually a fiddle or flute for melody, strings in background
 - The melody rises and falls
 - Starts with an ascending scale
 - Calm, pastoral
 - Relatively slow rhythm
- Represents the Hobbits and their unity and connection to each other
 - Peace, nature, and simple lifestyle the the hobbits live - the hobbits embody these traits that the music describes (Young, 2007).
- Provides a feeling of comfort amidst the chaos and danger of the film



The Fellowship Theme



Fellowship Theme

- Bold, major key using strings and brass.
- Melody repeatedly rises and falls
- Usually played with displays of fellowship, and devotion to the cause of delivering the ring.
- The brass and strings contribute to the feeling of heroism and fellowship.



Conclusion

- Music serves the screen in many ways:
 - Creating a more convincing atmosphere of time and space
 - The unspoken thoughts of a character
 - Highlighting the theatrical build-up of a scene (Copland, 2002)
- Importance
 - Evoke a sense of “wonder and awe” (Jorgenson, 2010)
 - Howard Shore’s appeal to emotion
 - The final piece that pulls the audience into this mythical world





Bibliography

Adams, Doug. "The Music of Middle-Earth." *Earth*, February 11, 2020. <https://musicofmiddleearth.libsyn.com/>.

Adams, Doug. *The Music of the Lord of the Rings: A Comprehensive Account of Howard Shore's Scores*. Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., 2010.

Bribitzer-Stull, Matthew. *Understanding the Leitmotif: From Wagner to Hollywood Film Music*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Chelkowska-Zacharewicz, Maria, and Mateusz Paliga. "Music Emotions and Associations in Film Music Listening: The Example of Leitmotifs from the Lord of the Rings Movies." *Roczniki Psychologiczne* 22, no. 2 (2020): 151–75.

Donnelly, K. J., and Philip Hayward, eds. 2013. *Music in Science Fiction Television : Tuned to the Future*. Routledge Music and Screen Media Series. New York: Routledge.

Goldmark, Daniel. 2007. *Beyond the Soundtrack : Representing Music in Cinema*. Edited by Lawrence Kramer and Richard D Leppert. Ahmanson Foundation Book in the Humanities. Berkeley: University of California Press.



Bibliography cont.

Haddad, Madeline. "Even Darkness Must Pass": An Ethical Commentary and Musical Analysis of *The Lord of the Rings* Score, n.d.

Harris, Will. INTERVIEW: Howard Shore ("The Lord of the Rings"). Other. *Rhino Insider*, April 27, 2018.

Hoffman, Robin. "What Is the Function of Film Music?" robin-hoffmann, January 12, 2020.

<https://www.robin-hoffmann.com/tutorials/what-is-the-function-of-film-music/>.

Irving, Ernest K. *Film Music*. Taylor & Francis, Ltd., n.d.

JORGENSEN, ESTELLE R. "Music, Myth, and Education: The Case of the Lord of the Rings Film Trilogy." *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 44, no. 1 (2010):

44–57. <https://doi.org/10.5406/jaesteduc.44.1.0044>.

Paranoid Trumpet, *The Fellowship Theme for Bb Trumpet*. 14 July 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bh6Wb1B9V8M>.

Rawlins, Eric. "Musical Themes in 'The Lord of the Rings.'" Musical themes in "the lord of the rings". Accessed November 5, 2021.

<http://woodzie.org/lotr/index.html>.



Bibliography cont.

Setia, Roszainora, Maziana Osman, Shazila Abdullah, and Kamaruzaman Jusoff. *Semiotic Analysis of a Media Text The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, 2009, 5, no. 4 (August 31, 2009): 26–31.

Sheppard, Jason. Interview: Howard Shore on Scoring Pieces of a Woman, LOTR and 30 Years of Silence of the Lambs. Other. *25 Years Later*, February 12, 2021.

Smit, Anton. Interview with Howard Shore. Other. *Soundtrack World*, January 29, 2020.

Wee, Wei Ping. "Wagner's Leitmotif and how it has influenced film music in closing the gap between the audience and the characters on screen for a more immersive experience." Liverpool Hope University. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/33036117/Wagners_Leitmotif_and_how_it_has_influenced_film_music_in_closing_the_gap_between_the_audience_and_the_characters_on_screen_for_a_more_immersive_experience?show_app_store_popup=true. 2016

Wierzbicki, James Eugene. 2009. *Film Music : A History*. New York: Routledge.

Winter, Mary. "Musical Themes and Why They're Important in Film." Entertainment Creative Group. Entertainment Creative Group, February 17, 2021. <https://www.ecgprod.com/musical-themes-why-they-are-important-in-film/>.

Young, Matthew David. "PROJECTING TOLKIEN'S MUSICAL WORLDS: A STUDY OF MUSICAL AFFECT IN HOWARD SHORE'S SOUNDTRACK TO LORD OF THE RINGS." Thesis, Matthew David Young, 2007.

Zeliner, Xander. Composer Howard Shore Talks 'Lord of the Rings' Scores, His Fusion Band Lighthouse, Working on 'SNL' & More. Other. *Billboard*, August 30, 2018.



History of Program and Film Music

- Program Music
 - Compositions with extra-musical content that direct the attention of the listener to a literary or pictorial association.
 - Essentially associating music with a particular image.
 - This type of music was particularly popular during the 19th century.
 - Examples include the *Symphonie Fantastique* by Hector Berlioz and