AoS 3

Film Music

Revision tips and exercises

AoS 3: Film Music

From the Eduqas specification:

Learners will study the use of **timbre, tone colour** and **dynamics** for effect, as follows:

- Use of musical elements to respond to a brief

- Use of leitmotifs and thematic transformation to develop thematic material

- Use of musical features to create a mood in descriptive music

- Use of instrumental and/or vocal timbres to create colour/mood

- Use of dynamics and contrast to create special effects

- Use of music technology to enhance sonority

- Use of minimalistic techniques in film music

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This topic is all about how composers use musical elements including sonority, tone colour, and dynamics for effect.

LEITMOTIF – a recurring musical idea (melody/chord sequence/rhythm) which is associated with a particular character or place.

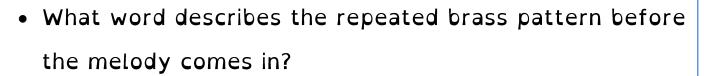Go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHbpnVBUfV0 to see a description of a *leitmotif.*

THEMATIC TRANSFORMATION – the development of a leitmotif by adding new notes or material, developing part of the theme, changing the pitch/rhythm, changing the sonority by using different instruments.

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Listen to some famous leitmotifs.

- *What makes them successful in representing their character/place/idea?*
- *How are they developed to show* thematic transformation?

Go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bTpp8PQSog

- What word describes the repeated brass pattern before the melody comes in?
- What instrument plays the main leitmotif?
- Is it major or minor?
- Why do you think John Williams made these decisions to represent the character of Indiana Jones?

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Go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Htaj3o3JD8I

- ## How would you describe the texture at the start?

- ## What instrument plays the main leitmotif?

- ## Give two difference between the original presentation of the leitmotif and the second time you hear it (around 0.46 seconds in).

- ## What mood/ atmosphere does the music help to create?

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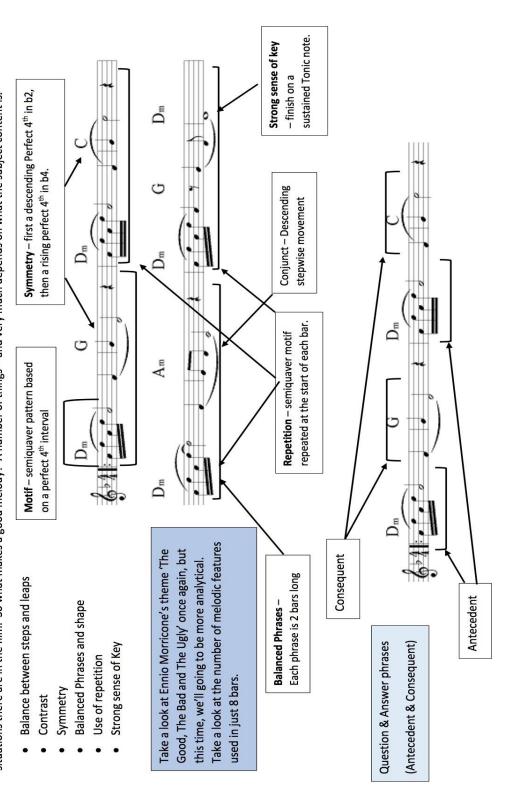Go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lV8i-pSVMaQ

- How does the composer develop the leitmotif?

- Give two ways in which the theme helps to create tension and anticipation

- What word describes the repeated pattern that is heard throughout the opening?

Balanced Phrases – Symmetry and Antecedent & Consequent

Melody adds character and shape to the musical ideas, often forming the main part of the music. It is common to have one main thematic idea, with some subsidiary ideas, although sometimes there are a number of equally important themes. It really depends on what suits the drama, or what characters and situations there are in the film. So what makes a good melody? A number of things – and very much depends on what the subject content is.

- Balance between steps and leaps
- Contrast
- Symmetry
- Balanced Phrases and shape
- Use of repetition
- Strong sense of Key

Take a look at Ennio Morricone's theme 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly' once again, but this time, we'll going to be more analytical. Take a look at the number of melodic features used in just 8 bars.

Motif – semiquaver pattern based on a perfect 4th interval

Symmetry – first a descending Perfect 4th in b2, then a rising perfect 4th in b4.

Strong sense of key – finish on a sustained Tonic note.

Conjunct – Descending stepwise movement

Repetition – semiquaver motif repeated at the start of each bar.

Balanced Phrases – Each phrase is 2 bars long

Consequent

Antecedent

Question & Answer phrases (Antecedent & Consequent)

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Make sure you know your instruments, but most importantly, make sure you know what different instruments are used for!

Musical footprints in Film Music

Instrument choices

TRUMPETS + SNARE DRUM = military/ patriotic/heroic.
e.g. Apollo 13, Superman, Indiana Jones

VIOLINS/STRINGS = romance/sadness.
e.g. Schindler's List

VOCALS = religious connotations, cult associations OR hymn
e.g. The Omen, 'A Knife in the Dark' from Lord of the Rings OR Apollo 13, Saving Private Ryan

SOLO PIANO = nostalgic, eerie
e.g. The Piano, American Beauty

ELECTRONIC INSTRUMENTS e.g. synth = sci-fi
e.g. Blade Runner

Rhythmic choices

SYNCOPATION for violence/unease
Short syncopated rhythms to create tension and fear.
e.g. Psycho, Jaws

OSTINATO for action/tension
Doesn't have to be on a percussion instrument...
e.g. Vertigo, The Exorcist, Apollo 13, Atonement

REGULAR RHYTHMS for romance
Simple patterns, steady beats, balanced phrases.
e.g. 'My Heart Will Go On' from Titanic, 'Now We Are Free' from Gladiator

Melodic choices

FANFARE = military/patriotic/heroic.
Uses mainly the notes of the triad (e.g. C, E, and G).
e.g. Saving Private Ryan, 20th Century Fox

ASCENDING FIFTH = optimism, heroism.
John Williams often starts his melodies with a rising fifth.
e.g. Superman, Star Wars

FALLING INTERVAL = sadness.
A musical 'sigh'.
e.g. Schindler's List

ASCENDING GLISSANDO = fear
Particularly effective in high strings.
e.g. 'A Knife in the Dark' from Lord of the Rings

CLOSE/CHROMATIC INTERVALS = fear, horror
Semitones are use in conjunction with other unexpected intervals in:
e.g. Psycho, Jaws

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Approaching the 10-mark question

"This music is the theme for an action movie. Explain how this music is appropriate for this setting."

REMEMBER: Mr D Tights!

Melody/ pitch

Rhythm

Dynamics

Tempo

Instrumentation/ sonority

Genre/ style

Harmony/tonality

Texture

Structure

What buzzwords would you associate with these terms?

DO NOT repeat/labour points! E.g. 'the violin represents sadness which adds to the sense of loss and sorrow. This is because the soldiers would be feeling loss and sorrow as there is lots of loss and sorrow in a war. We feel the same sense of loss and sorrow.'

EDUQAS sample questions on Film Music

Search for 'Schindler's List' on YouTube and answer the questions below:

> (a) For **each** extract, tick ✓   [3+3]
>
>   (i)   one solo instrument
>   (ii) one accompanying instrument (or instruments).
>
> (b) The music in each extract creates a particular mood and atmosphere for the audience. For **each** extract, explain **two** ways in which the composer achieves this effect.   [6]

(a) Identify the instruments:	Choose from:	Tick
(i) Solo Instrument	French Horn	
	Violin	
	Electric Guitar	
(ii) Accompanying Instrument(s)	Brass	
	Harp	
	Percussion	
(b) Explain two ways in which the composer achieves the mood and atmosphere of:		
sorrow/reflection		

(i)

....

....

....

(ii)

....

....

....

EDUQAS sample questions on Film Music

Search for 'James Bond' on YouTube and answer the questions below:

(a) For **each** extract, tick ✓ [3+3]

    (i)   one solo instrument
    (ii)   one accompanying instrument (or instruments).

(b) The music in each extract creates a particular mood and atmosphere for the audience. For **each** extract, explain **two** ways in which the composer achieves this effect. [6]

(a) Identify the instruments:	Choose from:	Tick
(i) Solo Instrument	Trombone	
	Clarinet	
	Electric Guitar	
(ii) Accompanying Instrument(s)	Brass	
	Piano	
	Percussion	

a. Explain two ways in which the composer achieves the mood and atmosphere of:

action/excitement

(i)
....
....
....

(ii)
....
....
....

EDUQAS sample questions on Film Music

Search for 'Jaws' on YouTube and answer the questions below:

(a) For **each** extract, tick ✔   [3+3]

    (i)   one solo instrument
    (ii)   one accompanying instrument (or instruments).

(b) The music in each extract creates a particular mood and atmosphere for the audience. For **each** extract, explain **two** ways in which the composer achieves this effect.   [6]

(a) Identify the instruments:	Choose from:	Tick
(i) Solo Instrument	French Horn	
	Viola	
	Saxophone	
(ii) Accompanying Instrument(s)	Brass	
	Harpsichord	
	Percussion	

(a) Explain two ways in which the composer achieves the mood and atmosphere of:

suspense

(i)

....

....

....

(ii)

....

....

....

AoS 3: Musical devices for FILM

Film soundtrack	The background music for a film which runs throughout
Cue sheet	Planning sheet used by film composers to match the music to the action on screen
Hit point/ Sync point	A key moment in the action which the composer wants to reflect in the music
Dynamics	Volume
Accent	A loud onset to a note
Sequence	A pattern that is repeated at a lower or higher pitch
Ostinato	A pattern that is repeated over and over; can be rhythmic or melodic
Glissando	Sliding through a range of notes from high to low or vice versa
Trill	Fast repeated movement between two next door notes
Tremolando	A single note, or two notes more than a tone apart, repeated very quickly
Major scale	Eight notes following the pattern of: tone, tone, semitone, tone, tone, tone, semitone
Minor scale	As for a major scale, but the third & sixth notes are flattened and the seventh sharpened (so: t, st, t, t, t, st, augmented 2nd)
Chromatic scale	A scale consisting of semitones A melody using lots of semitone movement
Dissonance	Notes played together that clash; harmonies containing discords
Disjunct	A melody containing large leaps
Conjunct	A melody containing step wise movement