

Music and Film - *leitmotifs*

In many film soundtracks each character is given a certain tune that is heard every time that character appears on the screen. An obvious example is *Star Wars* - there is a theme for the times when Han Solo and Princess Leia are together, and the famous *Imperial March* is played whenever Darth Vader emerges. A theme associated with a certain character is called a *leitmotif*, and the term was first used to describe such themes in 19th century German opera.

Think about how you would use instrumentation, tempo (speed), dynamics (volume) and pitch (how high or low the notes are) to describe certain characters, and fill in the spaces below. The first one has been done for you as an example.

Character	Instrument	Tempo	Dynamic	Pitch
An evil witch	<i>Clarinet</i>	<i>Fast</i>	<i>Loud</i>	<i>High</i>
	<i>(The high-pitched, loud clarinet would sound like a witch's cackling laughter, and the fast tempo would describe her riding on her broomstick)</i>			
A good witch	_____	_____	_____	_____
A mad scientist	_____	_____	_____	_____
A snowman	_____	_____	_____	_____
A fairy	_____	_____	_____	_____
A rock singer	_____	_____	_____	_____
Someone on a motorbike	_____	_____	_____	_____
Someone on a bicycle	_____	_____	_____	_____
A head teacher	_____	_____	_____	_____
A friend	_____	_____	_____	_____

Read the following passage from Revelation 12, imagining that it is a film that you are going to set to music.

And there was seen another sign in the heaven, and, lo, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his head seven diadems, and his tail doth draw the third of the stars of the heaven, and he did cast them to the earth; and the dragon did stand before the woman who is about to bring forth, that when she may bring forth, her child he may devour; and she brought forth a male child, who is about to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, and caught away was her child unto God and His throne, and the woman did flee to the wilderness, where she hath a place made ready from God, that there they may nourish her -- days a thousand, two hundred, sixty.

And there came war in the heaven; Michael and his messengers did war against the dragon, and the dragon did war, and his messengers, and they did not prevail, nor was their place found any more in the heaven; and the great dragon was cast forth -- the old serpent, who is called `Devil,' and `the Adversary,' who is leading astray the whole world -- he was cast forth to the earth, and his messengers were cast forth with him.

The important characters in this passage are:

The red dragon

The woman

Her male child

Michael and his messengers (angels)

Invent a *leitmotif* for each of these characters and describe it in terms of instrumentation, tempo, dynamics and pitch.

The red dragon _____

The woman _____

The male child _____

Michael and his messengers _____

Now imagine that you are a film composer writing a soundtrack to this film. Using your *leitmotifs* and other ideas you may have describe how your music would sound in each of these sections.

<p>And there was seen another sign in the heaven,</p>	
<p>and, lo, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his head seven diadems, and his tail doth draw the third of the stars of the heaven, and he did cast them to the earth;</p>	
<p>and the dragon did stand before the woman who is about to bring forth, that when she may bring forth, her child he may devour;</p>	
<p>and she brought forth a male child, who is about to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, and caught away was her child unto God and His throne,</p>	
<p>and the woman did flee to the wilderness, where she hath a place made ready from God, that there they may nourish her -- days a thousand, two hundred, sixty.</p>	
<p>And there came war in the heaven; Michael and his messengers did war against the dragon, and the dragon did war, and his messengers,</p>	
<p>and they did not prevail, nor was their place found any more in the heaven; and the great dragon was cast forth -- the old serpent, who is called `Devil,' and `the Adversary,' who is leading astray the whole world -- he was cast forth to the earth, and his messengers were cast forth with him.</p>	