

Creative Research

1. Compare and contrast the creative strategies of two sound designers/composers when designing solutions for film/game/animation within a given genre. Provide examples to support your discussion.

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Film and Television

Word – 1881

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"Films are 50% visual and 50% sound. Sometimes sound overplays the visual." (David Lynch). Sound and visuals have a complicated relationship, the wrong soundtrack or sound effect can offset a scene and dissolve any building tension or create a comical scene from a serious event. Soundtracks make a film a unique and emotional experience, even a second off and it would not have the same effect otherwise. Score is what manipulates audience members to feel for the characters and events on screen, a balance needs to be created as if one is off the other does not have the desired effect. After saying this, a scene will sometimes be a mundane shot, but with the right score it can create a meaning.

Both *My Hero Academia* (dir. Kenji Nagasaki, 2014) and *Captain America: Civil War* (dir. Anthony Russo and Joe Russo, 2016) are from the recent surge of Superhero genre of media in the past decade, and both have soundtracks to match the tense scenes. In neither of these clips is the fight as simple as good versus evil, rather it is about different ideals clashing between the heroes; *Captain America Civil War* is a fight between Steve Rogers and Bucky Barnes against Tony Stark, tension had been rising through the film and comes to a climax after he finds out Bucky killed his parents; *My Hero Academia* on the other hand is between Midoriya Izuku and Todoroki Shouto in a school festival, one is limiting his power to prove a point to his own father and the other is angry that he is willingly handicapping himself. A fight scene is often written into a show or film for a reason, it is rarely just there for the sake of it and holds a deeper meaning to the characters. Fight scenes can reflect something meaningful, whether that be the inner turmoil's and the relationships of characters or the battle between Good and Evil.

Henry Jackman was the composer for Captain America Civil War and has been active since 1999, Known all over the world for his composing work on films, video games and western Tv shows. Since his start he has won eleven awards for his music and been nominated for another seventeen.

Captain America: Civil War is based off the Marvel comics of the same name, in the film two teams form; one against the limitation of their powers; one for the limitations. The film has a lot of fight scenes that had the audience at the edge of their seats, however only one had the effect this one had. We watch the friendship of Tony Stark and Steve Rogers break apart, leaving audiences upset and astonished.

The fighting in the film is no longer about the US governments plan for future heroes but is now personal for Tony; he wants revenge. In the scene Tony has just found out who killed his family and wants revenge. Steve stands up for his friend, Bucky, as he was not in control at the time. Steve has to choose who to defend, splitting not just him but the audience as well. This is at the climax of the fight, the most emotional part, the end.

The sound of over exaggerated punches starts the climax of the fight, Tony against the wall as Steve beats into him. The music is melancholic and slow until Tony catches the shield. At this the point the overwhelming sound of metal hitting metal echoes, catching Steve and the audience off guard. As Tony takes the advantage one continues note plays, then begins to rise steadily as Steve is being knocked around. Sound stops with a cymbal as Steve hits the floor. Quiet drum roll slowly increases in volume as Steve says, "He's my friend", when cutting to Tony the volume and tension builds quicker. The audience can see and feel Tony's pain as he says, "So was I", the audience knows that this is hurting him, he feels betrayed. Steve is thrown as music gains speed again, then almost stops as he hits the floor.

As Steve rises to his feet again the music isn't the hopeful beat you'd expect, but there is a sad energy to it. They are tired, but Steve knows that Tony is hurting and won't let him hurt others. As Tony gets distracted Steve throws him to the floor. In this moment we know this is it, horror inspired strings increase in speed, volume and tempo as Steve starts to beat Tony. He smashes the helmet off and rises up. The audiences held their breath frightened, the scene implied that Steve was ready to decapitate Tony where he lay. The fear can be seen in Tony's eyes. Steve stabs into the arc reactor with his shield, the one thing keeping the suit powered as audiences flinch. The impact is a loud metallic clank overpowers the music, followed by the score becoming calmer as the fight is over. Even calm it is still tense and sombre as the fight is over.

As Cap gets up and dislodges his shield he moves to Bucky, as Steve is helping him up the music becomes more hopeful. The relationship between Steve and Bucky is as strong as ever. As Tony calls out for his father's shield back it sounds desperate and pitiful, sounding like a child losing a game. The score rises for the final time, then the clink of the Shield hitting the floor leaves the last notes to echo. This is when Steve Rogers is no longer Captain America, his fight has gone long enough, and this is how he ends it.

In the aftermath Tony is trying to stand for himself again but can't. The slow piano plays as he watches Steve and Bucky leave. Ringing under the music is Tony's ears after the fight and the loss. The camera slowly moves away with the piano and Steve Rogers.

Yuki Hayashi, who worked on My Hero Academia, is known in Japan for his work on TV Dramas and animated television shows. He never had an interest in music but became a self-taught composer in 2009 when he finally decided that the soundtracks he was listening to weren't very appealing and lacked enough emotion.

My Hero Academia is an anime based on the Manga of the same name. In this world more than 80% of people are born with powers, the show is about the protagonist, Midoriya Izuku, and his days in the top Hero School. Due to the nature of the show there are many tense fight scenes, however, this is one of the most emotional in the series to date. The fight is between Todoroki Shouto and Midoriya Izuku in a school sports festival, these two have incredible powers but are limiting their use. The fight between the two is about their ideals and upbringings clashing with each other. Midoriya grew up loved and with no powers, meaning no expectations, whereas Todoroki was created to be the number one hero with a lot of expectations to be his abusive father's successor.

In the fight Midoriya is holding back because his power destroys his body if he uses too much at once, his arm and fingers are already broken due to this. Todoroki on the other hand is holding back his fire power to prove a point to his father by winning with only ice, this slowly freezes his body because he is not regulating its temperature.

The music starts with a slow and soft piano, we are halfway through the fight at a standstill, it is a calm before the real storm to come. The last note is then elongated, a ringing inside Todoroki's head as he remembers something about his mother from his childhood. The scene falls silent as the memory plays, everything being echoed in the memory. He is remembering a time his mother had told him that he is his own person, something that was repressed after she was taken away. A slow piano begins again, this time more joyful and energetic than last time. Deeper instruments then join as he realises what he has been doing, the music gradually becoming livelier again. A fast, loud and powerful drum beat is then introduced as he uses his fire for the first time, the sound becomes overwhelming as it shows his full power being unleashed. The audience members are excited and hopeful for the characters development. The soundtrack is hyping the

audience along with the characters. We cut to the reactions of other characters as they watch on from the stands.

At 1:33 is when the real fight starts, a full body shot of Todoroki using both sides. After he speaks the music becomes over powering ones again, full of hope and excitement. A sharp noise can be heard when Endeavour (Todoroki's father) smiles, he believes his son has admitted defeat and is giving in, however is actually admitting that it is his power and not his fathers.

Once again, the music mellows out as the two on stage speak, it is the same tune but softer, it is energetic yet released. The audience knows that this is the end of the fight. As Todoroki uses both powers the music rapidly overpowers the scene again, a loud tinging comes from the ice and the sound of fire is heard over the music, the sound of Midoriya's clothes ripping can also be heard. Both are putting their all into the fight now and the audience can feel it from the way the air can be heard circling the both and the ground shaking. The Tinging from Todoroki's power is overpowering as a large barrage of ice is sent, the tempo of the scene keeps increasing, hyping the audience more and more as we hit the climax. The sound of Fire and clothes ripping as the can't hold together anymore as well as hearing Midoriya activating the power in his already broken hand. As the sound hits its peak walls are thrown up to limit damage and as both hit these walls they explode, the music stops, the fight is over.

In the aftermath only, the sounds of the damage and classmate's confusion. Then silence except for the sound of smoke clearing and ground settling. Todoroki wins the fight, however, Midoriya wins by getting Todoroki to use his fire.

I want to write and feel the drama. Music is essentially an emotional language, so you want to feel something from the relationship and build music based on those feelings – Howard Shore

A lot of work went into both clips, from the score to the sound effects and even the acting, all this has come together to create these highly emotional scenes that work well in the narrative of the film and engages the audience excellently. As Howard Shore says, 'music is a language', and like any other language it's difficult knowing what to say and how. If a score doesn't make the audience emotional or create a hype around the scene then there may as well be nothing there. Some scores go largely unnoticed but have the right effect where as others are recognised by audiences before it even begins, due to this it can leave them over used in a franchise.

Bibliography

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