



PROVIDE AN AUDITORY SCENE ANALYSIS OF A FILM SCENE

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Introduction

The Lord of the Rings trilogy (2001, 2002, 2003) was a milestone in cinema at the time, it not only moved CGI a lot closer to what we have today in Hollywood blockbusters but it created something that has gained millions of fans around the world, so much so that it has created 3 prequel films.

The writer of the lord of the rings is a British Professor called John Ronald Reuel Tolkien more commonly known as J.R.R. Tolkien, the stories he wrote about in these books are so far away from what was being written about back in the 30's to 50's but come early 2000's and a New Zealand film director called Peter Jackson who had the job of adapting the books into full length feature films, creating worlds around them and making the entire universe that this world is in believable but the one thing the books did not have to help Jackson was the music to accompany the film so Jackson brought in a famous film composer Howard Shore.

The work of Howard is something I have always listened to growing up, the scores he has created over extensive filmography he has composed for such as "The Fly (1985)", "Silence of the Lambs (1991)" and "Ms. Doubtfire (1993)" all these films have quite a unique films scores have a sense of question, when Peter Jackson wanted to find a composer to score the lord of the rings he thought that Howard's background was very suited and rather perfect for the trilogy and the music helps drive the thought to go on a small adventure of its own wondering what the next thing that's going to happen will be but in none other films is Howard Shore more famous for than the Lord of the Rings films.

When scoring the lord of the rings soundtrack Howard describes the process as scoring it as an opera score, because in the original books Tolkien wrote different languages into the books such as the elvish language and the dwarf language and Howard says that the language in the book was so poetic and beautiful that he wanted to make sure he got all that beauty into the final score.

The Scene Analysis

I'm going to be analysing not 1 scene from 1 of the lord of the rings films but I'm going to be analysing the score and how it progresses throughout the films and how the score moves the films and gives them subtle tone shifts to help the audience understand what's going on within the score and for audiences who listen out for the scores in films for them to get an idea of where the film is going and what the film is trying to say with the soundtrack. The scores for the lord of the rings and the hobbit and unique in their own way, they not only create the world just as soon as you hear the flutes begin to play as you're introduced to the shire, a key location within the trilogy and Shore knows that this piece is something that is going to have to have a lot of power behind it so he's composed 57 different pieces.

Lets start with a very important part of the 3 films, the prologue but before a image is shown on screen, the first piece begins to play, it's a uneasy harmonic piece sung by a female choir, the first song is the "song of the elves" it leaves you with as I mentioned earlier a questioning, a sort of curiosity but cautious mind set like a "I want to see what's behind the creepy door" kind of thought its sung in a minor key to make the audience feel even more uneasy, this piece is the theme of Galadriel the elf queen played by Cate Blanchett in the films, who then narrates over the opening sequence.



Lothlorian Theme.

Which then brings in the theme song for the ring titled "ring theme" appropriately which during this part of the film reveals the title for the film itself, played on strings in a E flat Minor it gives a sort of dramatic tone for the film.



Ring Theme.

Then once the title has disappeared the narrator changes from Galadriel to Bilbo Baggins played by Ian Holm and the shire theme begins to play fading from a darker theme of the ring theme and to a more humble light hearted homelike feeling song of the shire theme where a recorder is played to being the song to give it a peaceful safe like feel with the backing of violins which then changed through the piece to having cellos as the backing and the violin as the main instrument, giving the film a more light hearted feel and a more homely feel to the overall song



Shire Theme.

Which then after Bilbo has placed the films story in its setting of middle earth we're then given a more humble narration where the story then shifts away from the dark undertones of the dark history and changes to the more quite peaceful nature of the shire where it can be still heard by the violins playing and cellos behind, then after Bilbo as set the stage for the sub title of the first film "the fellow ship of the ring" the fellowship theme plays in full power to give rise the leitmotif of the music piece.



Fellowship Theme.

These four themes I have just spoken about is what's known as Leitmotifs an operatic technique that was used a lot and made popular by the German composer Richard Wagner, it's a technique that merges the musical piece to a character, location for events it's used to aid and sometimes shape how the views sees a situation. The one leitmotif that Shore does this a lot with is the "Fellowship theme" and I'm going to be focusing and isolation scene where the theme is developing throughout the film.

The next time we hear the theme after the title is when Sam and Frodo have a emotional moment before started the big adventure to Rivendell, a small slice the shire theme is played as to

give an idea of what they're leaving and where they've come from which then fades to a more peaceful humble version of the fellowship theme which is only played on a singular French horn so not yet the full epic piece but enough to understand that this is a part of the fellowship.

The next time we hear the theme is when the hobbits have accepted the new leader of Aragon portrayed by Viggo Mortensen and in the story world the fellowship has grown from 2 to 5 members to what Howard did was add 2 more French horns in to give the piece even more of a kick as to add more power to it as does the narrative add Aragon adding power to the hobbits team of heroes but this piece has also added a loud backing drum as to add some urgency, as again in the story world time is running short and the characters do need to get to Rivendell quickly.

The fellowship appears once more before the middle of the film where all of the fellowship come together in Rivendell and Howard Shore again magnifies that moment by playing 3 variations that seamlessly merge together to create the most powerful version of this leitmotif that we will hear throughout this film, once while Aragorn played by Viggo Mortensen states that the fellowship has finally come together and then again once the fellowship leave Rivendell towards Mordor and a 3 film adventure, the nature of leitmotifs is that a theme is merged with a character or a location but what interested me about the leitmotif of the fellowship is then throughout the film while the events of the film progress we get different variations of the theme when the party begins to lose people and while people stray away from Frodo the theme gets less so and sometimes gets stepped on by other more monumental themes, as to make the fellowship feel small again and more in danger and towards the end the theme can only manage to be played with violins and Shore knows what he's doing he's creating an emotional experience alongside the already emotional journey that is the moving image and it elevates the film even more so, it adds to something more, it plays to a more subconscious side of the audience, the side that feels the pain and the struggle that the characters go through, the music truly pushes empathy upon you and helps you understand the characters journey even more.

Shore has created something that is truly amazing, the leitmotifs really play a big part in these films and Shore changing the tempo, the harmony and the instrumentation, making them whole of separate weaving the music into and around each other and then at the very end the Shore's score really brings alive the film world and creates something so unique and something so thrilling that there is a reason that the soundtrack is played at orchestras around the world.

Conclusion

To conclude howard shore created something so rich in emotion that it fits almost effortlessly with the story of middle earth and helps drive the films forward, the importance of scores and music within cinema is incredible, it's an unseen element within film that is creates pure euphoria within us that helps move the film along and the use of leitmotifs is so powerful that it creates a audible aid so we know wether we are watching the film or if we hear it else where we'll think about that moment that the character or the location was in when that piece of music, and I think that's so powerful because no matter where you here that melody from then on you will always been drawn back to that world, you'll always been drawn back to the feeling you had during your viewing of that film.

Within cinema, music as become something that to some directors feel is a afterthought but when a film maker works closely with a composer to create something that truly represents the feel and the emotional journey of the film so genuinely as Howard Shore did it in the lord of the rings trilogy and in the more recent hobbit trilogy it became something more, it was no longer just a film score it was a enteral everlasting masterpiece of orchestral beauty that will stand its ground among the great soundtracks of time and will hold it there firmly for coming generations to watch and to listen and to appreciate.

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