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Sounds of cinema: Soundscapes and the cultural impact of film music

Abstract. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of music on the emotional perception of films by analysing how musical compositions affect the emotional reactions of viewers while watching a film. The research methodology involved selecting films to analyse the musical accompaniment and studying the influence of music on the viewer's perception of specific plots. The research findings proved that music is an essential component of cinematic art that can enhance the emotional impact of films on viewers. Music is a powerful tool to further influence the viewer and convey

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certain ideas in the film. The functions of music in cinema are diverse: from emphasising the film's atmosphere to an integral soundtrack consisting of noises and various sounds, without musical instruments. The analysis of the Harry Potter film highlighted the significance of music in creating the atmosphere of the wizarding world. The role of music in cinema transcends merely accompanying the image. It is a multifaceted means of expression that can change the perception of a scene, emphasise key moments, and even shape the emotional mood of the entire film. A vital part of a successful musical score is close cooperation between the composer and the director. They collaborate to ensure that the music not only complements the visuals but also integrates into the overall concept of the film, enhancing its emotional and narrative impact. With a soundtrack, or simply an integral tone series, the semantic horizons in films are expanded, ensuring a more profound emotional and narrative effect

Keywords: cinema; composer; soundtrack; film music; emotional impact

INTRODUCTION

From the first silent films to modern cinematic films, music is an essential tool for creating atmosphere, emphasising emotions, and shaping the overall impression of a film. Since the advent of cinema, music has become an integral part of the cinematic experience, adding depth and layers to the visuals on screen. During the screening of silent films, music was already present, usually played on a piano placed in the hall. As soon as sound appeared in films, the musical landscape was transformed and gained wide opportunities. Music in cinema can evoke a wide range of emotions – from joy to fear, from sadness to elation – and helps viewers to immerse themselves in the story and experience it together with the characters. The emotional component of music is crucial in the context of the viewer's perception of the film, as cinematic art is aimed at evoking a certain emotional state in the audience. Music also plays a vital role in creating cultural and historical contexts, helping to immerse the viewer in a concrete historical time and place. Through musical motifs and themes, one can feel the atmosphere of a certain era or culture, which makes the film more authentic and convincing.

A. Simões (2024) explores the innovative approach to narrative used in Gaspar Noé's *Vortex*, which uses split-screen techniques to create polyphony in the narrative, allowing for multiple storylines to be revealed simultaneously, giving viewers the opportunity to experience different perspectives of events. The researcher compares the latest technique to a polyphonic form of polyphony, which involves the simultaneous sound of several different melodic lines.

Often, films use existing music rather than a specially composed soundtrack. K. Raizen (2024) explored the interaction between Pier Paolo Pasolini's cinema and popular music. The researcher analysed how Pasolini used popular music. K. Raizen concluded that the use of popular music in Pasolini's films serves as a powerful tool to highlight the contrasts between different social strata and add depth to his cinematic works. J. Godsall (2021) analysed how Rossini's compositions are used in films to create new contexts and meanings. The researcher explored examples of scenes where Rossini's music takes on a new meaning by interacting with visual elements and narrative.

Film music has many functions, from emphasising a certain emotional state to enhancing the viewer's spatial sense. A. Kolassa (2024) analysed the influence of music on creating an atmosphere of horror in the TV series *Children of the Stones*. The researcher studied how the music and particular musical techniques are used to increase the sense

of tension and fear, as well as to reflect the themes of the past that haunt the characters. J. Richardson *et al.* (2021) investigated how the soundtracks to the films *Interstellar* and *Arrival* affect the viewer's perception of time and space and the manipulation of people's spatial and temporal senses through the soundtrack. The researchers analysed the compositional techniques used by the composers and their impact on the narrative structure and emotional effect of the films.

The digitalisation of the artistic space has prompted research into the creation of certain aspects of films using artificial intelligence. J. Liu (2023) analysed the creation of intelligent music systems for films based on virtual reality technology. Using computer modelling methods, the researcher created a system that automates the process of composing music, considering the emotional context of the scene. G. Touros and T. Giannakopoulos (2023) presented a method for evaluating video audio tracks using machine learning. The researchers concluded that using machine learning to evaluate video audio tracks considerably improves classification accuracy and ensures more efficient processing of large amounts of audiovisual information.

The influence of music on the emotional component from the standpoint of neurobiology was of interest to F. Bravo *et al.* (2024), who studied the effect of dissonant music on the early stages of visual perception using neurophysiological methods. The researchers emphasise that dissonant music can drastically change visual perception, increasing the level of attention and cognitive processing. However, the study of the impact of particular musical techniques on the emotional state of the viewer in conjunction with a particular visual image is an understudied topic.

The musicological aspect of cinema is poorly understood. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the concrete components of soundtracks and the overall musical landscape to better substantiate the impact of music on the viewer's emotional reactions while watching a particular film. Objectives of the study:

1. To consider the historical development of film scores, including silent films.
2. Based on the analysis of films, to identify the main types of musical accompaniment in films.
3. To analyse the films *Interstellar* and *Harry Potter* and identify the key features that influence the emotional perception of the film from the standpoint of musicology.
4. To study the influence of music on the narrative structures of films and to consider in detail how music helps to reveal the plot and characters.

The research methodology was based on a qualitative approach, which involved the analysis of soundscapes and the cultural impact of music in cinema. The principal method of the study was content analysis, which helped to investigate how music and sounds are used to convey ideological messages, cultural aspects and to investigate the impact of sound art on the emotional and psychophysical state of the viewer. The films were selected based on their significance in the art of cinema, as well as the presence of innovative sound technologies.

The data for the study was collected by watching the selected films and then dividing them into thematic segments. The following aspects were analysed during the review: musical themes and motifs, elements of musical language present in a particular theme, the use of instruments, sound effects, and the contexts in which these elements appear. Further musicological analysis involved working with the musical text (Musicnotes, n.d.; Musescore, n.d.).

HISTORY OF FILM MUSIC IN THE CONTEXT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CINEMATIC ART

The connection between music and visuals has been close since the beginning of cinema. L. Gorbolis and A. Chernysh (2023) highlighted the concept of the “artistic triad”, where literature, cinema, and music interact to create a multifaceted cultural product. Musical accompaniment evolved along with the development of the technical capabilities of cinema. In the early 20th century, as soon as silent cinema appeared, music was already accompanying screenings in cinemas. Live piano accompaniment was more often used, or an orchestra was used. Even then, the music emphasised the atmosphere of the film, certain movements of the characters and general scenes. Mostly, illustrative music was used, which provides a sound description of certain events in the film. This kind of music helped the viewer better understand what was happening on the screen plot-wise. D. Nasta (2023) emphasised the significance of music in silent cinema and substantiated the concretisation of the emotional and narrative aspects of cinematic art. In 1927, *The Jazz Singer* became the first sound film and, accordingly, music took on a new meaning, it became an integral part of cinematic art, and directors began to collaborate with composers to create unique music tracks for a particular film. Overall, collaboration between composers and directors is critical to creating effective film music. Directors often have concrete ideas about how music should support the visuals and enhance the emotional impact of a scene. Composers must take these requirements into account and find ways to integrate music with the image and plot. Music has a powerful impact on the emotional state of the viewer and is key in shaping emotional responses and reinforcing the narrative (Lampl, 2023). S. Silas *et al.* (2024) developed new methodological approaches to studying the impact of music on visual media and expanding the understanding of how music can be used to manipulate perception and emotional responses.

Musical compositions can emphasise the atmosphere, evoke certain emotions, and even change the perception of the scene. Furthermore, music helps to connect the emotions of the characters with the emotions of the audience, which contributes to a stronger impact of the film on the audience. The music often reflects cultural and historical

features that can help the audience better understand and accept the story and characters. For instance, in films depicting specific cultures or historical eras, composers use traditional instruments, rhythms, and melodies to convey the atmosphere and specifics of the time and place. L.G. López (2023) notes that music helps to reconstruct historical memory and develop new perceptions of historical events in a cultural context.

The functions of music in cinema are diverse. Overall, the musical landscape of film art can be divided into two aspects. The former involves working with sounds, and the latter with special music tracks. Working with sound is meant to emphasise the specific features of a particular scene, whether it is the character’s stomping footsteps, the sound of rain, or the hum of a metropolis. For this, completely different methods of sound production are used, not limited to certain musical instruments. Each aspect of the musical landscape is divided into distinct ways and approaches. Firstly, let us look at the types of work with sound. There are two basic methods of working with sound in cinema: subtractive and additive. These approaches are fundamentally different. While the subtractive way of using music in film implies the presence of only those sounds that are necessary for the plot, the additive method aims to maximise the saturation and brightness of all sound textures, including the sound of rain, the dialogue of the characters, the hum of the motorway, and some kind of advertising in the background. The additive way of working with sound conveys the atmosphere better, but sometimes the main sound line is lost amid the variety of sounds.

The musical approach to working with sound involves writing unique music tracks or using existing music. There are quite a few ways to work with soundtracks or existing musical compositions. The main ones include an integral sound system, psychophysical, counterpoint, functional, and leitmotif system. An integral soundtrack implies the absence of musical compositions in favour of noise scores. The use of an integrated soundtrack in films is not a widespread phenomenon, as it requires more arduous work on other aspects of the film, since music is a powerful tool for influencing the viewer, and if there is no music, the director has to work harder to convey a certain emotional state. To compensate for the lack of music, directors use noise scores. It is no longer just working with sound, but a certain sequence of rhythmic and pitch features of noise scores.

The psychophysical technique of working with film music involves instilling an emotional state in the audience. The impact of music on mental and physical health is well-grounded and real. Music can affect physiological processes in the body, such as heart rate, breathing, and blood pressure. Certain musical genres and tempos can accelerate or decelerate these processes, and therefore apart from emotional suggestion, the psychophysical technique of working with the musical landscape helps to change the viewer’s physiological parameters, which enhances a certain emotion from watching a film. The counterpoint method of working with music involves comparing or contrasting sound and visuals in a film. In terms of the juxtaposition of sound and visuals, this solution contributes to the creation of a unique cinematic canvas that can enhance the perception and emotional impact on the audience. The contrast between sound and visuals is used to emphasise

certain aspects of the story or characters, add irony, or create unexpected twists and turns in the narrative. For instance, calm or joyful music accompanying a tense or tragic scene can create an alienating effect or emphasise the absurdity of the situation, causing the audience to reflect deeper or have stronger emotional reactions.

The functional mode can convey the atmosphere of the historical time in which the events in the film take place. Usually, composers or sound engineers use certain musical instruments, methods of sound production, and genres of music that are inherent in a particular era. L. Nagib (2023) notes that musical elements reflect certain historical periods and social conditions, allowing viewers to experience history not only through images but also through sound. Furthermore, through a functional way of working with sound, directors can characterise a place, for example, considering the specific features of the music industry of a particular country or social group. A functional technique includes the propaganda properties of musical material. D. Pop (2024) addresses how musical films were used as a propaganda tool during the socialist era, emphasising the ideals of socialist society through melodramatic plots and patriotic music. Such films were intended to form national identity and support official ideology, while the music in these films was often aimed at enhancing the emotional impact and creating a positive image of socialist life. K.B. Sharpe (2021) underlines the significance of music as a means of expressing individual and collective feelings in times of political upheaval. R. Yosef (2022) emphasises that filmmakers use music to reflect complex and often contradictory cultural ideas. Often in cinema, music conveys the inner state of a character. This property also refers to the functional way of working with sound. The hero's state of mind is very well emphasised by a certain genre of music, e.g., if it is music of the Romantic era, then on a subconscious level the viewer understands that the hero will confront the real world and bring his own fictional world to the fore. In terms of some light major music, the hero can immediately be described as a positive and sunny personality.

The leitmotif system is another technique of working with sound in cinema that is quite common. The very notion of a leitmotif implies that a certain musical theme is tied to a particular film character. The theme accompanies the character in the frame and complements their characteristics. Richard Wagner pioneered the system of leitmotifs in the opera genre. This way of working with music has also gained popularity in cinema, as it allows creating deep emotional connections between the viewer and the characters or plot elements. Leitmotifs, or recurring musical themes, are associated with particular characters, places, or events, and each time they are played, the viewer has associations with the corresponding emotions and events. This feature helps to create consistency and cohesion in the film's narrative, as well as enhances the impact of key moments. For instance, in the Harry Potter film, for which John Williams composed the music, leitmotifs help to enhance the audience's emotional perception and make the music recognisable and memorable. Leitmotifs contribute to better understanding and memorisation of the plot, as music acts as a reminder of previous events and helps viewers navigate the narrative structure of the film.

Diverse ways of working with sound can be incorporated into a single film, allowing for a multifaceted and dynamic film. The music can range from orchestral scores to modern electronic compositions, creating different emotional shades and atmospheres. For example, epic orchestral music can emphasise the grandeur and scale of a scene, while minimalist electronic music can create a sense of tension and intrigue. The use of existing musical pieces creates subtexts and contributes to the film's deeper ideological message.

ANALYSIS OF THE MUSIC FOR THE FILM “INTERSTELLAR” (COMPOSER – HANS ZIMMER)

The science fiction film *Interstellar* became a cinematic sensation in 2014 thanks to its ambitious subject matter, visual effects, and profound philosophical underpinnings. H. Zimmer's soundtrack for this film has become widely popular on TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and has become one of the most famous film scores. The plot of *Interstellar* focuses on Cooper, a former NASA pilot who now lives on a farm with his children. After discovering a mysterious signal indicating the existence of a secret NASA project, Cooper joins a mission to find habitable planets. Together with a team of scientists, Cooper embarks on an exciting journey full of dangers and surprises. One of the greatest strengths of *Interstellar* is its scientific credibility. The film was based on the scientific concepts of one of the most prominent physicists of modern time, K. Thorne. All the solutions, assumptions, and theories presented in the film are valid in modern science. Furthermore, in *Interstellar*, all visual elements of space are as close as possible to the real appearance of black holes, wormholes, and other cosmic phenomena. The truthfulness of the scientific aspect makes the film even more fascinating. To make the viewer want to delve into various scientific concepts, the director and one of the screenwriters, C. Nolan, added an emotional aspect to the story that is striking in its depth. The plot focuses on family, love, and sacrifice. Cooper's relationship with his daughter Murph became the emotional core of the film. Across the distance and time that separate them, the film explores how this relationship endures and how strong feelings can overcome even cosmic barriers.

The film is striking in its depth of ideological direction, namely the idea of self-sacrifice for the safety of one's daughter in the case of Cooper and for the salvation of the human nation in the case of Professor Brand. Director C. Nolan skilfully integrates philosophical and moral questions about human existence, family values, and humanity's place in the universe, allowing the audience to not only enjoy the spectacular visuals, but also reflect on deeper questions about the future of humanity and its interaction with the surrounding world. While the scientific concepts in the film are extremely valuable and interesting, the storyline also skilfully holds the attention, allowing the audience to empathise with the characters more deeply.

Another component of the film's success is the soundtrack composed by H. Zimmer. Music not only accompanies the visuals, but also adds depth to them, enhancing emotional moments and dramatic scenes. *Interstellar* is not the first film on which two artists, C. Nolan and H. Zimmer, have collaborated. In this case, H. Zimmer created the core of the soundtrack without knowing either

the genre or the main storyline. C. Nolan showed the composer one dialogue and the general ideological direction of the film. Furthermore, the film's director told the composer that the main idea was based on the warm relationship between father and son, knowing that H. Zimmer had a son. This move worked very well, and the composer managed to get into the idea and write music based on the image of his own love for his son, so that every viewer and listener could recognise themselves in the sounds.

The main key of the soundtrack is A minor. Overall, the key of A minor is considered a symbol of sadness because of the minor mode and naivety, as well as transparency due to the absence of key signs. The music of the soundtrack can be classified as sentimental minimalism. In general, minimalism became widespread in academic music in the second half of the 20th century. The essence of the concept of minimalism is to show life as it is, without complications and unnecessary details. Often, minimalist music can immerse the listener in a certain state, through repetitive patterns, changes in which occur quite imperceptibly and very logically. Sentimental minimalism is not the official name of the minimalist movement that is in contact with entertainment music, i.e., the popular music industry. S. Downes (2021b) emphasised that sentimentalism in music not only reflects emotions, but also actively shapes them, creating emotional landscapes that resonate with the inner world of listeners. Sentimental minimalism implies a rather simple harmonic side, usually the basic four chords

on which most songs of various genres are based. Writing music using the minimalist method is a rather challenging task, as one needs to calculate the load well and change the details in the patterns exactly when listening to a certain pattern becomes difficult for the hearing impaired. Sentimental minimalism is a fairly common trend in film music, and therefore it is very well suited to certain climactic and emotional states.

The harmonic side of the music for *Interstellar* is quite simple and at the same time driving in the context of the development of the musical material. H. Zimmer uses the following chords as a basis: the 6th seventh chord (F-A-C-E), the 7th triad (G-B-D), the tonic (A-C-E), and the natural dominant (E-G-B). These chords would fit any song well. However, this does not diminish the value of the soundtrack. H. Zimmer's genius lies in the fact that he creates large-scale and beautiful musical canvases based on simple things. From simple harmonies, the composer builds a complex soundtrack that well emphasises the emotionality of the film. The harmonious side strongly influences the audience's perception of the film, adding pastel shades, something close, understandable, and native. An analogous harmony is often found in songs, and therefore people are familiar with it and H. Zimmer uses it as a basis for a reason. The chords become the background for the development of the soundtrack. The main theme is based on this harmony: (Fig. 1, measures 119-126 inclusive, the theme is written in the violin key).



Figure 1. Score for the film *Interstellar*

Source: Musicnotes (n.d.)

The main theme of the soundtrack appears simple, but in fact it makes the viewer go through a wide spectrum of emotions: from sadness, despair, and longing to hope and confidence in the brightness of the future. The first measure – A-E against the background of the 6th seventh chord – sounds incredibly open and large-scale, due to the use of a quintal interval in the upper voice, while the 6th seventh chord adds hope through the major triad in the base. This measure can be considered the personification of endless outer space, through the quintet, which adds spatial openness and boundlessness. The next measure, B-E against the

background of the seventh triad, sounds tender and has details of a call to hope through the quart in the upper voice. The third measure of the theme, C-E, has a sad colouring due to the minor triad in the base (tonic). The last measure of the theme, D-E, brings back hope thanks to the sixth triad, but the second (D-E) in the theme sounds doomed and uncertain. The repetition of the E sound, to which the theme keeps returning, is important in this theme. In this way, H. Zimmer emphasises the permanence of the endless space and loops the theme. Stopping on a half-note E feels like an island of hope, which is factually the grain of this theme.

Furthermore, stopping on a half-note E in each measure of the main theme sounds mechanical and even futuristic.

The composer develops the thematic grain by gradually adding instruments, adding numerous arpeggios that play on this harmony. The sound gradually builds up and at the climax breaks off on the sound of E in all voices. Then, H. Zimmer repeats the process, but adds instruments in a unique way, using a different ratio of arpeggio sounds. It is important in the development of the soundtrack that it corresponds to the most emotional scenes of the film. H. Zimmer's music is skilfully integrated with the film's visual effects, enhancing the emotional impact of the scenes. Using silence and pauses at certain points helps to create contrast and emphasise the significance of certain scenes. An essential element of the *Interstellar* soundtrack is the use of the organ. As an instrument, the organ is one of the most complex and large-scale musical instruments. Sound is produced by passing air through pipes, of which an average organ has about 1,000-5,000. The instrument, with its large-scale and majestic sound, emphasises the themes of infinity and spirituality that permeate the film. The organ, which is often heard in solo parts, creates a sense of grandeur and time, which is important for a film where the central theme is space and its impact on human life. The organ's sounds can express both majesty and drama, making it ideal for depicting space travel and intense emotional moments. A church organ was used to record the soundtrack.

The organ requires a special approach, as it is a rather complicated instrument for performing music. The composer and director saw in this instrument an echo of the film's central idea of the value of the human being, as the audience looks not just at space, it looks at people in space. And the organ requires a human touch; it is large, grandiose, but silent. Furthermore, the sound of the organ was very suitable for the aesthetics of the film. H. Zimmer combined the "human" sound of the organ with the cold and alienated timbres of electronic instruments. The soundtrack turned out to be very emotional due to the idea of sentimental minimalism, while at the same time strict due to the constant return to the E sound, which adds a mechanic feel and the emphasis on electronic sound.

ANALYSIS OF THE MUSIC TO THE FILM "HARRY POTTER" (COMPOSER – JOHN WILLIAMS)

The Harry Potter film series, based on J.K. Rowling's best-selling novels, has become a real cultural phenomenon that has won the hearts of millions of viewers around the world. The first instalment, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, was released in 2001, followed by *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002), and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004). These films, directed by C. Columbus and A. Cuarón, have become landmarks in the history of cinema for their ability to bring Rowling's magical world to the big screen. The history of the Harry Potter films has several fascinating moments. One of them concerns the choice of a director for the first film. Initially, several candidates were considered, including S. Spielberg, who had ambitious plans for the adaptation, but in the end, C. Columbus became the director. He was chosen because of his experience working with child actors and his ability to create an atmosphere of charm and warmth, which was essential for the adaptation of the first book. Another

interesting fact concerns the choice of locations for filming. Hogwarts Castle, which is the central location, was created based on real British castles and palaces, such as Alnwick Castle and Gloucester Cathedral. The recreation of the magic school required the careful work of a team of designers to convey the atmosphere of an ancient and at the same time fantastic place. Casting for the main roles was a crucial process, as the success of the entire series depended on it. It is especially interesting that J.K. Rowling personally insisted that the cast consisted mainly of British people to preserve the authenticity of the book.

As for the philosophical component, the films explore important themes such as good and evil, friendship, courage, self-sacrifice, and moral choice. All these themes permeate both the literary original and the cinematic adaptation. They raise the question of what it means to be a hero, how to preserve humanity in the darkest moments, and how important people's choices are in life. The ideological direction of the series of films also includes elements of the fight against prejudice and discrimination. The films raise issues of social justice through themes such as the treatment of muggles, pureblood wizards and blood traitors, highlighting the significance of tolerance, equality, and respect for diversity. The leitmotif system in the Harry Potter film scores, created by J. Williams, is one of the key musical elements that define the emotional and narrative structure of the films. A leitmotif, as a musical element, is a recurring theme or melody that is associated with a particular character, setting, or event, providing a deeper immersion of the audience into the world of the film. This technique, pioneered by Richard Wagner in his operas, allows for the creation of complex sound textures that enhance dramatic effect and emotional perception.

J. Williams used leitmotifs as a central element of the Harry Potter film scores, using them to establish the thematic identity of the main characters and important events. For example, the leitmotif known as Hedwig's Theme has become a kind of musical symbol of the entire film, being associated with the entire magical world that opens before the audience. This theme is used throughout the first three films, creating a connection between different storylines and episodes. Each of the film's characters also has its unique musical leitmotif. For example, Hedwig's Theme personifies the main character, reflecting his development from a young boy to a strong and courageous wizard. This theme changes and evolves along with the character, emphasising his evolution over the course of the first three instalments. Ron and Hermione's leitmotifs also reinforce their individual character traits and interactions with Harry, creating a musical backdrop for their friendship and adventures. An important aspect of the leitmotif system in the Harry Potter music is its ability to integrate various musical styles and influences, creating a unique soundscape. J. Williams draws inspiration from classical music, folklore, and contemporary musical movements, combining them into a coherent musical fabric that allows each film to have its individual musical identity, while maintaining a connection to the previous instalments in the series.

Overall, the leitmotif system in the Harry Potter film scores is an example of how music can serve not only as background music, but also as an active participant in the narrative, enhancing the emotional and symbolic content

of the film. J. Williams used a wealth of leitmotifs to create a musical universe that is at the same time an integral part of the cinematic experience. His approach demonstrates a profound understanding of how music can be a tool for revealing complex narrative ideas and enhancing the emotional impact on the audience. The complexity of analysing

the music for the Harry Potter film series lies in the fact that different composers were involved in the music. That is why this study presents an analysis of the music for the first three films composed by John Williams. The main theme “Hedwig’s Theme”, which is now associated with the Harry Potter film series, has a magical sound (Fig. 2, first 16 bars).

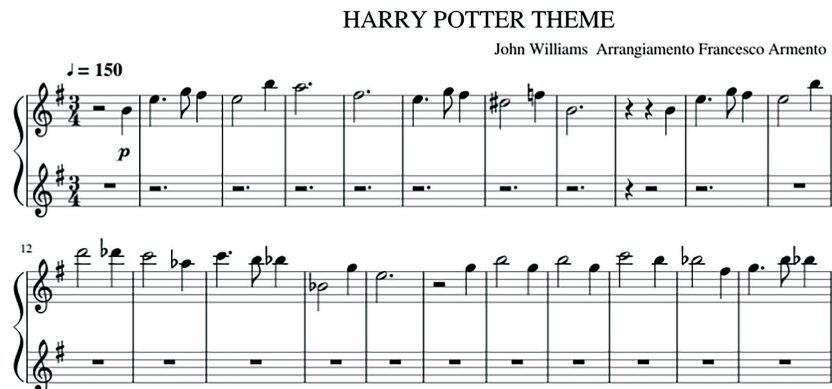


Figure 2. Hedwig’s Theme from the Harry Potter films

Source: Musicscore (n.d.)

The theme is written in E minor and is quite strict in its construction, consisting of two sentences that have the same beginning (bars 1-3 and bars 9-11), but the development and conclusion are different. The imperfection and strangeness in the first sentence are added by the sound of F sharp (measure 7), since in E minor this sound is the second lowered scale degree and, accordingly, Neapolitan harmony appears. The second sentence contains chromaticisms (bars 12-15), which add unevenness and a special colourful sound to the theme. The pickup measure, which is based on a call-and-response intonation of the perfect fourth, adds to the songfulness of the theme. The rhythmic organisation of the theme also plays a vital role in its emotional impact. The main motif is played in a measured, yet emphatically rhythmic style, reminiscent of the movement of an owl’s wing or the wind blowing, creating a dynamic effect that enhances visuals and gives the music a sense of flight or movement. A crucial element of the “magical” sound of the theme is the use of a special instrument by J. Williams, namely the celesta. The celesta is similar to a piano in appearance and method of producing sound, but instead of strings, celesta has thin glass tubes that are struck by hammers. And it is thanks to these tubes that an unusually charming sound resembling small bells is produced. The celesta is generally a rather quiet instrument, which adds an intimate sound to the theme. The use of celesta is an important aspect in the context of creating a magical sound space that corresponds to the main concept of the film.

J. Williams develops the main theme by building up the musical material, by adding new instruments, in this case – strings. The expansion of the musical material is felt as an expansion of space, because the strings fill a wide range. The theme is then played by the French horns. The French horn expands the sound of music even more due to the specific feature of sound production. The Hedwig’s Theme makes the audience believe in magic again and hold their breath in anticipation of a miracle thanks to its ability to combine musical elements that evoke a sense of magic,

delight, and mystery. The central musical motif, performed on the celesta, immediately immerses the listener in a world where anything is possible, regardless of age or life experience. Due to its simplicity and multilayered nature, Hedwig’s Theme evokes a resonance in the audience that goes beyond a simple musical association with a particular character or scene. The melody appears to be the only thread that runs through all the films in the series, reminding the audience of the main themes and ideas, such as the struggle between good and evil, friendship, loyalty and, admittedly, magic. Its recurring motif, which can be heard at the beginning of each film, acts as a kind of musical invitation for the audience to dive back into the world of Harry Potter, preparing them for a new, magical experience. Music contributes to the formation of identity and profound emotional connections in the context of fantasy series, emphasising its significance for perception and immersion in fictional worlds (Calabretto, 2023b; White, 2024).

Hedwig’s Theme is not just a musical theme, but a complex and multifaceted element that plays a central role in shaping the viewer’s emotional experience. Its ability to evoke a sense of belief in magic and arouse expectations of a miracle is the result of a masterful combination of musical elements such as melody, harmony, rhythm, and instrumentation. The theme has become a real symbol of the wizarding world of Harry Potter, capable of immersing the listener in a world where anything is possible. With every note, Hedwig’s Theme revives the audience’s faith in magic, making it an integral part of the film saga and culture in general.

ROLE OF MUSIC IN FILMS: CONNECTION WITH THE OPERA GENRE

Music is a critical part of cinematic art and can perform a wide range of functions: from noise scores to complex leitmotif systems. Thus, diverse ways of working with sound in one film allow directors and composers to create multi-layered and emotionally rich audiovisual works that engage the audience and make the cinematic experience

completer and more meaningful. Among the functional types of work with sound in cinema, immense importance is attached to the ability of music to impose certain political and ideological ideas (Erwin, 2023). M. Walters (2023) examined the role of music in Japanese cinema as a tool for attracting politically inactive viewers. The researcher argued that music can influence political consciousness through its ability to evoke emotional responses and create a context that fosters social and political engagement. This topic is quite researched, as the social aspect of human life is important and there are people who benefit from manipulating people's opinions on certain ideological beliefs. S. Downes (2021a) investigated how social contexts, ideologies, and structures influence the perception of art and its aesthetic appreciation and concluded that aesthetic judgements and perceptions of art are inextricably linked to social and cultural factors that influence the development of taste and artistic preferences.

Musical compositions in films and motion pictures have a strong influence on the viewer's perception of the visuals, due to the strong emotional impact on the audience. And often the music continues its independent life after the film's release, as is the case with the incredibly famous score by H. Zimmer for the film *Interstellar*. H. Zimmer introduces innovative techniques, such as the use of electronic elements alongside traditional instruments, which has resulted in an innovative soundscape that differs from conventional approaches to film score. Mixing organ parts with electronic sounds allows for a unique texture that emphasises both the emotional depth and cosmic scale of the film. The soundtrack has had such an impact on the audience that there are now countless arrangements and other compositions based on the main theme from *Interstellar*. This phenomenon is quite common in the field of film music. A.K. Windisch *et al.* (2023) studied how music in films transforms from an unknown element into a significant and expressive artistic medium. The researchers examine the role of music in creating emotional and narrative effects in cinema. They analyse the cases when music becomes critical to the perception of a film, as well as how music can transform from background to central in the context of a scene.

Music in films can be compared to the opera genre, as in both cases music accompanies the visuals. Admittedly, there are considerable differences, but film music has borrowed a lot from the opera sphere. For instance, the leitmotif system, which was first used by Richard Wagner, and which greatly influenced the development of film music and became one of the most common ways of creating musical compositions for films. One can recall the famous Harry Potter film series and composer J. Williams, who wrote the score for the first three films (*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*), who created several iconic themes that became the basis of the leitmotif system. The connection between film music and the opera genre is mentioned by S. Wang (2023), who argues that the soundscapes of films are deeply rooted in the musical and aesthetic traditions of the Chinese opera tradition, such as Peking Opera and other regional opera and theatre forms. Contemporary art overall is quite synthesised, specifically, cinema is influenced by opera and

theatre. Furthermore, M. Korsgaard (2021) argues that contemporary cinema cannot be fully understood without considering the influence of music videos. The researcher offers a new perspective on how music video has influenced cinematic aesthetics, narratives, and techniques, making it more dynamic and syncretic. By combining cinema with other art forms such as performance, video art, and installation (Gibson, 2022), one can take a deeper approach to interpreting the ideological content of cinema and assess the significance of its various components.

Selecting or composing music for a film is not an easy task. The complexity of the composer's task lies in the fact that music is a very versatile instrument, and it is important to use the aspect of it that is most suitable for a particular film. J. González (2023) notes: "One cannot just pick up and insert any melody, even the most favourite song, thinking it will work. The music may be completely unrelated to the episode. But if it 'hits', you will immediately feel it: at that moment, the whole is born, which is greater than the individual parts". Music is not always used in the film, and there are times when noise scores prevail. Sound effects in film music play a significant role in creating a realistic environment and enhancing the action. These can range from natural sounds, such as wind or rain, to complex audio effects that emphasise the sci-fi or magical elements of a film. In the Harry Potter films, the use of sound effects forms an integral part of the cinematic process, complementing the music and creating a deeper level of immersion. For example, in scenes depicting magical actions, sound effects such as magic flashes or spell sounds help to visually complement the magical atmosphere. These effects are often combined with music to create a multi-layered soundscape that enhances the emotional impact of a scene.

Silence, as part of sound design, can be extremely effective in creating dramatic tension or focusing attention on crucial details in a scene. In some critical moments of a film, silence can be used to allow the audience to focus on dialogue or visuals without distracting sound components. Notably, sound design in films is a complex and multilayered process that includes both music and sound components. Composers and sound designers work together to create a soundscape that not only complements the visuals of the film, but also deepens the emotional and dramatic impact. Often directors try to use music in their films in such a way that the viewer does not notice it, i.e., background music. This type of music also has its nuances. R. Calabretto (2023a) focuses on the difference between diegetic and background music in cinema and notes that diegetic music is more often an element of a particular event, picture, or dialogue. Whereas background music affects the emotional background of the scene and controls the audience's perception.

Music and sound effects are essential elements of filmmaking that help shape a unique cinematic project. They work in synergy to enhance the narrative and emotional aspects of the film, making each scene more emotional and meaningful to the viewer. Background music and sound effects not only add depth to the visuals, but also help to create a multi-layered perception of the film that is impressive and stays in the memory for a long time. The effective use of music and sound effects in films helps to create an emotional and important film for the audience.

CONCLUSIONS

Music is a powerful tool and its use in films enhances the impact of cinema on the audience. Its use in films not only complements the visual elements, but also actively shapes the emotional context, creating a deeper and more expressive experience. Music can enhance the atmosphere of a scene, expand the perception of characters and their experiences, and direct the viewer's attention to key plot points. The study results proved that music and sounds can influence mental and physiological processes, which helps to connect with the fate of the protagonist and makes the audience empathise with the film's characters. Using the example of the cult films *Interstellar* and *Harry Potter*, wherein music plays different roles and generally differs in terms of instrumentation, direction, and the specific features of the main musical themes, the study proved that music can be a powerful tool for influencing the audience's emotions while watching a film.

In *Interstellar*, H. Zimmer's music plays a key role in shaping the emotional perception of the film. By developing and repeating the main themes, the composer can maintain emotional tension and depth throughout the film. The music not only complements the visual elements, but also emphasises the emotional state of the characters, helping the audience to better understand and fathom their feelings. The study showed that through innovative approaches and the use of the organ as a central instrument, H. Zimmer creates a unique soundscape that can rightly be considered one of the most significant components of this cinematic piece. J. Williams' music in the first three *Harry Potter* films plays a critical role in creating the atmosphere and emotional impact of the series. The composer, known for his ability to create memorable and iconic themes, created a leitmotif system that contributed to the formation of

the films' musical identity. According to the study findings, it is thanks to the main theme that contributes to the musical identity of the films that the music and the concept itself stays recognisable and influential.

The study had limitations due to the analysis of a small number of films and the analysis of soundtracks using a limited amount of musical material, as the full score to *Interstellar* or *Harry Potter* is unfortunately not available. The analysis of musical accompaniment by ear could lead to errors in the result, but in this study, rather general concepts and aspects of musical analysis that were present in the available sheet music were discussed. The study of film music and soundscapes has its limitations, but it also opens numerous prospects for further research. Such prospects may include the analysis of soundtracks with available musical scores of all musical material. Such research would reveal many details that create a grandiose canvas of sounds. The study of sound effects could be explored by analysing noise scores, or by considering the tools and methods of sound production that directors use to create successful sound effects. It would be interesting to investigate the effect of soundtracks on the brain using an interdisciplinary approach, including the science of neurobiology, and conduct brain research while watching a film.

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Звуки кіно: Звукові ландшафти та культурний вплив музики до фільмів

Анотація. Дослідження мало на меті вивчити вплив музичного супроводу на емоційне сприйняття фільмів шляхом аналізу того, як музичні композиції впливають на емоційні реакції глядачів під час перегляду кінострічки. Методологія дослідження передбачала вибір кінострічок для аналізу музичного супроводу та вивчення впливу музики на сприйняття конкретних сюжетів глядачем. Результати дослідження довели, що музика є важливою складовою кінематографічного мистецтва, здатною посилювати емоційний вплив фільмів на глядачів. Музика є потужним інструментом для ще більшого впливу на глядача та трансляції певних ідей, закладених в фільмі. Функції музики в кінематографі різноманітні: від підкреслення атмосфери фільму до інтегрального звукоряду, який складається з шумів та різних звуків, без використання музичних інструментів. Аналіз фільму «Гаррі Поттер» підкреслив важливість музики у створенні атмосфери чарівного світу. Роль музики у кінематографі виходить за межі простого акомпанементу до зображення. Вона є багатогранним засобом вираження, що може змінити сприйняття сцени, підкреслити важливі моменти та навіть сформувати емоційний настрій всього фільму. Важливою складовою успішного музичного супроводу є тісна співпраця між композитором та режисером. Вони разом працюють над тим, щоб музика не тільки доповнювала візуальні образи, але й інтегрувалася у загальну концепцію фільму, підсилюючи його емоційний та нарративний вплив. За допомогою саундтреку, або ж просто інтегрального звукоряду розширюються смислові горизонти у фільмах, забезпечуючи глибший емоційний та нарративний ефект

Ключові слова: кінематограф; композитор; саундтрек; кіномузика; емоційний вплив