



GCSE Music – Set Work 6 – Star Wars

A: Film Music

- Before soundtracks were invented, films relied on music played live in the cinema. The music was normally pieces of existing music that would work with the film.
- The first film with a soundtrack was The Jazz Singer in 1927.
- Even after this, film directors still used existing pieces of music in their films rather than using a film composer.
- Broadway musicals were often turned into films (West Side Story 1961)
- Most films started with an opening title.
- Music was also needed for parts of the film where there was no dialogue e.g. Car chases
- Composers were criticised for following the music a little too closely – this was known as ‘Mickey Mousing’ -
- Composers created **leitmotifs** that linked to the character.
- Films with a bigger budget usually use a full orchestra where as some films with a smaller budget will use sampled sounds.

B: John Williams

- John Williams was born in New York and relocated to Los Angeles when he was 16.
- He studied classical composition at the University of California before returning back to New York to study piano at Julliard School of Music.
- He originally started to write music for television in the 1960’s.
- His first major film was The Starlight Express (1974), his first partnership with Steven Spielberg.
- Jaws (1975) was his first Oscar. He has 5 Oscars, 7 British Academy Awards, 22 Grammys and 4 Golden Globes.
- Some of his other works include: E.T., Star Wars, the first 3 Harry Potter films, Indiana Jones, Home Alone and Jurassic Park.

C: DR SMITTH

| | | | |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| D | Wide variety of dynamic markings. | I | Full symphony orchestra 3 Flutes (3 rd also playing Piccolo) 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets, Bass Clarinet, 2 Bassoons, 4 Horns, 3 Trumpets, 3 Trombones and Tuba, Timpani, Triangle, Snare Drum, Tam-Tam, Glockenspiel, Vibraphone and Cymbals, Piano/Celeste and Harp, Strings |
| R | The 4/4 metre and the March style also reflect the ‘military’ nature of the wars between the rebels and the Imperial forces The opening three bars use rhythmic gestures typically found in Fanfares – rapid repeated notes and triplets The homorhythmic (rhythmic unison) chords at 44-50 | I | The fast tempo chosen for the opening section of this extract matches the mood and genre of the film. At 51 the music sets off furiously, at a very fast tempo, |
| S | 1-3 Introduction 4-7 Main Theme (A) 8 – 11 Main Theme Repeated (A) 12 – 20 Contrasting Section (B) 21-29 – Main them (A) plated twice 33-35 – Transition The main theme section (Bars 1-29) follows a conventional pattern, in which regular four bar phrases are used to construct a longer musical structure with an AABA shape. This is a musical shape. The remainder of the extract takes its shape from the narrative/action on the screen and so has less of a purely musical structure | I | This extract is dominated by various types of homophonic (tune and accompaniment) texture Pedal textures are used in this extract Ostinato textures 51-60 |
| M | Opening three bars are a fanfare – Rapid notes, Triplet arpeggios Main theme is a 4 bar idea repeated. It has a careful balance of stepwise and leaps. Anacrusis is used at the start of the B section. Use of sequence in the second half of the extract. | I | This extract is in a clear Bb major for the first 29 bars From bar 30 onwards the tonality becomes less clear, with more unstable harmonies and progressions At bar 36 the music modulates to C Major. The music from bar 42 onwards is more based around the note C, often heard as a bass pedal More complex chords and much dissonance make some of the passage from 41-60 almost atonal (without key) at times and the passage from 51-60 combines elements of bitonality (two keys at once) |
| | | H | The harmony is predominantly tonal. Major and minor chords, mostly in root position and first inversion, are used as the basis for the harmonic style There are few conventional cadence points In bars 4-7 almost half the chords use Quartal harmony – usually where chord V might otherwise have been used The end of the first phrase in the A section (bar 7) features an Imperfect cadence 39-41 – Atonal 44 - Dissonance |