

# Year 10 - AoS3: Film Music

## A. The purpose of film music

	To create an atmosphere
	To 'place' a film in a geographical setting. Example: A film set in lively India you would expect to hear a fast tempo, thick texture, forte dynamics and Indian instruments.
	To set the time period or era.
	To support the physical actions of a character.
	To predict events or inform the audience of upcoming events. Example: The jaws <b>leitmotif</b>

## B. Film music keywords

Leitmotif	A short musical theme or idea that is associated with a character, place, object or situation—often abbreviated to 'motif'.
Ostinato	A short repeated pattern in world music, films and western art music.
Riff	A short repeated pattern in pop music or modern genre.
Layering	Building up musical ideas to fill out the texture, to achieve a more powerful or interesting outcome.
Fanfare	A short musical flourish or call to attention based on a triadic (chordal) movement. It is often associated with an announcement or important event.
Minimalism	A style of music categorised by the repetition of small cells of music, which evolve very gradually to create a hypnotic effect. Often used by film composers to establish the mood of a scene.

## C. How the musical elements can be used in film music

**PITCH AND MELODY** – **RIISING MELODIES** are often used for increasing tension, **FALLING MELODIES** for defeat. Westerns often feature a **BIG THEME**. **Q&A PHRASES** can represent good versus evil. The **INTERVAL OF A FIFTH** is often used to represent outer space with its sparse sound. **DYNAMICS** – **FORTE (LOUD)** dynamics to represent power; **PIANO (SOFT)** dynamics to represent weakness/calm/resolve. **CRESCENDOS** used for increasing threat, triumph or proximity and **DECRESCENDOS** or **DIMINUENDOS** used for things going away into the distance. Horro Film soundtracks often use **EXTREME DYNAMICS** or **SUDDEN DYNAMIC CHANGES** to 'shock the listener'.

**HARMONY** – **MAJOR** – happy; **MINOR** – sad. **CONSONANT HARMONY OR CHORDS** for "good" and **DISSONANT HARMONY OR CHARDS** for "evil". **SEVENTH CHORDS** often used in Westerns soundtracks.

**DURATION** – **LONG** notes often used in Westerns to describe vast open spaces and in Sci-Fi soundtracks to depict outer space; **SHORT** notes often used to depict busy, chaotic or hectic scenes. **PEDAL NOTES** – long held notes in the **BASS LINE** used to create tension and suspense.

**TEXTURE** – **THIN/SPARE** textures used for bleak or lonely scenes; **THICK/FULL** textures used for active scenes or battles.

**ARTICULATION** – **LEGATO** for flowing or happy scenes, **STACCATO** for 'frozen' or 'icy' wintery scenes. **ACCENTS (>)** for violence or shock.

**RHYTHM & METRE** – 2/4 or 4/4 for Marches (battles), 3/4 for Waltzes, 4/4 for "Big Themes" in Westerns. **IRREGULAR TIME SIGNATURES** used for tension. **OSTINATO** rhythms for repeated sounds *e.g. horses*.

## D. Minimalist techniques

Note addition and note subtraction	Adding or subtracting one note in a cell.
Rhythmic displacement	Moving the rhythm so that it starts on a different beat in the bar.
Metamorphosis	This is where tiny changes are made over time to one note, or one bit of the rhythm.
Augmentation	Doubling the duration of each note in the melody.
Diminution	Halving the duration of each note in the melody.