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THE NARRATIVE COMPOSER: HECTOR BERLIOZ'S IMPACT ON THE EVOLUTION OF
FILM SCORING IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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Abstract

Hector Berlioz was a French Romantic composer, whose literary and musical works have an undeniable effect on the history of Western music. Specifically, Berlioz's most famous orchestral work, the *Symphonie Fantastique*, transformed how music could be utilized in an orchestral setting because it was the first programmatic symphony, which is a symphony with music set to a written narrative. The *Symphonie* would inspire German composer Richard Wagner to create what is now recognized as the leitmotif, a musical phrase used to identify an idea. In modern Hollywood film music, Wagner is credited with establishing the techniques that have become staples of the genre, such that Berlioz's contributions were unjustly overshadowed as time went on. This project will be applying the written and musical works of Hector Berlioz to the modern Hollywood film score for the purpose of demonstrating how the techniques and creative intentions behind film compositions are indebted to Berlioz's literary and musical works.

Keywords: Music, Berlioz, Wagner, leitmotif, *idée fixe*

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Introduction

In popular media such as interviews, lectures, and ‘behind the scenes’ videos on YouTube, filmmakers often use the phrase ‘the cinematic experience’ to describe the purpose of their films being in theaters or to explain why they made certain creative choices in their works. This experience, which filmmakers argue can only be enjoyed in movie theaters, is a carefully crafted sense of immersion into the stories and worlds that occupy the duration of a film. Filmmakers, cinematographers, sound technicians, and film composers seek to immerse their audiences into the stories they wish to tell. Directors like Christopher Nolan are constantly pushing technological boundaries in filmmaking by filming his works with IMAX cameras, or using certain techniques to enhance the element of realism in the fictional worlds and spectacular scenes he creates. Sound designers make extensive use of Dolby Atmos surround sound to sonically remove the audience from a dark theater and aurally place them into the world of the movie. Cinematographers use the visual art of motion pictures to create another layer of storytelling for the audience, such as in the case of Roger Deakins’ work on the film *1917* (2021), which was filmed to appear as though it was one single shot. Film composers add an essential component to the art of filmmaking, by enhancing all other parts of what creates the cinematic experience. They immerse their audiences into the narratives and worlds created by writers and directors. They offer musical reflections to further the impact of the film, so that the audience may be emotionally, mentally, and even physically changed by the work they witness. They empower the narratives that they accompany to elucidate greater meaning behind character arcs, relationships, the circumstances of the story, and the intangible concepts which filmmakers are illustrating to their audience. The film composer entrances their audience by drawing them into the world of the film, often revealing elements about the characters that cannot readily be

seen onscreen or heard in dialogue, and highlighting the importance of what the audience is witnessing as it unfolds before them. Through music, filmmakers and composers can offer and articulate emotional catharsis, tension, hope, love, hate, and other intangible themes that cannot be explicitly articulated in a script, nor indirectly shown through production design or scene blocking. As such, music lends the art of filmmaking its emotional power through scores that are distinctly and expertly crafted for each film, its characters, and the themes it is attempting to portray.

Throughout modern history, certain films, and by extension the scores behind them, have become icons of the art of filmmaking as they have grown and retained immense popularity across the world. For an example of this, look no further than George Lucas's *Star Wars Saga*, and the equally iconic musical scores crafted by Maestro John Williams. The score to the *Star Wars* film series includes pieces that have become the modern tenets in the history of film scoring, with the "Imperial March," "The Force Theme," and "Duel of the Fates" becoming symbolic cornerstones for the sound of the *Star Wars* and its fictional universe.

Modern film scores, especially the nine scores written by Williams for the *Star Wars Saga*, employ the use of leitmotif. Leitmotifs are used as a scoring technique to establish, recall, and develop musical ideas throughout a musical work, and function like "identifying musical tags."¹ These 'tags' are used to identify significant characters, places, or ideas that occur throughout a narrative. Moreover, these motifs are subject to variation, as they can change in tonality and melodic structure in service of how the subject they reflect changes throughout a narrative.

¹ Ross, Alex. "A Field Guide to the Musical Leitmotifs of 'Star Wars.'" *The New Yorker*. Condé Nast, January 3, 2018. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/a-field-guide-to-the-musical-leitmotifs-of-star-wars>.

Leitmotifs are primarily used to highlight or symbolize a specific element without direct explanation. The “Imperial March” from *Star Wars* is shortened to its initial melody to become a leitmotif associated with the villainous Darth Vader, who holds a leadership position in the antagonistic Galactic Empire. As such, whenever Darth Vader is mentioned, alluded to, or placed onscreen in the films, the “Imperial March” motif is played.

Furthermore, leitmotifs help filmmakers to articulate intangible or implicit ideas and themes that could not exist within a script. Using the “Imperial March” as a further example, the rhythm and instrumentation establish a foreboding, menacing, and overwhelming presence that could not otherwise be indicated by either visuals or script alone.

The use of leitmotifs offers film composers the ability to set up and evolve themes and variations throughout a film script, or a series of films. The use of leitmotif, especially in film music, has become a defining feature for them, with small and easily memorable melodies and rhythms serving as the musical backbone for contemporary filmmaking.² Leitmotifs ultimately serve the narrative purpose of providing a more nuanced and enhanced immersive experience for audiences to behold. However, there is a rich history to the art of narrative scoring, and it extends beyond the invention of the leitmotif in the late 19th century.

Music as narrative accompaniment has origins within the Romantic Period of music history, dating to the late 18th and early 19th century. Among Romantic composers such as Johannes Brahms and Claude Debussy was Hector Berlioz, a man who obsessively crafted each of his musical works to accompany and recreate both drama and narrative. This paper will aim to articulate multiple analyses of Hector Berlioz through his composition techniques and philosophy that will illustrate a causal link between his orchestration and philosophical ideations

² Kregor, Jonathan. "Program Music: Understanding the Leitmotif: From Wagner to Hollywood Film Music." *Notes* 73, no. 3 (03, 2017): 547-550.

on music to the tenets of modern film scoring. As the history of film scoring unfolds into the twenty-first century, the two-hundred-year-old legacy of Hector Berlioz retains its significance through his writings, philosophy, and orchestration techniques serving as a foundation for the modern film score and its composers.

Chapter 1: A Biographical Account of Hector Berlioz

To understand the origin and significance of the advancements that Berlioz made to music history and how they affected modern film scoring, it is essential to understand the personal history of the Romantic composer. By understanding the life and times of Berlioz, one can understand his methodology, writing practices, philosophies, and how his ideas on musical evolution echo in works, ranging from his 1830 masterpiece, *Symphonie Fantastique*, to the latest Marvel Cinematic Universe blockbuster. Fortunately, there is a twofold way in which one can understand the personal history of Berlioz: written works about the composer and written works written by the composer himself. In using the former, more objective and matter-of-fact historical analyses can be gleaned about the personal life of the Romantic composer. The latter is especially poignant, as they allow readers not only a lens by which to view the personal life of Berlioz from a first-person perspective but also to gain an insight into the artistry, drama, and obsession that became marked characteristics of Berlioz's larger-than-life personality, which then translated into his musical style. Among his written works, this paper will explore his autobiography, *Mémoires*, his essays on music, and the *Treatise upon Modern Instrumentation and Orchestration* to obtain a nuanced understanding of how his life and personality influenced

his musical works and his philosophies regarding music in general. Berlioz opened his autobiography with this disclaimer,

Biographical notices have been printed, and still are printed from time to time, about me so full of inaccuracies and errors, that the idea finally occurred to me to write myself what, in my laborious life and agitated, seems to me capable of some interest for friends of the art. This retrospective study will also provide me with the opportunity to give exact notions of the difficulties presented by the careers of composers in our time, and to offer them some useful lessons.³

Louis-Hector Berlioz, historically known as Hector Berlioz, was born on December 11th, 1803 to Louis Berlioz, a medical physician, and Marie-Antoinette Josephine.⁴ His birthplace was in his mother's family home in the French municipality La Côte-Saint-André. Louis Berlioz, Hector's father, was a progressively-minded physician who garnered praise and acclaim for being the first European practitioner to write a medical treatise on acupuncture, cupping, and other non-western medicinal practices.⁵ Louis Berlioz, given that he was an avid scientist and esteemed medical doctor, encouraged his son to practice a skeptical and agnostic look on religious beliefs.⁶ On the other hand, his mother encouraged Hector to pursue the Catholic faith. As such, Berlioz was baptized only days after his birth, on December 14th, at the Church of Saint André. At the age of twelve, Berlioz completed his first communion. In the halls of the chapel, as he received the sacrament, Berlioz had an experience by which his entire life changed, later ruminated on in his autobiographical memoirs, wherein he had his first musical impression. He writes in his first memoir, "I thought I saw the sky opening up, the sky of love and chaste delights, a sky purer and more beautiful a thousand times than the one about which I had been

³ Berlioz, Louis-Hector. *The Life of Hector Berlioz as Written by Himself in His Letters and Memoirs*. (Paris, France. 1870; Project Gutenberg, 2008) Ch. 7. <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/26370/pg26370-images.html>

⁴ Ibid. Ch. 1.

⁵ Thomas, Michael Tilson. "Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*: Keeping Score." PBS. Public Broadcasting Service. <https://www.pbs.org/keepingscore/berlioz-symphonie-fantastique.html>

⁶ Berlioz, Louis-Hector. *The Life of Hector Berlioz as Written by Himself in His Letters and Memoirs*. (Paris, France. 1870; Project Gutenberg, 2008) Ch. 1.

told so much. O marvelous power of true expression, matchless beauty of the melody of the heart!”⁷ His poeticism and romantic idyllation of the moment by which he discovered melody are further detailed when he articulates that he had, “thus became holy all of a sudden, but holy to the point of hearing mass every day, taking communion every Sunday, and going to the court of penance”.⁸ Berlioz had become enamored by music by way of the church. He writes in his memoirs that his father dutifully reminded him to be skeptical of his newfound piety, while his mother encouraged her son’s willingness to engage in the faith as a believer and churchgoer. As he grew older, he took favor of his father’s agnosticism, but he kindly regarded his youth when he avidly practiced Catholicism. He wrote in his *Memoirs*, “This charming religion, since it no longer burns anyone, has made me happy for seven whole years; and, although we have been estranged together for a long time, I have always preserved a very fond memory of it.”⁹ This fond recollection of his religious youth helped him to maintain a positive working relationship with the Catholic Church, in addition to his pleasure in writing the oratorio *L'enfance du Christ*, about the story of the Nativity.

As is indicated in these fragments already seen from his writings, Berlioz had a flair for drama, in both his artistic command of language and in the idyllic memory of his youth. He continues this trend when he discusses his first visit to Meleyan, a countryside suburb that was close to the Grenoble prefecture in Southeastern France. In this visit, Berlioz comments on another inspiring tale from his youth that enraptured his mind for the rest of his life: his first love. While in Meleyan, he became infatuated with an older girl named Estelle. He became so obsessed with her that he wrote and dedicated to her a small duet for voice and guitar in 1819 that encapsulated his bleak feelings of loss entitled *Je vais donc quitter pour jamais (So I Will*

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

Leave Forever). In his later work, the *Symphonie Fantastique*, he recycled the melody for his first love in the *Symphonie*'s first movement: "Reveries and Passions."

Early in his life, Berlioz was taught the flageolet, a small wind instrument that would eventually evolve into the modern Recorder. While learning the instrument, Louis Berlioz taught his son to read music and the most basic of music theory, "he explained to me the first principles of this art, giving me a clear idea of the reason for musical signs and of the office they fulfill. Soon after, he placed a flute in my hands, using Devienne's method, and took the trouble, as for the flageolet, to show me its mechanism."¹⁰ His father acquired flute lessons and guitar lessons for Hector until even his teacher commented that it was impossible to further teach Hector anything more on the guitar.¹¹

In 1817, Berlioz wrote his first composition, which he described to be a *Pot-Pourri* for six instruments. He based his writings for the piece based on a novel understanding of the machinations of music theory, harmony, and part-writing from an abridged version of Rameau's *Traité de l'harmonie* (Treatise on Harmony) edited by Charles-Simon Catel.¹² After the success of his *Pot-Pourri*, Berlioz sought to write a more complex quintet that would prove too difficult to perform for the amateur musicians he could hire for the performance, "our amateurs could not succeed in executing it passably. The viola and the cello above all were floundering."¹³ After the pieces were performed and accepted by his township, he burned both of these manuscripts. However, he saved the main melody of the second and used it in one of his future compositions. "It is the chant in A flat given by the first violins, shortly after the beginning of the allegro of the *Francs-Juges Overture*."¹⁴

¹⁰ Ibid. Ch. 4.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Four years later, in 1821, Berlioz passed the baccalauréat examination in Grenoble and moved to Paris to enroll at the University of Paris School of Medicine to pursue the medical sciences at the behest of his father. In Chapter Four of his memoirs, Berlioz writes that his father proposed that Hector study medicine with seriousness. If it were truly disagreeable in a fashion other than personal preference, Dr. Berlioz would purchase a new flute with newly furnished keys for his son.¹⁵ Berlioz wrote in response,

The solemnity of the proposal, the respect mingled with fear that my father inspired in me, despite all his goodness, and the force of temptation, troubled me to the last degree. I let out a weak *yes* and went back to my room, where I threw myself on my bed overwhelmed with grief. Be a doctor! study anatomy! dissect! to witness horrible operations! instead of giving myself up body and soul to music, that sublime art whose greatness I already imagined!¹⁶

Berlioz exemplifies his flair for drama in his thoughts about his father's proposal to have him attend medical school. He made clear his disdain for medicine, yet agreed to pursue the field, and treated it as an obstacle to overcome in order for him to continue his study of music. This is made apparent in later writings he makes on account of his time at The School of Medicine.

While at medical school, Berlioz made his first visit to the Opera house, wherein he watched a performance of Christoph Gluck's work *Iphigénie en Tauride*, which began his obsession with opera. "I swore, on leaving the Opera, that, despite father, mother, uncles, aunts, grandparents, and friends, I would be a musician. I even dared, without further ado, to write to my father, to let him know all that my vocation had that was imperative and irresistible, conjuring him not to thwart it unnecessarily."¹⁷ Following his viewing experience at the Opéra in

¹⁵ Thomas, Michael Tilson. "Berlioz's Symphonie Fantastique: Keeping Score." PBS. Public Broadcasting Service. <https://www.pbs.org/keepingscore/berlioz-symphonie-fantastique.html>. To a

¹⁶ Berlioz, Louis-Hector. *The Life of Hector Berlioz as Written by Himself in His Letters and Memoirs*. (Paris, France. 1870; Project Gutenberg, 2008) Ch. 4. <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/26370/pg26370-images.html>

¹⁷ Ibid.

Paris, Berlioz frequented the Paris Conservatoire library in between medical studies to learn, copy, and engage himself in the study of Gluck's works and the field of scoring. After a series of visits, Berlioz was able to connect with Jean-François Le Sueur, who was the director of the Royal Chapel and a professor at the Paris Conservatoire, to receive instruction on the art of scoring. Berlioz recalls his first memory of having his scores reviewed by a professional, "Le Sueur was kind enough to carefully read the first of these two formless works, and said as he handed it back to me: 'There's a lot of warmth and dramatic movement in there, but you [Berlioz] don't know how to write yet, and your harmony is marred.'"¹⁸ Following this, Berlioz threw himself into the study of music, mastering Rameau's *Treatise on Harmony* in weeks, and he began to pursue the study of music in earnest.

In August of 1823, Berlioz made his first contribution to the musical press in the form of a letter to the journal *Le Corsaire* to defend and champion French Opera against Italian Opera. In the letter, he makes arguments about instrumentation, orchestration, and performance that allude to his philosophies on music. He would remain consistent with his views in his future work, *Treatise upon Modern Instrumentation and Orchestration*, which has since become integral to the study of scoring and instrumentation. He discusses the placement of instruments onstage, and the effect that performers have on the sound of a piece, and critiques dense orchestrations by calling them "noisy."¹⁹ The early promise of a life dedicated to music was alluring to Berlioz, but his family did not return the excitement when he saw them in the following year.

On a visit back to La Côte, he petitioned the acceptance of his father and his mother to offer blessings for a reframing of his career to move away from medicine and towards the study and practice of music. Dr. Berlioz accepted the eccentricities of his son, along with the career

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

shift, so long as Hector would graduate from medical school. His mother, on the other hand, cursed her son and disowned him. ““Very well, go! Drag yourself through the gutters of Paris, besmirch our name, kill your father and me with shame and sorrow. I shall not set foot in this house again until you have left. You are my son no longer. I curse you!””²⁰ He returned to Paris shortly after, in poor spirits about his mother’s words, but eager to complete his tenure at medical school so that he could begin his studies at the Conservatoire in Paris.

In 1824, Berlioz graduated from medical school and began studying music in earnest. He composed the *Messe solennelle*, a full-length mass, which was performed the following year. In December of 1824, he attended a performance of Carl Maria von Weber’s *Der Freischütz* and grew to obsess over Weber’s command over drama through music, as he had with Gluck. The admiration he had for both of these composers and their techniques would resurface in his seminal work, *Treatise on Orchestration*, as examples of masterful writing. While obsessing over opera and studying composition, Berlioz wrote his first opera, *Les Francs-Juges*. “I had just made friends with a young man of heart and spirit, whom I am happy to count among my dearest friends, Humbert Ferrand; he had written a grand opera poem for me, *Les Francs-Juges*, and I composed the music for it with unequaled enthusiasm.”²¹ Unfortunately, the opera was never performed, and only mere fragments of the score have survived the ravages of history. Once again, he would take melodies from his unused works and recycle them as part of the *Symphonie Fantastique*, as he used the melody of “March of the Guards” from *Les Francs* in the fourth movement of the *Symphonie* as the “March to the Scaffold.”²²

²⁰ Clarson-Leach, Robert. *Berlioz: His Life and Times*. Pg 27. New York , New York: Hippocrene Books, 1988.

²¹ Berlioz, Louis-Hector. *The Life of Hector Berlioz as Written by Himself in His Letters and Memoirs*. (Paris, France. 1870; Project Gutenberg, 2008) Ch. 11.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/26370/pg26370-images.html> .

²² Temperley, Nicholas. “The ‘Symphonie Fantastique’ and Its Program.” *The Musical Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (1971): 594. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/741260>.

Two years later, in 1826, Berlioz embarked on writing compositions for the Prix de Rome competition, a prestigious award for pursuits in the arts. He failed to earn the award the first time he submitted his writings for consideration, which disheartened the new composer. Following the curses of his mother and the begrudging acceptance from his father, Berlioz sought to validate his career choices and personal talents to his parents by winning the Prix. The pursuit took him five attempts over four years to finally win the coveted award. It was during this time that he became decidedly disillusioned with the conservatism exhibited by music academics and composers of the time.²³ During these four years, Berlioz honed his skills as a composer by continuing his study of orchestration, learning instruments, and expanding his listening knowledge to include foreign composers, such as Beethoven, Berlioz's greatest inspiration.²⁴ One such technique he used to study scoring was to take a copy of the full score of whatever concert he was attending and study how the written instrumentation translated into the performance he would watch unfold onstage. The translation of page-to-performance would become a recurring theme within his *Treatise*, given his emphasis on concert experience.

The year 1830 was decisive in the life and career of Berlioz. In it, he both won the acclaimed Prix de Rome and premiered his career-defining epic, the *Symphonie Fantastique*. Integral to the significance and purpose of the *Symphonie Fantastique* is Berlioz's hasty abandonment of his childhood love, Estelle, for an Irish-born Shakespearean actress named Harriet Smithson. By 1828, "he had apparently forgotten his Estelle: his longing for Harriet was almost 'tearing my heart out by the roots!'"²⁵ His admiration and adoration of the actress additionally introduced him to another deeply influential figure in his life: William Shakespeare.

²³ Clarson-Leach. *Berlioz: His Life and Times*. 48.

²⁴ Raz, C. (2022). "Hector Berlioz's Neurophysiological Imagination." *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 75(1), pg 2. doi:10.1525/jams.2022.75.1.1.

²⁵ *Ibid.* page 42.

In his *Memoires*, Berlioz reflected on the introduction to the works of Shakespeare through Smithson's performance:

The impression made upon my heart and mind by her marvelous genius was only equalled by the agitation into which I was plunged by the poetry she so nobly interpreted. Shakespeare, coming upon me unawares, struck me down as with a thunderbolt. His lightning spirit, descending upon me with transcendent power from the starry heights, opened to me the highest heaven of Art.²⁶

The euphoric language utilized to describe Shakespeare's effect on Berlioz was a staple of the composer's writing style, particularly when he reflected on works of art that greatly moved him. The works of Shakespeare became the narratives from which some of his more notable works would be adapted, such as his operas *Roméo et Juliette* and *Béatrice et Bénédict*. Berlioz continually refers to Shakespeare and his works with reverence in his *Memoirs*. Meanwhile, his infatuation with the actress only grew more potent as time went on. Berlioz, in an attempt to gain the attention of Miss Smithson, fashioned a plan to organize a concert of his works that she would attend. The concert would make her realize his genius, and she would reciprocate the romantic feelings that possessed the composer. "She should hear of me; she should know that I also was an artist; I would do what, so far, no French artist had ever done—give a concert entirely of my works."²⁷ Ironically, the concert was successfully organized and performed, yet the actress neither attended the concert nor did she become aware of the young composer. Berlioz only grew in his need to express his intense love for the actress. He assigned himself the task of writing a symphony that would serve as a reflection of his feelings toward her. The totalizing nature of his infatuation took shape through the musical notes he composed, as he established a musical form of expressing his obsession with his beloved actress through the use

²⁶ Berlioz, Louis-Hector. *The Life of Hector Berlioz as Written by Himself in His Letters and Memoirs*. (Paris, France. 1870; Project Gutenberg, 2008) Ch. 15.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/26370/pg26370-images.html> .

²⁷ Ibid.

of the compositional technique called the *idée fixe*. The *idée fixe* is translationally defined as a ‘fixed idea,’ and the idea is expressed in a melodic phrase that is repeated and slightly modified in the different movements of the *Symphonie Fantastique*. It reflects the protagonist’s obsession towards the Beloved, as the melodic phrase is meant to evoke the image of her character. The character of the Beloved was based upon Berlioz’s romantic feelings towards Harriet Smithson. As such, the *idée fixe* has both a narrative and a structural function to the piece, as it both highlights the Artist’s obsession and infatuation with the Beloved in addition to being a consistent melodic contour that reflects the harmonic and melodic developments within the *Symphonie*.

Between late 1829 and 1830, Berlioz wrote and perfected his *Symphonie Fantastique*. While writing the *Symphonie*, Berlioz felt the rejection of Smithson’s lack of response to his numerous displays of affection and grew resentful towards the actress and her lack of acknowledgment towards him. His umbrage towards Smithson manifested itself in the now iconic final movement of the *Symphonie Fantastique*, “Dream of a Witches’ Sabbath.” Throughout *Symphonie Fantastique*, the main protagonist, ‘the Artist,’ is held in adoration towards his ‘Beloved.’ The first three movements highlight an idyllic vision of the woman and her effect on the piece’s main character. Conversely, the finale of the *Symphonie* depicts a descent into Hell, as the ‘Beloved’ character morphs into a witch and tortures the protagonist. The manifestation of Berlioz’s frustration towards Harriet Smithson served to only exemplify the degree of reflection that the music had on his personal life. To amplify the degree by which Berlioz implanted his personal life and feelings into the symphony, he wrote a program to accompany the performance of the *Symphonie Fantastique*, which heavily coincided with the composer’s infatuation and subsequent disillusionment with his own ‘Beloved.’ The inclusion of

the program with the symphonic performance would become a highlight feature of the piece and its performance. The *Symphonie Fantastique* premiered on December 5th, 1830 at the Conservatoire in Paris to an excitedly receptive audience.

Following the successful premiere of his work, Berlioz traveled to Italy, as a part of his earnings from the Prix de Rome. While in Italy, he stayed in the Villa Medici, the home for students at the French Academy. There, he met fellow composer, Felix Mendelssohn, and sparked a friendship. During his stay, Berlioz wrote another successful piece, *Roméo et Juliette*, which included his technique of interweaving narrative ideas with musical notation, along with an overture to the Shakespearean play *King Lear*. He returned home to Paris in November of 1832.

The return to Paris also signified a reignition of his love for Harriet Smithson. By a stroke of luck, he moved into the same apartment building where she resided while he was writing the *Symphonie Fantastique*, and he seemed to forget about the contentious final two movements of the piece. He commissioned a concert of his works to be put together, and he directed that she would receive a personal invitation for box seats at the venue.²⁸ In this concert, the *Symphonie Fantastique* and its sequel, the monodrama *Lélio*, were performed. Miss Smithson attended the concert, and the next day was formally introduced to Berlioz. The two began a whirlwind romance that led to their marriage in the following year, on October 3, 1833.²⁹

In that same year, Berlioz gained the important friendship of a virtuoso violinist by the name of Niccolò Paganini, following a concert he held in November. By January of the following year, Paganini, revered for his skillful ability on the violin, had recently acquired a Stradivarius viola and desired for Berlioz to compose a piece so that the artist could dazzle the

²⁸ Clarson-Leach. *Berlioz: His Life and Times*. Pg 75.

²⁹ Crabbe, John. *Hector Berlioz: Rational Romantic*. New York, NY: Taplinger Pub. Co., 1980, p. 49

audience with his instrument and skill. Berlioz set out to write his second full symphony, *Harold en Italie* (*Harold in Italy*). “The four movements have individual superscriptions, like the *Symphonie Fantastique*, and also like that masterpiece, each makes use of an *idée fixe*.”³⁰

Berlioz’s *idée fixe*, and its use as a recurring and consistent theme throughout a narrative, would set the groundwork for using motifs and melodic patterns throughout modern film scoring to serve the same narrative purpose as the *idée fixe*.

Although the virtuoso violinist never performed the piece, he fulfilled his commission price for it, and maintained a healthy friendship with Berlioz. Shortly after completing *Harold in Italy*, Berlioz began to compose his opera, *Benvenuto Cellini*, inspired by the Italian musical traditions he was exposed to during his stay in Rome after winning the Prix de Rome. The virtuoso and his son attended the opera, and Berlioz recorded his memory of their reaction following the conclusion of the epic, “[Paganini’s son said,] ‘My father bids me tell you, sir, that never in all his life has he been so affected by any concert. Your music has overwhelmed him, and it is all he can do not to go down on his knees to thank you.’”³¹ The friendship is further highlighted in a letter that Paganini wrote to Berlioz two days later, when Paganini’s son called on Berlioz to deliver a letter in which was written, “Beethoven being dead, only Berlioz can make him live again!”³² The praise expressed by the virtuoso further convinced Berlioz to remain steadfast in not only composing but to be steadfast in his compositional style, as a rejection of the strict rules of the Classical era in favor of expression, melodrama, and artistry.

Berlioz spent the rest of his life traveling through West and Central Europe, visiting Germany after conducting *Benvenuto Cellini*, and eventually traveling to London in the 1840s.

³⁰ Ibid. pg 78.

³¹ Berlioz, Louis-Hector. *The Life of Hector Berlioz as Written by Himself in His Letters and Memoirs*. (Paris, France. 1870; Project Gutenberg, 2008) Ch. 49.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/26370/pg26370-images.html> .

³² Clarson-Leach,. *Berlioz: His Life and Times*. Pg 80.

Throughout this time in his life, relationship between Berlioz and his wife grew estranged over time, particularly in regards to her lack of ability to find work.³³ Harriet developed alcoholism as a coping mechanism for her inability to find work, which further entrenched the couple in marital conflict.³⁴ Eventually, the disrepair in their relationship led to the two divorcing from one another, ending the relationship that inspired the *Symphonie Fantastique*.³⁵

Throughout the decade, Berlioz premiered numerous important works for his career, one of which being the *Messe des Morts (Requiem)*, was famous for its grandiosity in scale in both music and the size of the orchestra required to perform it, as the piece demanded four offstage brass ensembles to envelop the audience in music. He wrote the epic oratorios *La damnation de Faust* and *Romeo et Juliette*, both of which highlighted Berlioz's commitment to narrative focus and his expertise in musical expression. Following the premieres of these works, Berlioz would write one of the most influential works of his life: *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes (Treatise upon Modern Instrumentation and Orchestration)*.

Berlioz published the treatise in 1844 and subsequently revised it with additions in 1855. His *Treatise upon Modern Instrumentation and Orchestration* would be a defining staple of the study of orchestration, instrumentation, and the art of musical expression, as it was the first complete treatise on how to compose for an orchestra. In it, Berlioz carefully analyzed the registers, tonalities, abilities, and practical uses of each instrument in a full symphony orchestra. Throughout the writing, Berlioz's admiration for composers such as Mozart, Weber, and Gluck was on full display, as Berlioz used their writings as examples of aesthetic excellence.³⁶ The

³³ Berlioz, Hector, and Jacques Barzun. *New Letters of Berlioz: 1830-1868*. 17. New York, NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1954.

³⁴ Clarson-Leach,. *Berlioz: His Life and Times*. Pg 81..

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Berlioz, Hector.. *Berlioz's Orchestration Treatise: A Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge Musical Texts and Monographs) (H. Macdonald, Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
doi:10.1017/CBO9780511481949

significance of the *Treatise* is exemplified in its use by future canonical composers such as Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss, and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov.

The final years of Berlioz's life were marred with loss and the subsequent reinvigoration of his compositional obsessions. After numerous failures, including the critical panning of his venture into opera, *Le Damnation de Faust*, Berlioz earned money by way of conducting tours through Great Britain and Germany. These tours were successful at garnering a positive critical reception for Berlioz as a conductor and composer, as other works, such as the *Symphonie Fantastique*, were receiving critical praise. Contemporaries, such as Franz Liszt, Felix Mendelssohn, and Richard Wagner praised Berlioz and his compositions, which imbued the French composer with further critical praise across Europe. Liszt praised Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, commenting that it had an undeniable "abundance and diversity of ideas."³⁷ Berlioz, who was invigorated by the newfound praise he had received, took the opportunity to write his final opera epic, *Les Troyens à Carthage*, otherwise known as *Les Troyens*. The opera was completed in 1858, and was an exemplar of Berlioz's passion for classical literature, as it was based on Virgil's poem *The Aeneid*, as well as his grandiose compositional style, with the opera having five acts. The opera never fully premiered in Berlioz's lifetime, as it was heavily edited and shortened by the Théâtre Lyrique, the opera company which signed to perform it. The butchering of his work demoralized Berlioz, as *Les Troyens* was the last major work by the composer, except for a small operatic passion project entitled *Béatrice et Bénédict*, adapted from William Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*.

In tandem with the issues in his professional life, Berlioz's personal life throughout the 1860s was wrought with tragedy. Berlioz's second wife, Marie Recio, died suddenly in 1862,

³⁷ Thomas, Michael Tilsen. "Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*: Keeping Score." PBS. Public Broadcasting Service. <https://www.pbs.org/keepingscore/berlioz-symphonie-fantastique.html>.

while Berlioz was on tour with an orchestra. Five years later, Hector's son, Louis Berlioz, died of Yellow Fever. Throughout the latter years of his life, Berlioz suffered from Crohn's disease, but he remained steadfast in touring, conducting, and taking on compositional and performance judging.³⁸ Berlioz spent his final years working throughout central and Western Europe until he fell ill in 1869, falling in and out of a coma.³⁹ He passed away on March 8, 1869, in his home in Paris. Berlioz was buried with both of his late wives in the Montmartre Cemetery in Paris, and has remained there, with a small memorial over his final resting place.

Chapter 2: The Personality of Hector Berlioz

As can be elucidated from the biographical description of his life, Berlioz was a melodramatic, artistically obsessive, and eccentric individual whose personality is exceedingly apparent in not only his musical works, but in his literature as well. Notably, the music of Berlioz intertwined his personal feelings and perspectives into the orchestration of those works. The clearest example of this can be found in his *Symphonie Fantastique*, wherein his adoration and subsequent dismay with English actress Harriet Smithson were put on full display for every audience member who listened to the symphony. Berlioz's romantic obsession and idealization of the actress were communicated by his *idée fixe* throughout the *Symphonie*. When his feelings towards the actress soured with time, so too did the *idée fixe* transform the theme for the 'Beloved' in the last movement of the *Symphonie*. Therefore, the entirety of the *Symphonie Fantastique* is simply a musical mode of communicating Berlioz's infatuation and emotional obsession with the English actress, especially since he invited Ms. Smithson to its premiere in

³⁸ Clarson-Leach, Robert. *Berlioz: His Life and Times*. 116. New York, New York: Hippocrene Books, 1988

³⁹ Ibid. 118.

1830. However, Berlioz's propensity towards melodrama was not exclusively exercised in his orchestrations, as his literary works include language as dramatic and colorful as the composer's personality.

Throughout his literature, Berlioz includes multiple descriptions that reinforce the idea of a larger-than-life personality of the composer. A primary example of this can be seen when the composer describes the visceral reactions he has to certain musical works in one of his most famous essays, "A travers chants" (The Art of Music),

My vital forces seem to be doubled in strength, I feel a delicious pleasure in which reason plays no part...my emotion grows more intense and in direct proportion to the Vigor or nobility of the composer's ideas and causes a strange agitation in my blood circulation: my arteries beat violently... my muscles contract spasmodically, a trembling overtakes my limbs and a numbness in my hands and feet.⁴⁰

This is one of several examples wherein Berlioz highlights the transformative physical and emotional reactions that he has to music. It serves to highlight two interesting components of Berlioz: the colorful use of language throughout all of his literary works, and his perception of the power of music. notably, the visceral reaction induced in Berlioz by well-composed music is reinforced later on in the same essay when he discusses how an audience reacts to well-composed and expressive music. He wrote that, "While listening to the masterpieces of our great composers, how many times have we seen members of the audience convulsed by fierce spasms, laughing and crying at the same time, and showing all the symptoms of delirium and fever!"⁴¹ Berlioz made the argument that music, when properly written and listened to, would be able to induce feverish and fierce involuntary symptoms in an audience, just like he described. His mission in life was to write such music-that which reflected the inner melodrama that he felt,

⁴⁰ Berlioz, Hector, Jacques Barzun, Elizabeth Csicsery-Rónay, and Hector Berlioz. "A travers chants." Essay. In *The Art of Music and Other Essays (A travers chants)*, 4. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 3.

and would also induce the same physio-emotional symptoms in the audience that he had the benefit of experiencing.

His romantic personality also appears in the colorful and dramatic language he uses to describe his emotional states. In a letter to a colleague at the Conservatoire in 1831, Berlioz commented that, “To turn to myself, for a moment, I can only tell you the unspeakable boredom that is killing, sapping, devouring, stifling, asphyxiating me...”⁴² The composer’s inherent need to artistically create is obvious in this brief passage. The colorful and dramatic language emphasizes his eccentricities, and the language is consistent throughout all of his written works, particularly in his autobiography, the *Memoires*. In his *Memoires*, Berlioz writes in an opulent style, especially when he recounts his younger years. One example is in his dramatic reaction to his father commanding him to study medicine in Paris,

The solemnity of the proposal, the respect mingled with fear that my father inspired in me, despite all his goodness, and the force of temptation, troubled me to the last degree. I let out a weak *yes* and went back to my room, where I threw myself on my bed overwhelmed with grief. Be a doctor! study anatomy! dissect! to witness horrible operations! instead of giving myself up body and soul to music, that sublime art whose greatness I already imagined!⁴³

The drama glues readers to the scenes that Berlioz depicts, and fixates itself as a staple element of his writing style. The short sentences, “Be a doctor! study anatomy! dissect! to witness horrible operations!” are dramatic to the point of humor, and Berlioz remained consistent with the melodrama in the language that he used in his writings, whether formal or informal.⁴⁴

⁴² Berlioz, Hector, and Jacques Barzun. *New Letters of Berlioz: 1830-1868*. New York, NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1954, p. 9.

⁴³ Berlioz, Louis-Hector. *The Life of Hector Berlioz as Written by Himself in His Letters and Memoirs*. (Paris, France. 1870; Project Gutenberg, 2008) Ch. 4.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/26370/pg26370-images.html>

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Explicitly discussed within his literary works, and heavily alluded to in his music, Berlioz was highly influenced by the works of Shakespeare. Berlioz's critical essay, entitled *Romeo et Juliet (Romeo and Juliet)*, was inspired by his perception on the lack of artistic integrity towards Shakespeare's original narrative and the extent to which composers disrespect or delegitimize the Shakespeare's emotionally resonant story. This essay features a critical version of Berlioz, in which the composer articulates the importance of prioritizing narrative and artistic integrity when adapting the work of a writer. In it, Berlioz criticizes Vincenzo Bellini's opera adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*. In one of his many critiques lobbied against the opera, in which he wrote, "Juliet gives herself a little stab with a pretty little silver-gilt dagger. She sits down gently next to Romeo's body, sighs a charming little, 'Ah!' which is then supposed to represent her last gasp, and that's it."⁴⁵ Berlioz's disdain for stagnant performances and monotone music is inspired by his innate desire for emotional expression and artistic integrity. Berlioz worshiped the prose of Shakespeare, and as such felt that any musical or performative work which diluted the passion that Berlioz gleaned from the play was practically blasphemous towards the English playwright.⁴⁶ In addition, Berlioz wrote numerous musical works based on the plays of William Shakespeare, including his own musical rendition of *Romeo and Juliet* that premiered in November 1839, and the final opera that he wrote in 1862, *Béatrice et Bénédicte*, based on Shakespeare's comedy *Much Ado About Nothing*.

The composer's personality is also evident in his orchestration of large ensemble works from throughout his lifetime. The music that Berlioz composed was grand in its expressive and orchestral ambitions. Whether those ambitions manifested in the notes of the music or the number of performers that the music called for depended on the effect that Berlioz was trying to

⁴⁵ Berlioz, Hector, Jacques Barzun, Elizabeth Csicsery-Rónay, and Hector Berlioz. "Romeo and Juliet." Essay. *In The Art of Music and Other Essays (A travers chants)* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005, p. 220.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 221.

elicit from the audience. Examples of the larger-than-life compositions that Berlioz composed include *Les Troyens* and the *Grande Messe des Morts (Requiem)*.

In regards to the former, Berlioz wrote multiple operas, and *Les Troyens* was arguably his most ambitious work. The opera was an adaptation of Virgil's *The Aeneid*. The opera was so large in scale that Berlioz did not live to see a full premiere of the work. The premiere for the opera did not feature the entire work when it was first shown to audiences in 1858. Rather, it was cut nearly in half, and the full work was not premiered until 1972, when its final runtime was over four hours long. The opera includes a full cast of over twenty main performers, each contributing to the extensive narrative Berlioz wrote.

Regarding a second example of larger-than-life works, Berlioz wrote few religious works, given his agnosticism.⁴⁷ However, upon a sizable commission by the French government, Berlioz wrote his most instrumentally dense work, the *Grande Messe des Morts*, otherwise known as the *Requiem*. The ensemble was a combination of full choir and orchestra, with the addition of four brass bands that were distributed around the venue when the *Requiem* premiered in 1837. The purpose of the brass bands was twofold: to make the music as loud as possible and as omnidirectional as possible.⁴⁸ The work became ubiquitous with the ridiculously large orchestral ensemble and remains nearly impossible to stage, due to its large choir recommendation of up to eight hundred singers. This work is extremely important in the overarching analysis of this paper, as it serves as a practical application of Berlioz's theory of sound in relation to the audience's experience of music, which he explores in "A travers chants" and *Les soirées de l'orchestre*.

⁴⁷ Berlioz, Louis-Hector. *The Life of Hector Berlioz as Written by Himself in His Letters and Memoirs*. (Paris, France. 1870; Project Gutenberg, 2008) Ch. 2.

<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/26370/pg26370-images.html>

⁴⁸ Raz, C. (2022). "Hector Berlioz's Neurophysiological Imagination." *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 75(1), pg 25. doi:10.1525/jams.2022.75.1.1.

The personality of Berlioz is as clearly reflected in his music as were the events of his life. His larger-than-life compositions alluded to the eccentric personality who composed them. Berlioz committed himself to the art of music as a function of his innate and obsessive passion for the art form, such that he wrote numerous essays and musical works to express the emotional extremities that he experienced. As it were, the composer's written and musical works were undoubtedly influenced by his dramatic and romantic personality, which would subsequently inform his philosophies on the art of writing and performing music.

Chapter 3: Berlioz's Aesthetic Philosophy

Berlioz's style of writing music was defined by his philosophy on musical aesthetics, particularly his utilization of Xavier Bichat's Vitalist anatomy to form his own theory of aesthetics that he would utilize to evaluate the capabilities of music and how they occupied space. Vitalism was a biological theory that argued for a vital force which distinguished living beings from nonliving beings, and subsequently organized itself into different biological processes that separated animals from plants.⁴⁹ From reading in his father's library throughout his youth, and his studies at the University of Paris Medical School, Berlioz read and took a liking to Bichat's work that would inform his theories on how people perceive music on a biological level. The numerous essays that Berlioz wrote during his lifetime contributed in some way to establish how Berlioz would argue that music ought to be composed and performed, such that it would be able to elicit the strong emotional and physical reactions that occur when music is properly processed in the mind.

⁴⁹ Coulter, Ian et al. "Vitalism-A Worldview Revisited: A Critique Of Vitalism And Its Implications For Integrative Medicine." *Integrative medicine (Encinitas, Calif.)* vol. 18,3 (2019): 60.

The central argument of Berlioz's aesthetics was simple: the orchestration, choice of venue, and ensemble size have a direct impact on how an audience will perceive and therefore respond to musical tones. As such, the three ought to be carefully crafted for a specific purpose, such that the orchestrator (Berlioz) would be able to properly communicate the themes and narrative ideas intended within their creative vision. The value of integrity to the artistic vision of an artwork's creator is of notable importance as a part of Berlioz's values, the principle will be reinforced in a later analysis. Berlioz's theory rested on the threefold criteria listed- when all three were utilized in a specific way to maximize the sonic output of instrumental and vocal ensemble(s), the audience would respond in the visceral way that Berlioz described in "A travers chants" which was indicated in the previous section.⁵⁰

In his essay, "Sur l'état actuel de l'art du chant" (The Current State of the Art of Singing), Berlioz makes the claim that opera houses are not properly built for opera performances- they are too large.⁵¹ Berlioz plainly articulated,

It is a proven fact that for sound to act *musically* on the nervous system, The Listener must not be too far from its source. Whenever the acoustics of an opera house is mentioned, people are given to replying: Everything can be heard easily... And yet this noise, which in any case is not musical, does not in any way strike or move me, does not stir my nervous system.

In the rest of the essay, Berlioz highlights the main tenets of his theory of music aesthetics and how the space that sound occupies can affect the listener. In it, he refers to music as a "fluid" that travels through a limited amount of space before it is diluted over time, indicating that, "this musical fluid is without force or warmth of life when it has to travel too great a distance. We may *hear*, but we do not *vibrate*."⁵² Berlioz's claim was that music ought to be heard close so that

⁵⁰ Berlioz, Hector, Jacques Barzun, Elizabeth Csicsery-Rónay, and Hector Berlioz. "A travers chants." Essay. In *The Art of Music and Other Essays (A travers chants)*, 4. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005.

⁵¹ Berlioz, Hector, Jacques Barzun, Elizabeth Csicsery-Rónay, and Hector Berlioz. "The Current State of the Art of Singing" Essay. In *The Art of Music and Other Essays (A travers chants)*, 60. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005.

⁵² Ibid.

every bit of musical fluid could cause vibrations that would stimulate the brains of the audience, and elicit the reactions of delirium he desired.⁵³

Notably, this theory on how sound is affected by space and its subsequent impact on the audience experience was inspired by Berlioz's extensive time reading during and before his tenure at the University of Paris Medical School. While in medical school, Berlioz read and internalized the anatomist theory of Xavier Bichat, a French scientist, and Vitalist.⁵⁴ Bichat's theory created a twofold distinction in the biological organization of the human body, with one system being called '*la vie organique*' and the other named '*la vie animale*.'⁵⁵ *La vie organique* is comprised of internal organs that were responsible for the basic biological functions necessary for human life, such as the circulatory system; while *la vie animale* comprised the systems and functions that distinguish animals from plants, such as the presence of a nervous system, a musculoskeletal system, etc.⁵⁶ The conjunction of the two organic processes distinguished humans from other animals and would serve to justify Berlioz's theory of how music affects individuals by resonating with these systems. When music passes into *la vie animale* through the ears and resonates into affecting *la vie organique*, the simultaneous vibrations from the two organic systems would, "induce an...overpowering mental and physical response to music experience as an embodied, neurophysiological form of the sublime."⁵⁷ The incredible and extreme reactions that Berlioz experienced as a result of music could be replicated, and he wanted to capitalize on recreating those effects. If Berlioz's audience could experience music in the way that he could, as the sublime, then he would be able to properly communicate the

⁵³ Raz, C. (2022). "Hector Berlioz's Neurophysiological Imagination." *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 75(1), 25. doi:10.1525/jams.2022.75.1.1.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 27.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 12.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Raz, C. (2022). "Hector Berlioz's Neurophysiological Imagination." *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 75(1), pg 4-5. doi:10.1525/jams.2022.75.1.1.

musical ideas of expression and drama that he obsessed over. However, Berlioz was also readily able to concede that not every individual would be able to appreciate the sublime aspects of music. In “A travers chants”, Berlioz opens the essay with the statement,

Music is the art of combining sound so as to touch the emotions of intelligent persons endowed with special, cultivated faculties. To define music in this way is to confess that I do not believe it to be, as the phrase goes, meant for everybody...a great number of people can neither feel nor understand its power.⁵⁸

This statement is significant for two reasons: the definition of music, and the immediate concession he offers regarding cases of people who do not react as Berlioz reacts. The definition of music that Berlioz provides is one which primes his Vitalist conception of human organization, as music can only “touch the emotions of *intelligent persons*,” and not anyone else. Therefore, if individuals do not react to music in the same way that Berlioz does, they are either unintelligent or biologically defective. The subsequent concession that Berlioz offers as a preemptive response against his claim staves off any criticism of his theory for being wrong by the outlier individual who, “cannot perceive the power of music,” as Berlioz would be able to concede that some individuals will not have the mental faculties to properly grasp music as an element of the sublime.⁵⁹

Notably, the principle that Berlioz is highlighting throughout “A travers chants” is the audience's experience of music and its impact on their emotional state. The discussion on the resonance of music in an opera house, his Vitalist conception of how music affects the body, and his writings on how music ought to affect individuals' emotional states all unite to form a priority on audience experience and appreciation of the music that they are listening to. Berlioz's

⁵⁸ Berlioz, Hector, Jacques Barzun, Elizabeth Csicsery-Rónay, and Hector Berlioz. “The Art of Music” Essay. In *The Art of Music and Other Essays (A travers chants)*, 1. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 4

desire was to ensure that he could maximize the emotional resonance of the music he wrote by analyzing how sound moves through space and how it interacts with the human body.

Berlioz wrote himself to be perceived as a unique blend of musician and medical physician throughout his written works, such as in his *Memoires* and also among his essays, “Sur l'état actuel de l'art du chant”, and “A travers chants”, among others.⁶⁰ In doing so, he theorized and justified creative decisions behind his music, such as the eight hundred-person chorus and four brass bands used in the *Requiem* and the careful choices of concert venues throughout his career.⁶¹ The desired effect was to inspire the audience with the awesome power of God juxtaposed with how small humans are in comparison, specifically in the “Tuba Mirum” section of his *Requiem*.⁶²

A crucial element of his philosophy is the perspective it lends on the evolution of music over time. Working in conjunction with his already multi-faceted theory of music aesthetics, Berlioz claimed that music ought to evolve through the intelligent breaking of conventional rules of composition that are able to service a narrative in a clear way, such that the composer is able to articulate their message more clearly in the music than they otherwise would have.⁶³ For example, the *idée fixe* from the *Symphonie Fantastique* was unprecedented during Berlioz's lifetime and was a technique used by Berlioz to create musical and narrative consistency throughout the piece.⁶⁴ Berlioz's music was intentionally designed to exist beyond the

⁶⁰ Raz, C. (2022). “Hector Berlioz's Neurophysiological Imagination.” *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 75(1), pg 2. doi:10.1525/jams.2022.75.1.1.

⁶¹ Berlioz, Hector, Jacques Barzun, Elizabeth Csicsery-Rónay, and Hector Berlioz. “The Current State of the Art of Singing” Essay. In *The Art of Music and Other Essays (A travers chants)*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005, p. 63.

⁶² Raz, C. (2022). “Hector Berlioz's Neurophysiological Imagination.” *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 75(1), pg 27. doi:10.1525/jams.2022.75.1.1.

⁶³ Berlioz, Hector, Jacques Barzun, Elizabeth Csicsery-Rónay, and Hector Berlioz. “On the Richard Wagner Concerts .” Essay. In *The Art of Music and Other Essays (A travers chants)*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005, p. 207.

⁶⁴ Temperley, Nicholas. “The ‘Symphonie Fantastique’ and Its Program.” *The Musical Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (1971): 594.

established rules of traditional composition and Western rules of musical notation, such that the music would enhance the narrative that Berlioz was attempting to highlight. He felt that the move beyond established rules was a necessary step forward in the history of music, especially for artists, like himself, who felt entrapped by the rules of Western musical traditions.⁶⁵ In breaking established rules, with intelligent and deliberate intentions, a composer (Berlioz) would be able to elicit extreme physiological responses from the audience, inherently maximizing their experience of music.

This conception, taken as a whole, is particularly weighty because the emphasis placed on audience experience transcended the essays of Berlioz into the methods and intentions of modern film scoring. While French Vitalism has been undermined by scientific developments over time, the emphasis on music creating an unforgettable audience experience is indubitable, particularly in relation to the ways in which modern film scores are written, recorded, and played for an audience. The modern film score is meant to enhance the themes, ideas, and narrative beats that occur within a given film, similar to how Berlioz utilized music to highlight the themes, ideas, and narrative beats of his operatic and symphonic works.

Chapter 4: An Analysis of the *idée fixe*

The most recognizable and most influential musical work from Hector Berlioz is his *Symphonie Fantastique*, particularly among contemporary film composers. The five-movement piece is heralded for its musical storytelling, and emotive orchestration, and for introducing mass audiences to Berlioz's propensity towards drama. In writing the *Symphonie*, Berlioz actualized

⁶⁵ Clarson-Leach, Robert. *Berlioz: His Life and Times*. New York, New York: Hippocrene Books, 1988, p. 20.

his philosophy of prioritizing the requirements of narrative and expression over established conventions in music composition. As such, the *Symphonie* was the first truly programmatic symphony written, as a logical step forward from the pictorial symphonies of the likes of Beethoven, such as the latter's *Pastoral Symphony* (Symphony No. 6).⁶⁶ As previously indicated in Chapter 1, the music of the *Symphonie Fantastique* was fundamentally intertwined with and based on the romantic obsession Berlioz harbored toward English actress Harriet Smithson. As such, Berlioz was able to notate his obsession in musical form, through the invention of what he called the *idée fixe*, which became a necessary and identifying element of the *Symphonie Fantastique*.

Berlioz's *Symphonie* was the first of its kind- an entirely programmatic symphony that functioned as a narrative, with program notes specific to the story that Berlioz was trying to tell. Berlioz strived to musically articulate the total infatuation and romantic obsession that the protagonist, the Artist, experienced for his romantic counterpart, the Beloved. Given that Berlioz was infatuated with Harriet Smithson, the Artist in the *Symphonie* was equally enamored by his Beloved, so much so that the obsession and single-minded pursuit of her was musically written as the *idée fixe*. In the program notes that Berlioz wrote for the *Symphonie*, he identifies this musical notation by indicating, "By some strange trick of fancy, the Beloved vision never appears to the Artist's mind except in association with a musical idea, in which he perceives the same character – impassioned, yet refined and diffident that he attributes to the object of his love. This melodic image and its model pursue him unceasingly like a double *idée fixe*."⁶⁷ Berlioz's invention of the *idée fixe* helped to ground his narrative on a musical foundation and provide it a

⁶⁶ Gerald E. H. Abraham. "The Influence of Berlioz on Richard Wagner." *Music & Letters* 5, no. 3 (1924): Pg 241. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/726783>.

⁶⁷ Berlioz, Hector. "Symphonie Fantastique (Hector Berlioz)." LA Phil. Los Angeles Philharmonic Association. <https://www.laphil.com/musicdb/pieces/708/symphonie-fantastique>.

melodic consistency throughout the piece. In doing so, it offered listeners an additional dimension of storytelling, as the melodic phrase would vary and mold itself to the scene being depicted in the written program. For example, Berlioz wrote in the program notes in the first movement that, “[The] musical idea, in which he perceives the same character – impassioned, yet refined and diffident that he attributes to the object of his love...the tune at the beginning of the first allegro constantly recurs in every movement of the symphony.”⁶⁸ The narrative of the piece becomes tragic, as the Artist is killed in the fourth movement, and then taken to the Underworld in the fifth movement, wherein he sees his Beloved once more. However, Berlioz, in accordance with his residual anger towards Harriet Smithson (the *Symphonie*'s inspiration) for her disinterest in him, had the Artist's Beloved transform into a witch. In the notes to the fifth movement, Berlioz wrote, “The beloved tune appears once more, but it has lost its character of refinement and diffidence; it has become nothing but a common dance tune, trivial and grotesque; it is she who has come.”⁶⁹ The theme for the Beloved shifts and changes in accordance with the scene, as the theme becomes violent and disparate in comparison to the original theme from the first movement, which is mellow and heartfelt. The recreation and variation of the initial theme in accordance with a corresponding narrative cemented the *Symphonie Fantastique* as an aural spectacle. Yet, it proved to be divisive among both critics and audience members.⁷⁰

The *Symphonie Fantastique* and the *idée fixe* therein were fundamentally contrary to the conventions of orchestration and academic rules on music theory. Berlioz wrote his music with a marked priority on emotional expression, artistry, and storytelling.⁷¹ Conversely, music

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Thomas, Michael Tilson. “Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*: Keeping Score.” PBS. Public Broadcasting Service. Accessed April 12, 2023. <https://www.pbs.org/keepingscore/berlioz-symphonie-fantastique.html>.

⁷¹ Service, Tom. “Symphony Guide: Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*.” The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, August 19, 2014.

academics, journalists, and other contemporary composers were conservative towards these matters, opting for a regulated and formulaic approach to orchestration. For example, German music journalist Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl commented that the *Symphonie Fantastique* was “abominable,” citing Berlioz’s liberal approach to composition and structure.⁷² The *idée fixe* was thought to be anti-intellectual and rebellious, rather than revolutionary and a harbinger of musical evolution. Notably, the music of Berlioz was reviled by his contemporaries, with his music being criticized as overly elementary and poorly written, while academics found his focus on story and expression to be insulting to the audience.⁷³ Regardless, the use of the *idée fixe* in the *Symphonie Fantastique* inspired other composers to follow likewise, such as in the case of Richard Wagner’s use of leitmotifs. By extension, the technique of establishing and changing a melody based on a character or idea within a narrative is a fundamental element of film scoring. Changing the melody of a motif or *idée fixe* to service the story helps to articulate the implicit ideas that the story is attempting to articulate. The *idée fixe* in the fifth movement of *Symphonie Fantastique* reflects the betrayal and horror experienced by the artist when he sees the Beloved become a witch in front of him. These elements are not explicitly written in the program notes but are instead articulated through the notation within the score and offered to listeners as the information they would only learn from hearing the piece. Returning briefly to the start of the overarching analysis, recall the discussion on John Williams’s “Imperial March”. The piece, from *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) functions similarly to an *idée fixe*, as the piece highlights the militaristic and overwhelming nature of the Galactic Empire despite these elements never being explicitly stated throughout the film. Other film composers that will

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/tomserviceblog/2014/aug/19/symphony-guide-hector-berliozs-symphonie-fantastique>.

⁷² Fr. Niecks. “Hector Berlioz and His Critics.” *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 21, no. 448 (1880): 273. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3355690>.

⁷³ Ibid.

be explored in the overarching analysis, such as Hans Zimmer and Ludwig Göransson, make notable use of the same technique of communicating ideas with music throughout their works as well. As such, the *idée fixe* from the *Symphonie Fantastique*, despite its controversy, grew to foster the evolution of music such that it became a fundamental aspect for film scoring, as themes, characters, locations, and actions are highlighted by corresponding musical phrases as common practice.

Chapter 5: On Richard Wagner and the leitmotif

An integral element to the analysis of Berlioz's effect on the drafting of modern film scores is the impact of Richard Wagner's literature and compositions in the same regard. Wagner was a German Romantic composer born in 1813, ten years after Berlioz was born in La Côte-Saint-André. Upon his first visit to Paris in 1839, Berlioz and Wagner met and began a rival-like acquaintanceship with one another.⁷⁴ This section will highlight the contributions to music history that Wagner established while also clarifying the influence that Berlioz had on Wagner to demonstrate that Wagner alone did not establish the concept of the leitmotif, but rather that it was an adaptation of the previously mentioned *idée fixe*.

Modern film scorers, such as John Williams and Hans Zimmer, claim Wagner as an inspiration for their compositional process, because of Wagner's use of the leitmotif, and his name is synonymous with epic large-scale compositions.⁷⁵ Wagner's music is credited for establishing the technique ubiquitous with film scoring in general: the creation and use of the

⁷⁴ Tiersot, Julien, and Theodore Baker. "Hector Berlioz and Richard Wagner." *The Musical Quarterly* 3, no. 3 (1917): 460. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/738035>.

⁷⁵ Kregor, Jonathan. "Program Music: Understanding the Leitmotif: From Wagner to Hollywood Film Music." *Music Library Association. Notes* 73, no. 3 (03, 2017): 547-550.

leitmotif.⁷⁶ The leitmotif functions similarly to Berlioz's *idée fixe*- a subject that will be later explored- in the sense that it establishes musical and thematic consistency throughout a work of music. The leitmotif is a small musical statement that is meant to evoke a certain idea and how the idea changes in regards to a story, such that it could apply to characters, settings, or plot points in a narrative piece. The clearest example of Wagner's use of leitmotifs is in his seminal operatic work, *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung* or *The Ring Cycle*), a four-part epic that features over sixty individual leitmotifs throughout its runtime.⁷⁷ The leitmotif provided a structural and melodic consistency throughout the work, with themes being established and recapitulated, similarly to how Berlioz utilized the *idée fixe* throughout the *Symphonie Fantastique*.

Wagner's operatic and dramatic style of composition had a wide influence on future musicians, as he is credited as having an undeniable impact on how music was written and performed in the twentieth century.⁷⁸ In his seminal literary work, *Oper und Drama* (*Opera and Drama*), Wagner lays out the conceptual grounding for his use of the leitmotif throughout his works. Notably, Wagner never utilized the term leitmotif but referred to the small musical ideas he created as *motiv*, or *grund thema* (ground tone).⁷⁹ The term was an invention of a Wagner scholar named Hans Von Wolzogen to unify the vocabulary that Wagner used in *Oper und Drama* under a single term.⁸⁰ For the purpose of unifying language, the remainder of the

⁷⁶ Ross, Alex. "A Field Guide to the Musical Leitmotifs of 'Star Wars.'" *The New Yorker*. Condé Nast, January 3, 2018.

⁷⁷ McShan, Jessica K. *Wagner and the Leitmotiv*. University of Michigan, December 17, 1997. http://websites.umich.edu/~umfandsf/symbolismproject/symbolism.html/Teutonic_Mythology/wagleit.html.

⁷⁸ "Richard Wagner: Composer." English National Opera. Arts Council England. <https://www.eno.org/composers/richard-wagner/>.

⁷⁹ Wagner, Richard, Albert Goldman, and Evert Sprinchorn. *Wagner on Music and Drama: A Compendium of Richard Wagner's Prose Works*. Pg 214. New York, New York: Da Capo Press, 1988.

⁸⁰ McShan, Jessica K. *Wagner and the Leitmotiv*. University of Michigan, December 17, 1997. http://websites.umich.edu/~umfandsf/symbolismproject/symbolism.html/Teutonic_Mythology/wagleit.html.

overarching analysis will utilize leitmotif in association with Wagner and his concept of the ground tone or *motiv*.

The pervasive leitmotif became a staple of Wagnerian music-making and found its way into the zeitgeist of composition given the composer's popularity during and after his lifetime.⁸¹ The German composer was able to utilize essentially the same composition technique that divided Berlioz's audience without the same harsh critical response by his colleagues and contemporaries.⁸² Notably, Wagner's attitude towards Berlioz was rather friendly in person, and considerably harsh in writing:

We cannot escape a feeling of wellnigh painful surprise on realizing the kind of infuriation with which Wagner pounces on the works of [Berlioz]... According to him [Wagner], all of Beethoven that Berlioz was capable of assimilating was a few 'strokes of pen' that were nothing but the leavings of his art!⁸³

The German composer's disdain for the orchestration of Berlioz was on full display in his literature, despite his friendly behavior towards Berlioz in person.⁸⁴ Fascinatingly, Wagner still credits Berlioz for at least a rudimentary conception of how he utilized motifs throughout his works, going so far as to dedicate his opera *Tristan und Isolde* to Berlioz.⁸⁵ This is further evidenced by the fact that Wagner ended up composing the Overture for Berlioz's *La damnation de Faust*.⁸⁶ While the relationship between the two was indeed complicated and rivalrous, Wagner himself cites how Berlioz contributed to what would become his staple musical technique. Ultimately, "Berlioz, in the *Symphonie Fantastique*, was the first deliberately to adopt

⁸¹ Gerald E. H. Abraham. "The Influence of Berlioz on Richard Wagner." *Music & Letters* 5, no. 3 (1924): Pg 240. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/726783>.

⁸² Ibid. pg 242

⁸³ Tiersot, Julien, and Theodore Baker. "Hector Berlioz and Richard Wagner." *The Musical Quarterly* 3, no. 3 (1917): Pg 466. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/738035>.

⁸⁴ Ibid. Pg 462

⁸⁵ Gerald E. H. Abraham. "The Influence of Berlioz on Richard Wagner." *Music & Letters* 5, no. 3 (1924): Pg 243. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/726783>.

⁸⁶ Ibid. pg 242.

a theme representative of a distinct character and, a great step forward, afterward developed, modified, and transmuted in accordance with the exigencies of the story.”⁸⁷ As such, it is Berlioz who ought to receive due credit for the conceptualization of Wagner’s leitmotif, despite the technique’s controversial history in Paris. The leitmotif and the *idée fixe* function in the same way, as the two are musical phrases or statements which denote a specific character, idea, or object within a given narrative. Attempts to establish distinctions between the two are superficial, with leitmotifs being referred to as shorter than the *idée fixe*, even though the *idée fixe* in, “Dream of a Witches’ Sabbath ” is only a few measures long. The function of the *idée fixe* and the leitmotif are the same, and Wagner alludes to the latter being inspired by the former in his writings. Therefore, uses of the Wagnerian leitmotif, particularly in the context of film scoring, owe attribution to Berlioz and his *idée fixe*, particularly because the *idée fixe* is grounded in scenes and ideas from a narrative as they are expressed in music.

Chapter 6: Berlioz Applied to Film Music

The first half of this paper articulated the different theories, musical ideas, and frameworks on which the crux of this analysis rest. Berlioz’s life as a composer, his romantic personality, Vitalist aesthetic theory, and invention of the *idée fixe* are necessary components of understanding the music and future impacts of the French composer. The previous analysis was meant to articulate a framework by which to apply the conditions and creative processes of modern film scoring for the purpose of demonstrating how the philosophies and methodologies from Berlioz have impacted modern Hollywood film scores. The three film composers chosen

⁸⁷ Ibid.

for this practical application of Berlioz's musical framework are John Williams, Hans Zimmer, and Ludwig Göransson. These three are arguably the most popular working film composers in Hollywood, with Williams winning five Academy Awards, Hans Zimmer with two Academy Awards, and Göransson recently winning his first Academy Award for his *Black Panther* (2018) score. The following section of analyses will serve to illustrate how the works and philosophies of Berlioz are not only applicable to modern film scoring, but also how modern film scoring techniques are more compatible with the Berliozian framework of music and its purpose than the Wagnerian framework. This analysis will have a threefold application of Berlioz's musical ideas, being the *idée fixe*, his aesthetic theory of balancing artistic integrity with audience experience, and his claims on the evolution of music with regards to music as a narrative device.

The *idée fixe* in Modern Film Music

As previously discussed in the analyses between the Berliozian *idée fixe* and the Wagnerian leitmotif, the two function in a similar manner, with merely superficial differences in classification. Despite the difference in nomenclature, "The 'leit-motif' was Berlioz's own invention," and the deliberate establishment and modification of a symphonic theme in accordance with a program (corresponding written narrative) was a technique first drafted by Berlioz for his seminal orchestral work, the *Symphonie Fantastique*.⁸⁸ Wagner adapted the *idée fixe* for his works, such as *The Flying Dutchman*, *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (*The Ring of the Nibelung*), and *Tristan und Isolde* (*Tristan and Isolde*).⁸⁹ The leitmotif is more recognizable than the *idée fixe* because of the critical and commercial popularity of Wagner, especially with his

⁸⁸ Gerald E. H. Abraham. "The Influence of Berlioz on Richard Wagner." *Music & Letters* 5, no. 3 (1924): Pg 242. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/726783>.

⁸⁹ Ernst, Alfred. "Wagner Corrige Par Berlioz." *Le Ménestrel* 50 (September 28, 1884): Pgs 348–49. <https://archive.org/details/lemnestrel50pari/page/348/mode/2up>.

notable influences on composers like Gustav Mahler and Richard Strauss. This fact, taken in tandem with the lack of attention given to Berlioz's musical works during and after his lifetime, explains why the leitmotif and Wagner are credited with inspiring the uses of motifs in film scores rather than Berlioz and the *idée fixe*- because Berlioz was a less popular composer.⁹⁰ Regardless, the similar functions of the two merit an application of their usage throughout the film scores drafted by Williams, Zimmer, and Göransson, respectively.

All three of the highlighted twenty-first-century film composers utilize the motif/*idée fixe* to great extent in each of their filmographies, displaying the importance of the technique and its wide range of applications.

With respect to John Williams, there are numerous themes throughout *Star Wars: The Star Wars Saga* that are established and repeated as motifs throughout the films individually and the whole saga of nine films. One example of this can be found in the use of the “Imperial March” motif to signify ideas and characters related to the Empire, particularly those with regard to Darth Vader. The “Imperial March” is first utilized in *Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back* (1980), during a scene that displays the overwhelming force of the Galactic Empire against the small group of rebels in the first act of the film. The march-like rhythms induce a militaristic tone, while the melody is structured with repeated descending tones, emphasizing the empire ‘bearing down’ on freedom within the *Star Wars* universe. This march became synonymous with the primary antagonist of the Original Trilogy, Darth Vader- an evil force user whose strength and ruthlessness were matched only by his allegiance to the Empire and its Emperor, his master. The motivic theme of the “Imperial March” is utilized in the film to display the power of the Empire, and by extension, Darth Vader. For example, it is featured in scenes where Darth Vader

⁹⁰ Gerald E. H. Abraham. “The Influence of Berlioz on Richard Wagner.” *Music & Letters* 5, no. 3 (1924): Pg 239. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/726783>.

utilizes his supernatural force abilities, such as when he uses the force to choke insubordinate or ineffective officers of the Empire as the Emperor's enforcer.⁹¹ The motif characterizes the dread of the film's climax, when Luke Skywalker learns his father, Anakin Skywalker, was not killed by Darth Vader, but *is* Darth Vader. In the scene, the "Imperial March" motif is slower and mainly occupied by brass instruments playing the melody, rather than the full score utilized in the motif's first appearance in the film during the first act. This highlights the gravity of the revelation, not only to the audience but also to the characters, as the dreadful beats of the theme descend upon Luke Skywalker's emotional state. The scene's gravitas is highlighted by the use of the theme's melody and accentuated by its slower tempo. The theme was further developed in the subsequent film *Episode VI: Return of the Jedi*, as it was infused with punchier articulations granted by the increased use of timpani drums. The more powerful rendition of the "Imperial March" accentuates a scene where Darth Vader welcomes the Emperor, and the might of the Empire is on full display. The theme is faster, and more parade-like, as the two discuss the future of the Empire, as the new superweapon, the Death Star II, was on schedule for completion, granting the Empire planet-destroying capabilities once again. The sinister undertones of the "Imperial March" are paraded throughout the film until its end when Darth Vader is redeemed through empathy for his son, Luke Skywalker. The melody for the "Imperial March" is in a minor key signature, specifically g minor. This means that the third, sixth, and seventh notes of the G scale are lowered. This is important because minor key signatures have a darker tone than their Major counterparts. The minor key signature used in the "Imperial March" elicits its darker tone, grave sonority, and the imposing qualities that it shares with the Galactic Empire.

⁹¹ Inside the Score. "The Evolution of Darth Vader's Theme," December 23, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYGt8RwHVSE>.

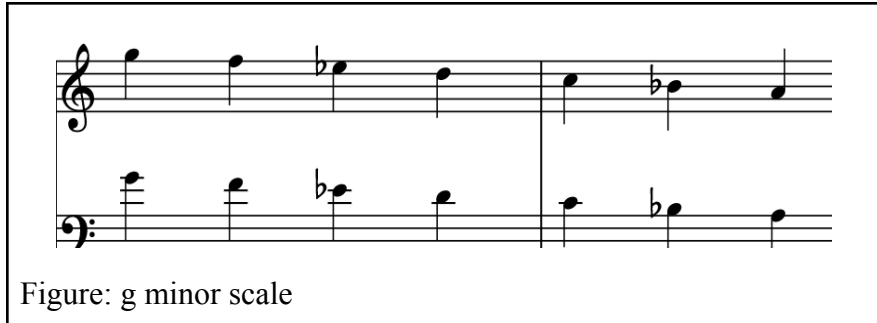


Figure: g minor scale

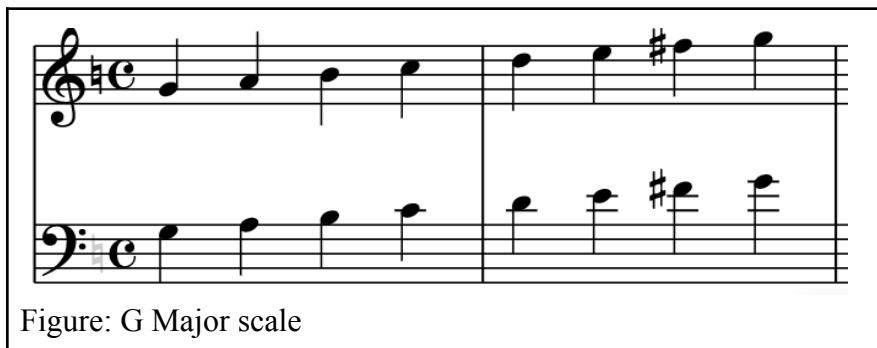


Figure: G Major scale

Following the climactic battle on the Death Star II between Luke Skywalker, Darth Vader, and the Emperor, Darth Vader is redeemed, having saved his son from torture by the Emperor. While dying from injuries suffered, Vader beseeches Luke to remove his helmet, so he could see his son without the mask. The final rendition of the “Imperial March” in the Original Trilogy of Star Wars is in G Major, the parallel key signature to g minor. G major is brighter-sounding and hopeful, which notes the redemption of Darth Vader as he reverts to Anakin Skywalker, father of Luke Skywalker. The “Imperial March” is slower, with violins taking the main melody from the brass section, as they softly sing the melody of the piece with a finality that denotes the all-too-late redemption of Darth Vader. This serves as an example of how motifs are utilized throughout not only a single film but throughout numerous film entries in a saga. The added or removed instruments create different emotional responses to the same core theme, while their contexts enhance the story of the *Star Wars* franchise.

This transformation of the “Imperial March” and its contexts reflect Berlioz’s *idée fixe* and his theories on orchestration as articulated in his *Treatise*. The modulation of the key signature in the final rendition of the march for Darth Vader’s unmasking and redemption coincides with the effects of the G major scales that Berlioz defines as pleasant and hopeful in his *Treatise*.⁹² Furthermore, the changes in instrumentation, tempo, and key signature all coincide with Berlioz’s use of the *idée fixe*, as a means to naturally reflect a narrative in musical form, such that it emphasizes certain elements within the story.⁹³

Moving on to the music of Hans Zimmer, the film composer makes frequent use of motifs/*idées fixes* throughout his filmography. The repeated use of a musical phrase to denote the presence or affect of a character is utilized by Zimmer throughout his work in the superhero genre, particularly in regards to his scores for the DC superhero film, *Man of Steel* (2013).

Man of Steel is an origin story that attempts to modernize the character of Superman in order to establish a new comic book film franchise. The character of Superman, otherwise known as Clark Kent, is synonymous with qualities of heroism, strong moral character, and kindness. As such, Zimmer was tasked with balancing the superheroic elements of the character and story for *Man of Steel* along with the more grounded and human aspects of the character. To do so, Zimmer elected for a basic piano melody, one which can be adjusted through tempo and instrumentation to match both Superman’s power and his gentle nature.

The main theme for *Man of Steel* is encapsulated in the track entitled “What Are You Going to Do When You’re Not Saving the World”. The track highlights Snyder’s vision of character- one which emphasized the humanity of Superman while also displaying the most

⁹² Berlioz. (2002). *Berlioz's Orchestration Treatise: A Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge Musical Texts and Monographs) (H. Macdonald, Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511481949.

⁹³ Raz, C. (2022). “Hector Berlioz’s Neurophysiological Imagination.” *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 75(1). doi:10.1525/jams.2022.75.1.1.

visually captivating feats of strength the character has ever accomplished in live action. The Superman motif is a series of intervals (two notes played in succession which creates either a dissonant or consonant tone), followed by a chord to complete the phrase. In the first half of the track, the motif is performed by a solo piano. The piano plays the melody gently and with a slight delay, signifying the gentleness of Superman as a person.



Figure: *Man of Steel* theme from “What Are You Going to Do When You’re Not Saving the World” and “This is Clark Kent”

The same motif is played in the track entitled “This is Clark Kent,” emphasizing the kindness of his character when he is not a larger-than-life superhero. However, the second half of the track is a triumphant call to action. The solo piano playing softly transitions into an ensemble of electric guitars, horns, strings, and a chorus belting the Superman theme. The power of the theme is emphasized by drums beating a repeated syncopated rhythm.



Figure: Repeated percussion in “What Are You Going to Do When You’re Not Saving the World”

The notes and tempo remain the same, but the harmony is thickened and the motif feels larger because of the change in instrumentation and the addition of syncopated percussion. This use of the *idée fixe* highlights how the same musical phrase can have a double meaning, with one version of Superman’s theme highlighting his power, while another can emphasize his kind heartedness and gentle mannerism. As such, the music for *Man of Steel* musically articulates the balance between superhero and normalcy that the film highlights as one of its themes- regardless of whether or not he wears the cape, Clark Kent remains the same person.

Looking at the music of Ludwig Göransson, the high degree of experimentation synonymous with his compositional style helps to reinforce how he utilizes themes and motifs throughout his compositions, such that each motif has a greater variety in sound and increased quality of memorability. As such, Göransson's employment of motifs is arguably stronger than that of other film composers, because of the variety of instruments and sounds that the composer uses, making motifs further stand out from one another. An example of this principle can be seen in how Göransson wrote the Killmonger theme in *Black Panther* to be easily discernible from the rest of the score. The track entitled "Killmonger" provides the foundation for the character's theme and subsequent motifs that are utilized throughout the score.

The theme is representative of multiple aspects of the character: his lineage, where he grew up, and his personality. In the plot of the film, Erik Stevenson, otherwise known as Killmonger, is a US Special Forces agent who is revealed to be the cousin of T'Challa and returns to Wakanda to challenge his cousin for the right to the throne. Killmonger was a character designed to be a foil for that of T'Challa- where T'Challa is a personification of excellence and opportunity, Killmonger is the personification of perseverance through traumatic circumstances. Killmonger is a Wakandan prince by blood but was left as an orphan by his uncle, King T'Chaka, as a child. The character watched his father be killed by his own brother, grew up as an orphan, and was exorcized from the history of Wakanda and its royal family to never have existed. The journey for Killmonger back to Wakanda was personal, as he sought not only to use the nation's resources as retribution against colonial powers but also to exercise his legitimate claim to the throne of Wakanda. Göransson's theme for Killmonger reflects this personal journey of anger that is deliberately exercised by perseverance through trauma in addition to the identities that Killmonger holds. The beginning of "Killmonger" opens with a plucked string ensemble

accompanying a flute melody. The melody is slow, and melancholy, and yet feels deliberate. Göransson discussed in an interview that the initial melody for the track was meant to highlight Killmonger's intelligence, as the plucked strings add a steady percussive tempo to the solo flute's melody. The solo flute is a West African Fula Flute or Fulanu.⁹⁴ The instrument originates from the Fulani tribe, who are concentrated in Senegal and Nigeria. This instrument, being from a West African tribe, further reflects Göransson's intentional use of instrumentation to immerse the audience in West Africa, where Wakanda would be located if it were real. This instrumental element also alludes to Killmonger's family lineage as Wakandan, as his father and uncle are Wakandan royalty. The flute is momentarily dropped for a series of low 808s that sound like a bass drum, serving as the buildup towards the track's climax. An 808, or an 808 beat, is an electronically manufactured series of percussion sounds, such as a snare or bass drum, which are put together to form a rhythmic phrase, such as those in "Killmonger," and "Burn it All". The rhythm of the solo bass beats is syncopated, as each phrase leads into the next, building anticipation. At the climax of the track, Göransson is able to utilize his extensive hip-hop production expertise for the main motif of the character of Killmonger: an 808 hip-hop beat. The beat includes a short double bass melody that accompanies the beat while the Fulanu shrieks its melody with the beat. This combination of sounds and instruments, along with the way the motif is written, highlights elements of Killmonger's character. The instrumentation functions as an expression of Killmonger's identity being both from Wakanda, through the Fulanu, and Oakland, California, from the hip-hop 808s. Furthermore, the intensity of the 808 beats, the accents within the double bass accompaniment, and the shrieks from the Fulanu during the beat

⁹⁴ Sideways. "How the Music in Black Panther Tells a Story," May 30, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVVS7gsm9N0>.

drop all accentuate the intense anger that the character exhibits throughout the film. The theme for Killmonger thus acts as a musical expression of his personality and his identity.

The motif for Killmonger is developed in the second act of the film. At this point, Killmonger has successfully won the throne of Wakanda from T'Challa. As king, he is able to receive the superhuman abilities of the Black Panther, the protector of Wakanda, through drinking the juice from the 'Heart-Shaped Herb,' a plant that grants its consumer superhuman abilities and a connection to the spirit realm. For Killmonger, the traditions of Wakanda ousted him from his ancestral home and killed his father. Killmonger, once he has the abilities that the herb lends, orders the burning of all of the sacred herbs, so that none are able to challenge his rule. The track accompanying this scene is entitled, "Burn It All," as it is borrowed from the dialogue when Killmonger orders the gardeners of the 'Heart-Shaped Herb.' The scene serves as the first instance of Killmonger using his royal authority to reject and literally burn the traditions of Wakanda that ostracized him as a child. The music in the scene is anxious and mysterious, as a vocal ensemble sings a hurried and hushed array of melodies. Accompanying these vocal lines is an oboe solo with a repeated descending melody. The oboe melody has a syncopated rhythm, with two sixteenth notes followed by an eighth note- a rhythm which builds anticipation and creates a natural drive toward the end of the phrase.



Figure: Oboe melody from "Burn it All"

The oboe is accompanied by a violin section with a high-pitched violin countermelody that further builds the tension.



Figure: Violin countermelody in “Burn it All”

The musical phrases repeat and grow in volume until a female vocal line interrupts them. The solo female vocal line wails out a descending melody, as the performer sings a descending melodic pattern in a desperate tone of voice. The vocal line builds in volume along with the string melody. The solo female melodic voice sounds desperate and emotional as she pleads for mercy through song. The strings then ascend in a sinister array of notes, as they are joined by French horns. The brass instruments lend the strings a thick sonority, and the track explodes with a powerful beat drop, bringing back the hip-hop 808s from “Killmonger”.



Figure: Climactic melody of “Burn it All”

The melody above is performed by a string section and horns, serving as the brief melody that plays over a booming beat drop which is nearly identical to the initial hip-hop beat from “Killmonger.” This rendition of the beat is slower but feels grander in scale. A vocal ensemble sings the ascending melody from the strings and horns above the 808s, adding to the scale of the climax in the track. The ascending melody notably mirrors the plucked string melody at the start of the track “Killmonger,” indicating the return of the character’s motif at this point in the score.

The wailing female vocal solo before the beat drop alludes to not only Killmonger’s inner pain and trauma, which he is now able to reckon with as King of Wakanda and Black Panther but

also to the pain felt by Wakanda for literally burning away its history and a sacred element of its culture. The voice sounds like it pleads with Killmonger, and sounds like it cries once the beat drops. The beat drop occurs at the cut of one of the most iconic shots from the film- an upside down shot of Killmonger walking to the throne, as Wakanda and its values have been turned upside down by Killmonger. The camera slowly rotates to normal orientation as Killmonger walks to his new throne. The beat drop signifies his rise to power, and the addition of the horns, typically used to denote regality in music, are blaring while Killmonger takes the throne of Wakanda. The Fulanu flute that shrieked during his theme, reminding the audience of his Wakandan heritage, has been transformed by Göransson into a woman singing, almost crying out against Killmonger's immediate despotism towards Wakandan culture. The voices in the early parts of the track would thus represent the spirits, whose connection to Killmonger is reinforced by him consuming the 'Heart-shaped herb,' being uneasy and anxious towards his intentions. The hip-hop beat would thus be an indication of the power, intensity, and anger of Killmonger, with his ascent to the throne being his most triumphant moment, therefore being highlighted by the presence of the brass melody announcing his entrance into the throne room. The return of Killmonger's theme, though slightly altered, is one of the most musically memorable parts of the score and in the film, as it marks one of its few uses of the hip-hop 808s. The music communicates his rise to power to the audience, through the use of horns, a slower and larger feeling hip-hop beat, and the addition of a vocal countermelody throughout the beat drop. "Killmonger" and "Burn it All" highlight Göransson's use of extraordinary instrumentation to highlight narrative elements of a character, while also displaying how the modification of a melodic idea can provide further significance to specific plot points, such that they are etched into the minds of a film's audience.

This utilization and adaptation of a motif, or *idée fixe*, coincides with how Berlioz utilized it in the *Symphonie Fantastique*, noting changes to the same character through differences in the instrumentation and tempo of the musical phrase being performed. Furthermore, the expansion of instrumental repertoire to include native instruments to West Africa and the inclusion of the 808s align with Berlioz's claim on the necessity for musical experimentation when the narrative a musician is attempting to convey demands it.

Throughout these three examples, the use of Berlioz's *idée fixe* is on full display, as twenty-first-century film composers utilize elements of harmonic modulation, melodic change, and instrumental experimentation to create character themes and motifs which express numerous aspects of them and their relation to their respective narratives. Thus, demonstrating the applicability of Berlioz's musical elements in modern film scoring. While Wagner did indeed utilize leitmotifs throughout his works, Berlioz's *idée fixe* allows musicians to experiment with sound, and defy conventions of music-making to a degree that Wagner would have disavowed. Thus, making the *idée fixe* a more applicable musical technique in film scoring.

Chapter 7: Berlioz's Aesthetics in Film Music

Throughout Berlioz's numerous essays, short stories, and theoretical writings on music, his thoughts on how music ought to be composed and performed are united under the purpose of deliberate expression and audience experience. As such, the way in which the audience is able to understand the richness and significance of the music that they are hearing is to be entrenched in it. Berlioz, in works such as "A travers chants", *Les soirées de l'orchestre*, and "The Richard Wagner Concerts" highlights his acoustic theory, which helps clarify the technical and orchestral

inspirations for how modern film music is both composed and utilized as a part of the cinematic experience.

One of the core components of Berlioz's acoustic theory is his Vitalistic view of music. As previously elaborated, Berlioz went to medical school, studied human anatomy, and internalized Xavier Bichat's Vitalist anatomism. Notably, throughout his time in medical school, Berlioz remained infatuated with music performance and composition, such that his father promised to buy him an instrument if he were to graduate from medical school.⁹⁵ While attending medical school in Paris, Berlioz studied numerous medical treatises that would later provide justification for his theories on how music ought to be composed, and how that composition ought to be relayed through an orchestra. Berlioz paid special attention to the work of Xavier Bichat, a French anatomist who distinguished between the two types of organic functions exhibited in the human body, being *la vie organique* and *la vie animale*. By applying Bichat's Vitalist theory of human anatomy, along with a conception of music as a fluid that travels through space in a series of vibrations, Berlioz was able to create his own theory of how music affects individuals physically and psychologically.

Notably, as Berlioz articulated in his essay "A travers chants", music can only be understood to its full extent by individuals with specific mental capacities.⁹⁶ This appreciation lends itself to the physical reactions that Berlioz highlights throughout his *Memoires* and his essays, such as feelings of deep elation and visceral physical reactions to a melody. Berlioz articulates a materialist theory of sound in the epilogue of *Les soirées de l'orchestre*, in which he describes music as a series of soundwaves that are organized in patterns that trigger harmonic

⁹⁵ Berlioz, Louis-Hector. *The Life of Hector Berlioz as Written by Himself in His Letters and Memoirs*. (Paris, France. 1870; Project Gutenberg, 2008) Ch. 11. <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/26370/pg26370-images.html>.

⁹⁶ Berlioz, Hector, Jacques Barzun, Elizabeth Csicsery-Rónay, and Hector Berlioz. "A travers chants." Essay. In *The Art of Music and Other Essays (A travers chants)*, 4. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005.

resonance in the human ear. If music is made up of soundwaves, and individuals who listen to music process those soundwaves into physical and emotional responses, then more musical stimuli will create a greater physical and emotional response out of the audience. This served as the conceptual justification for the impossibly large ensemble Berlioz commissioned for the *Grande Messe des Morts (Requiem)*. The symphonic mass included over four hundred performers at its premiere, with the special feature of four brass ensembles interspersed throughout the performance venue. The purpose of this exceptionally large ensemble was twofold: to surround the audience with music and for the music itself to be more voluminous. The increase in volume and spatial occupation of sound would yield an enhanced audience experience of the music because the audience is entrenched in the melodies that the composer wrote. Rather than music traveling towards the audience from a single direction, the performance is omnidirectional, and utilizes the space of the venue to immerse the audience in the sounds of the choral orchestra.

Berlioz's theory of sound, which established a positive causal relationship between the volume and direction of music with how music affects its listeners, serves as a conceptual justification for how audio is utilized in the film.

Berlioz's Artistic Integrity in Film Scoring

Another way in which Berlioz's theories on music have a modern application is the prioritization of music as a function of a narrative, which by extension created a more immersive audience experience. This audience experience in a narrative setting was, according to Berlioz, enhanced by music that focused on expression over respecting established musical conventions.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ Berlioz, Hector, Jacques Barzun, Elizabeth Csicsery-Rónay, and Hector Berlioz. "On the Richard Wagner Concerts." Essay. *In The Art of Music and Other Essays (A travers chants)*, 207. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005.

Furthermore, Berlioz argued that if music is to supply additional dimensions to a given narrative, it ought to properly reflect the narrative it is accompanying. He highlighted this principle in his essay on *Romeo and Juliet*, wherein he discussed his disdain for composers who neglect Shakespeare's envisioning of the story.⁹⁸ When music complements the vision of a storyteller and remains faithful to the narrative without unnecessary expansions or eliminations, the music is able to properly engross the audience within a story. Each element of Berlioz's compositional style and theories is designed to achieve a balance between artistic fidelity to the writer's vision (whether compositional, narrative, or both) along with the best possible audience experience, such that they can experience the faithful interpretation of an artist's vision.

This claim on the relationship between artistic integrity and the quality of experience that an audience has, as a result, is widely exemplified throughout the film industry, particularly in the relationship between the director and composer. In the three twenty-first-century film composers discussed throughout the overarching analysis, each of them has notable working and personal relationships with particular directors. John Williams has worked with directors Steven Spielberg and George Lucas for decades. Williams's compositions are doubly known for their display of his technical prowess as an orchestrator and the degree to which they complement and enhance the filmmaker's vision in a way that achieves fidelity toward that vision. As a matter of fact, it was Steven Spielberg who introduced John Williams to George Lucas when the young director was making the first *Star Wars* in 1977.⁹⁹ Lucas and Williams met and discussed Lucas's vision for the sound of *Star Wars*, in which the director had originally planned to use Gustav Holst's epic symphonic suite *The Planets*, Op. 32 for his intergalactic fantasy adventure.¹⁰⁰ The

⁹⁸ Ibid. "Romeo and Juliet." 219.

⁹⁹ Keegan, Rebecca. "John Williams and Steven Spielberg Mark 40 Years of Collaboration." *Los Angeles Times*. Los Angeles Times, January 8, 2012.

<https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/la-xpm-2012-jan-08-la-ca-john-williams-20120108-story.html> .

¹⁰⁰ Ross, Alex. "The Force Is Still Strong with John Williams." *The New Yorker*, July 21, 2020.

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/persons-of-interest/the-force-is-still-strong-with-john-williams>.

result of the meeting was Williams's understanding of the vision that Lucas had for the space epic, and he set out to write the score for *Star Wars*, so that it mirrored the style of the Romantic period composers that Lucas envisioned for his film. Williams drew from Richard Wagner, Johannes Brahms, and Gustav Holst as inspirations for the score of *Star Wars*.¹⁰¹ The blend of retrofuturism in the film with the Romantic style orchestration provided by Williams maintained the integrity of Lucas's vision for the project while providing the new iconic franchise with an established musical identity.

The use of music as a vessel for maintaining artistic integrity for a director's vision is a staple for the compositions and working relationships between Hans Zimmer and director Christopher Nolan. The partnership between the director and composer has an explicit effect on the way in which music is written for Nolan's films. Nolan often provides completed drafts of his films to the composer and often meets with the composer to collaborate on how to capture a unique sound for each film they make together. This collaboration ensures fidelity to Nolan's vision for the film, such that certain themes or ideas are emphasized by the music. One example of this process is how Nolan collaborated with Zimmer on the music for his 2014 space odyssey film *Interstellar*, which features a father leaving his children behind to find a new planet for humans to settle. Nolan's narrative vision was spectacular, as the film depicts astronauts slingshotting around stars and journeying into black holes. Yet, the theme he wanted for the film was a soft and reflective piece on fatherhood, to emulate the main protagonist's journey throughout the story as a father.¹⁰² Nolan wanted the music to constantly reflect the main character's desire to return home to his family, and ultimately, to his daughter.¹⁰³ Regardless of

¹⁰¹ Inside the Score. "Star Wars: How John Williams Composes a Theme." YouTube. YouTube, January 1, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1z5YmjSgyoo&>

¹⁰² Elegyscores. "Hans Zimmer - Making of Interstellar Soundtrack," December 3, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_8t2VlwK4w.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

the visual opulence the film displays in its visual effects, the music consistently communicates the theme of parenthood and love. This juxtaposition served Nolan's vision for an emotionally resonant story of a family divided throughout spacetime, and the music for the film highlights the central theme of parenthood.

A secondary example of the relationship between the two is how Nolan was able to have a direct influence on the score that Zimmer wrote for the 2010 sci-fi action thriller *Inception*. Zimmer's behemoth-like melodies and scores are notable for their use of brass instruments in orchestrating the primary melodies of a film.¹⁰⁴ This is also seen in films such as *The Dark Knight Trilogy* (2005-2012), *Man of Steel* (2013), and *Dunkirk* (2017), which all feature brass instruments that perform the main motifs within the given films. Fascinatingly, Hans Zimmer is equally known for the utilization of low brass tones in order to elicit tension or a sense of scale in a scene, called the 'BRAAAM' sound.¹⁰⁵ It is most notable in the score and trailer music for Nolan's film *Inception* and is actually a product of Nolan and Zimmer's mutual efforts to maintain artistic integrity. In an interview, the composer, "said that he is the godfather of braaams — an effect he stumbled upon as he tried to achieve a sound described in Nolan's screenplay as 'massive, low-end musical tones, sounding like distant horns.'"¹⁰⁶ This is significant for two reasons: it undermines the assumption that Zimmer alone created the musical effect on the one hand, and on the other it shows a clear example of how Nolan thoughtfully considered the effect of the score on the audience's experience. Thus, the combination of Nolan's creation and its

¹⁰⁴ Cassidy, Kevin. "Dreaming Big: Composer Hans Zimmer Melded his Mind with Christopher Nolan's to Score 'Inception'." *Hollywood Reporter*; July 14, 2010, 9. Gale General OneFile <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A232794568/ITOF?u=wint47629&sid=bookmark-ITOF&xid=a2cd0a1b>.

¹⁰⁵ Abramovitch, Seth. "'Braaams' for Beginners: How a Horn Sound Ate Hollywood." *The Hollywood Reporter*. The Hollywood Reporter, May 5, 2015. <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/braaams-beginners-how-a-horn-793220/>.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

execution by Zimmer further displays the significance of the working relationship between the two, and how it can impact a film.

In looking at the career of Ludwig Göransson, his most notable collaborator, outside of his work with Christopher Nolan, is that with his longtime friend, director Ryan Coogler. The two film artists met in film school at the University of Southern California, with Coogler studying directing and Göransson studying scoring.¹⁰⁷ Göransson began his collaborative relationship with Coogler by scoring a student film for the budding director.¹⁰⁸ Following graduation from film school, Göransson began working as a producer and composer, working on Dan Harmon's sitcom series *Community* (2009-2015) and producing for rapper Childish Gambino. When Coogler made his directorial debut in *Fruitvale Station* (2013), he tapped Göransson to helm the score for the film, and Göransson began his work as a mainstream film composer with Ryan Coogler. Given the history that the creatives share, they are able to unify their visions into one, such that Göransson is given creative freedom with the score, and Coogler is able to utilize and shape the score to the film. In fact, when Göransson traveled to Lagos to visit local recording artists for the soundtrack and score of *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* (2022), Coogler joined him on the trip.¹⁰⁹ As such, Coogler was able to find the best collection of musical styles and artists that would represent his vision for the film, while Göransson was able to expand on musical ideas that he introduced in the first *Black Panther* (2018). This allowed for a cohesive union between narrative and music, such that Coogler's vision for the film was enhanced by Göransson's score. The nation of Wakanda was not only visually spectacular, but musically one-of-a-kind, due to the use of West African instruments. Character themes

¹⁰⁷ Dennis, Jason. "Ludwig Göransson and the Power of Collaboration." USC Thornton School of Music. University of Southern California, November 16, 2022.

<https://music.usc.edu/ludwig-goransson-and-the-power-of-collaboration/>.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ *Voices Rising: The Music of Wakanda Forever*. Disney Plus. Marvel Studios, 2023.

<https://www.disneyplus.com/video/2b12d38e-ec33-48d6-84e3-cb784aa3a1e2>.

accurately reflected their narrative progressions, such as in the case of Killmonger's theme in the first *Black Panther* film. As such, the experience of not only watching the two *Black Panther* films, but also the experience of listening to their music, is faithful to Coogler's vision for the story and characters. This narrative cohesion creates a better audience experience rather than the film and music feeling dissonant in tone, or that one element overshadows the other. Both the onscreen film and the music that accompanied it were given equal importance by the director, because the harmony between the two was inherent to his vision.¹¹⁰

The cohesion between the music of a film and the artist's narrative vision allows for an enhanced audience experience of both the musical and visual elements of any given film. This, in tandem with modern surround sound technology and modern interpretations of Berlioz's *idée fixe* as motifs, modernizes the audience experience that Hector Berlioz prioritized. The balance between the creator's vision and the appreciation of that vision justified his invention of the programmatic symphony with the *Symphonie Fantastique*, his dramatic retelling of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in his choral symphony *Roméo et Juliette* (1839), and the larger-than-life orchestration that enveloped around the audience for his *Grande Messe des Morts* (1837).

Berlioz and Surround Sound

The priority that Berlioz placed on audience experience has subsequently been modernized, but the desired effects remain the same. A core element of the audience experience was the location and intensity of the sounds that the listener would perceive.¹¹¹ Surround sound

¹¹⁰ The Hollywood Reporter. "Composers Hans Zimmer, Terence Blanchard & Ludwig Göransson," November 28, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lp9H-0EKCVs>.

¹¹¹ Raz, C. (2022). "Hector Berlioz's Neurophysiological Imagination." *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 75(1), pg 25. doi:10.1525/jams.2022.75.1.1.

was created for the purpose of having a three-dimensional musical output, such that the audience was immersed not only in film as a visual medium, but as an aural one as well. In the 1940s, Walt Disney's Fantasound served as the technological basis for surround sound, with Disney's desire for the effect of hearing a live omnidirectional orchestra being the justification for the invention of the new technology.¹¹² Following this, surround sound technology drastically improved, with Dolby Labs Split Sound prototyping 5.1 surround sound in 1976, and its utilization in cinemas thereafter.¹¹³ The modern surround sound technology used in theaters is provided by the technology company Dolby Digital, and it remains a staple of the modern moviegoing experience. The use of Dolby Digital Surround Sound speakers are so ubiquitous with the experience of going to the movies, that films are advertised as being shown with the utilization of the Dolby Atmos, a more refined surround sound technology.¹¹⁴ The proliferation of this technology allowed for the work of film composers and sound designers to be emphasized, which overall enhances the audience's experience of sound in a film.

This effect can be demonstrated in the sound design and mixing in *Black Panther* (2018), when the protagonists enter Wakanda. As the audience is newly introduced to the Afrofuturistic country, the sound design of the film brings Göransson's theme, "Wakanda," to the forefront of what the audience is meant to hear. The highlighting of music through sound design enhances the cohesion between the film as a visual and aural medium, as the melody for Wakanda is easily recognizable and a staple melody in the *Black Panther* duology.

The technology of surround sound is able to enhance the audience experience of a film score, and by extension the film it comes from, because the audience is simultaneously

¹¹² Lazarescu-Thois, Laura. "From Sync to Surround: Walt Disney Studios and its Contribution to the Aesthetics of Music in Animation." *The New Soundtrack* 8, no. 1 (2018): 61–72. <https://doi.org/10.3366/sound.2018.0117>.

¹¹³ Frantzolas, Tasos. *The Beautiful Lies of Sound Design*. YouTube. TEDx Talks, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDy5j0c6TrU>.

¹¹⁴ Digital Trends. "What Is Dolby Atmos? Everything You Need To Know," September 17, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xfsj4wIcLIY>.

surrounded by sound and is enveloped in its volume, making the film score in a given scene more effective. The concept and execution of surround sound have practical roots in the orchestration and premiere of Berlioz's *Requiem*, and theoretical justification in works such as, "A travers chants" and *Les soirées de l'orchestre*. Furthermore, his claim on the necessity of artistic integrity for a successful musical adaptation, from his essay *Romeo et Juliet*, is exemplified in the relationships between Williams and Lucas, Zimmer and Nolan, along with Göransson and Coogler.

Chapter 8: Application of Berliozian Musical Evolution in Film Scoring

Notably, Berlioz's written and musical works all share one additional element: the evolution of music for the purpose of servicing a story. Berlioz's argument for the evolution of music is based on, rather than the aesthetics of music, its application to a specific narrative. The invention of the *idée fixe* was radical in the 19th century, but is now commonplace in modern composition. The popularization of the method is credited to Richard Wagner's leitmotif, given his greater popularity than Berlioz in music history. Yet, Berlioz's conception of the evolution of music to serve a story more aptly describes the progression of film scoring throughout the twenty-first century.

Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* put him and his music at the forefront of a debate among music academics and artists on the merits of programmatic music.¹¹⁵ The composer himself writes on the necessity for bending or breaking established compositional rules and

¹¹⁵ Temperley, Nicholas. "The 'Symphonie Fantastique' and Its Program." *The Musical Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (1971): 594. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/741260>.

traditions so long as they serve a given narrative.¹¹⁶ However, the use of experimentation during the 19th century was considered blasphemous to the established conventions, particularly in France, where Berlioz cited that the Conservatoire and its Headmaster were musical conservatives.¹¹⁷ In the context of the twenty-first century, the forward propulsion of musical experimentation is considered commonplace, especially with how technology is intertwined with the creation and proliferation of musical works. The evolution of modern music in accordance with Berlioz's criteria of narrative design is evident in the compositional styles and works of John Williams, Hans Zimmer, and Ludwig Göransson.

The starting place for our analysis of the evolution of film scores in the 21st century lies with the music of John Williams, particularly in the *Star Wars Saga*. Notably, William's style of scoring is emulative of that of Romantic composers, such as Gustav Mahler, Gustav Holst, Igor Stravinsky, and of course, Richard Wagner.¹¹⁸ As such, he utilizes methods of orchestration and instrumentation from established Western musical conventions, such as composing for and conducting a full symphony orchestra when recording for the score of *Star Wars*. Furthermore, Williams's score includes many similarities to the melodies and instrumentations of other famous symphonic works, such as Holst's *The Planets*.¹¹⁹ The instrumentation that John Williams uses in his scores emphasizes the significance of certain melodies or the ideas that those melodies are articulating. For example, the use of horns in Kylo Ren's theme throughout the Sequel Trilogy emphasizes the character's relation to that of Darth Vader and his theme in the "Imperial March."

The "Imperial March" melody is blared through a motif for the French horn, and Kylo Ren's

¹¹⁶ Berlioz, Hector, Jacques Barzun, Elizabeth Csicsery-Rónay, and Hector Berlioz. "On the Richard Wagner Concerts." Essay. In *The Art of Music and Other Essays (A travers chants)*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005, p. 207.

¹¹⁷ Clarson-Leach, Robert. *Berlioz: His Life and Times*. New York, New York: Hippocrene Books, 1988, p. 20.

¹¹⁸ The Kennedy Center. "In Conversation with John Williams and Deborah Rutter | The John Williams 90th Birthday Celebration," July 29, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKQTbpoH-d0>.

¹¹⁹ Inside the Score. "*Star Wars*: How John Williams Composes a Theme." YouTube. YouTube, January 1, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1z5YmjSgyoo&>

theme is also performed on the same instrument. Additionally, Ren's theme sounds like a melodic variation of the "Imperial March," due to the similarity in the orchestration for each. Notably, Williams composed Kylo Ren's motif in a way that mirrors the descending melodic progression in the "Imperial March." This choice was creatively deliberate, as in the film *Star Wars Episode VII: The Force Awakens* (2015), it is revealed that Kylo Ren is both a fanatic of Darth Vader, but also his grandson. This narrative element is highlighted by the choice of instrumentation for Kylo Ren's theme, so that the music is able to emphasize the narrative ideas expressed. The *Star Wars Saga* and its music are ubiquitous in modern popular culture, as the established musical ideas expressed by Williams defined how the music for *Star Wars* would sound- operatic, neo-romantic, and symphonic. As such, Williams and his work serve as the first step in the evolution of film scoring in the twenty-first century, given its neo-romantic musical identity.

The next step in the evolution of twenty-first century film scoring is from the filmography of Hans Zimmer. Zimmer's music is highly regarded for its textural vastness and the use of unconventional instruments in creating the atmosphere. Similar to John Williams, Zimmer makes use of a full studio orchestra and choir when necessary. An example of this can be seen in the track entitled "The Kraken" from *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* (2006), wherein Zimmer utilizes a range of instruments from the symphonic orchestra, such as the double bass, the French horn, and the timpani drum. However, Zimmer's music also defies established conventions by using unconventional objects as musical instruments, such as the tin sheet and Colossus AS100 synthesizer, pushing what can be defined as inherently musical, and shifting forward the evolution of film scoring.

Zimmer's style incorporates sonic experimentation in how music occupies space, along with instrumentation that transports a film score outside of the normal symphonic orchestra. This is exemplified in his score for the 2013 Zack Snyder film, *Man of Steel*, where the composer utilized pitched percussion instruments, experimentally created by a welder, for an ethereal and otherworldly tone quality.¹²⁰ Zimmer intended to create a musical atmosphere that sounded extraterrestrial and mysterious, and with the new instruments he claimed, "We can go way way beyond the symphony orchestra."¹²¹ This statement reflects Zimmer's musical style, as it is inspired by the grandiosity of Williams's melodic phrases, but extends the instruments that can be used to draft a film score with the additions of electronics and audio sampling.

The primary way in which Zimmer's music distinguishes itself from his contemporaries, and to that of John Williams, is through his priority for musical-visual cohesion, such that the music sounds like it comes from the world that the film is taking place in. An example of this principle can be found in his Oscar-winning score for *Dune: Part One* (2021). He discussed in an interview regarding the film, "Why do all these science fiction movies have a European orchestra, orchestral sounds, or romantic period tonalities about them? We are supposed to be on a different planet, a different culture. We are supposed to be in the future."¹²² This sentiment of having music reflect the atmosphere of a fictional world and its narrative informed the creative decisions that Zimmer made when composing for *Dune* and other works in his filmography. It also shows the point at which Zimmer's compositional style evolved from that of the likes of John Williams. Notably, the score for the *Star Wars Saga* emulates the Romantic period European-style orchestration that Zimmer talks about as being dissonant from the science-fiction

¹²⁰A.A.M Production. "Making of Man of Steel Music: Hans Zimmer," December 16, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJydVKTJYJg>.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Vanity Fair. "How 'Dune' Composer Hans Zimmer Created the Oscar-Winning Score | Vanity Fair," March 17, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93A1ryc-WW0>.

narrative taking place on the screen. Therefore, Zimmer prioritized musical experimentation and crafting a unique sound for his works, such that they could not be directly compared to the works of classical composers such as Wagner, Mahler, or Dvorak in terms of orchestration or the instruments utilized.¹²³ In essence, the work of Hans Zimmer reflects a turning point in film scoring because of his diversion from established scoring techniques and instruments and his propensity towards experimentation with how different sounds can be used to enhance or create an atmosphere for a given film. His work as a film scorer has inspired more recent film composers to embrace musical experimentation and to lean into the use of technology for film scoring, such that composing for films reflects the technological shifts not only in the film industry, but in the twenty-first century in general.

Continuing on the theme of evolution, Ludwig Göransson credits the inspiration behind his film scoring work to Hans Zimmer, who was previously mentioned as one of the most recognizable film composers currently working.¹²⁴ Echoing compositions by Zimmer, a primary aspect of Göransson's compositional style is his use of both extraordinary instruments in relation to Western academic musical tradition, and the dominance of technology in writing the score for films. Western musical instrumentation is highlighted in Hector Berlioz's *Treatise*, with elements such as a full orchestra with strings, brass, woodwinds, and percussion. Instruments have specific uses and registers, such as how percussive instruments are primarily used to either maintain a steady beat or to accent specific beats within a melody. However, Western musical conventions neglect sonic elements from non-European origins, such as instruments and vocals from Asia, South America, and Africa. Primarily excluded from the Western conventions were indigenous

¹²³ Turner, Brad. "The Classical Cues That Inspired John Williams's Music for 'Star Wars'." Colorado Public Radio. Colorado Public Radio, June 30, 2019.

<https://www.cpr.org/show-segment/the-classical-cues-that-inspired-john-wiliams-music-for-star-wars/>.

¹²⁴ The Hollywood Reporter. "Composers Hans Zimmer, Terence Blanchard & Ludwig Göransson," November 28, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lp9H-0EKCvs>.

communities and their musical traditions. While he was instructed with Western musical conventions, Göransson rejects the notion of an established array of instruments and orchestration techniques, as he frequently utilizes unusual instruments from outside of established conventions. As film scoring and filmmaking developed into the twenty-first century, film artists are more capable of pushing the boundaries of established axioms of filmmaking, such as narrative, characters, and how a film score reflects the story and themes within any given film, and Göransson capitalizes on these developments.

Despite this, Göransson does not outright reject Western convention entirely. In fact, he makes significant use of Western instruments and compositional techniques throughout his works. In this way, he unwittingly aligns himself with Hector Berlioz in regard to how they follow the established rules of composition and its techniques therein. Returning to Berlioz's philosophy, Hector Berlioz wrote in the essay, "On The Richard Wagner Concerts" a discussion regarding Wagner's musical framework, *Music of the Future*, which heralded a Germanic origin to the evolution of music during the late Romantic period.¹²⁵ Berlioz highlighted his agreement with Wagner, in the sense that, "New needs of mind and heart and the sense of hearing all demand new departures and at times the breaking of old [musical] laws." Both Hector Berlioz and Ludwig Göransson sought to push the boundaries of music and create evolution where necessary in service of the narratives they are expressing through their orchestrations.

Göransson himself commented, "You have to push the boundaries of existing music", especially in cases where there are no musical precedents for the work done for films such as *Black Panther* (2018). The novelty of intelligently combining indigenous, electronic, and Western instruments and orchestration techniques led to Göransson winning an Academy Award

¹²⁵ Berlioz, Hector, Jacques Barzun, Elizabeth Csicsery-Rónay, and Hector Berlioz. "On the Richard Wagner Concerts ." Essay. In *The Art of Music and Other Essays (A travers chants)* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005, p. 207.

for Best Music Score for *Black Panther* in 2019. As such, Göransson does not outright reject academic musical convention. Rather, he carefully exercises creative liberties with the rules of music theory, such that the music he writes is in service of the scene and overall narrative being depicted in a film.

Aptly, the score for the film *Tenet* (2020) reflects both the technological shift of the twenty-first century along with Göransson's creative ability. *Tenet* deals with themes about temporal manipulation, fate, and the aversion of catastrophe, all of which are reflected in the score by Göransson. As such, the score reflects the technological shift in film scoring by subverting conventional orchestration techniques in favor of combining, "orchestral textures with heavy production and racing drum beats, adding in samples throughout to add drama, such as heartbeats and heavy breathing." The drum beats and racing tempos can be heard in tracks such as "TRUCKS IN PLACE," "POSTERITY," and "747." The sampling of heavy breathing is primarily utilized in the track "SATOR," along with its recurring use throughout the score for *Tenet*.

Heavy breathing is used as the motif for the film's villain, Andrei Sator. Sator is a Russian oligarch who utilized resources and instructions inverted to him from the future, such that he would be able to enact a plan that would reverse the entropy of the Earth, which was intended to prevent future natural disasters that affected the unnamed individuals from the future. In reversing the entropy of the world, the current population of the Earth would be destroyed in the process, establishing the stakes for the Protagonist and side characters. One of the core aspects of Sator's character is his terminal cancer from being exposed to radiation as a young adult in the Soviet Union. In a flashback scene, the film displays how Sator, as a young man, lived and worked in a Siberian town named Stalsk-12, during which time he was constantly

poisoned by nuclear fallout radiation. Throughout the film, Sator's character overcompensates for his sickness (and subsequent perceived weakness) with physical brutality towards others, which denotes his sadism and condescension. Another element of Sator that the use of breathing samples alludes to is the constant inversion and reversion through time that he undergoes throughout the film. When an individual is inverted through time, according to the film, biochemical reactions are also inverted, such that instead of breathing oxygen, individuals inhale carbon dioxide and expel oxygen. As such, inverted individuals wear portable breathing masks so that they can move about in the inverse flow of time without suffocating. The heavy breathing motif used in "SATOR" and in the character's recurring motifs throughout the film both articulate Sator's terminal sickness while highlighting the influence of temporal inversion on his actions. The climax of "SATOR" includes three elements, the breathing sample, a brassy low synthesizer, along with a low and booming heavy drum. The synthesizer adds the menacing element of Sator's character while simultaneously indicating to the audience his power and relentlessness, as the synthesizer note repeats, only interrupted by the breathing sample. When the synthesizer is interrupted, the breathing sample is supported by a heavy drum, pounding away at the beats of the track itself, signifying a heartbeat in tandem with the troubled breathing sounds that are sampled. The track highlights Sator's character by emphasizing his sickness, power, and violence, all while using samples and electronic sounds that were integral to the score for *Tenet*.

These and similar orchestration techniques are the markers of the experimentation utilized in crafting the soundscape for the film, as unconventional sounds are used and distorted, illustrating how the score is an exemplar of musical evolution. This is further illustrated in the track "TRUCKS IN PLACE," as the track is primarily composed of a distorted and inverted 808

hip-hop beat and distorted sounds from operating a fire engine. The sampling and instrumentation utilized by Göransson exemplify the evolution of music, as his music places technology as integral to how music is written.

In discussing the compositional process for *Tenet*, Göransson identified the necessity for sonic experimentation to draft a film score that was intertwined with both the advancements in technology that are reflected in the film, and also the advancements of technology in music and composition. Göransson highlighted how he achieved a musical articulation for temporal inversion through creative notation and recording,

There are parts of the score that are inverted, that can be played forwards and backwards and sound the same. I experimented with having a live orchestra play my music and reversing the sheet music so they played it backwards. Then, I took the recording and reversed it again, so the result sounds like an orchestra playing backwards in real-time.¹²⁶

This technique is utilized throughout the score for *Tenet*, highlighting the conceptual element of the film (being time manipulation) while simultaneously immersing audiences into Nolan's fictional world through Göransson's retrograde composition. Retrograde composition, when functioning in tandem with the heavy distortion and reverberation that Göransson incorporated throughout the score, imbues both the film and the audience with undertones of tension. These elements are expanded throughout the film's runtime, being exemplified in the track, "747," due to the repeating quintuplet string ostinato that builds into a gargantuan brass melody. The abnormal rhythms create anticipation within the audience, which Göransson takes advantage of once the brass instruments enter with their motif. The brass are distorted, with their reverberations being increased to sound more spacious and overwhelming than if naturally played in a recording studio.

¹²⁶ Pitchfork. "Mandalorian Composer Ludwig Göransson Breaks Down His Movie & TV Scores | Critical Breakthroughs," April 13, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GW53-eaDz8M>.

The experimental sound design of the score for *Tenet*, along with avant-garde instrumentation, secures Göransson's score for the film as the latest example of the evolution of film scoring, as it highlights how technology is more integral to filmmaking and artistry than ever. Göransson's electronic distortion of instruments and melody creates a musical balance between the grittiness of Nolan's filmography along with the futurism explored in *Tenet's* narrative and the themes therein. Göransson still follows conventional film scoring techniques, such as the use of motif and using melody to articulate character traits, but does so in a way that defies previous notions of how to compose for films, such that the music sounds unique to the film and to the twenty-first century.

In this way, Göransson's work aligns with the musical frameworks of Hector Berlioz, although unintentionally, by establishing a new kind of music which takes previously established and common elements of music and combines them in an unprecedented manner in relation to the narrative. Berlioz's thoughts on the spatial qualities of music, such as the effects of music volume on audience experience, are also illustrated throughout Göransson's music, although they are modernized. Instead of exploring how music interacts with space in a concert hall, like Berlioz did, Göransson explores the spatial capacities of music through reverberation, sound mixing, and distortion through electronics. The manipulation of music, both electronic and acoustic, is an essential element of Göransson's score for *Tenet*, as it immerses audiences into the world of the film, but also to the director's vision of how he wanted his audience to experience the film.¹²⁷ In this way, Göransson and Berlioz share a similar disposition towards established musical conventions, in which they make use of techniques and instruments within conventional

¹²⁷ Ludwig Göransson Breaks Down "Rainy Night in Tallinn," "Meeting Neil," and Working with Travis Scott. YouTube. *Rolling Stone*, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sa6Uja5rgig&>.

practices insofar as they are in service of the narrative they attempt to portray, and otherwise innovate with orchestration.

Following the three-fold analysis on the development of film scoring into the 21st century, it is clear to see how different practices and creative conceptions have molded the art form. Beginning with the music of John Williams, the neo-romanticism of the *Star Wars Saga*'s score emulates the composition and instrumentation practices from Romantic composers, like Mahler, Holst, and Wagner, who Williams credits as inspirations.¹²⁸ The use of the symphonic soundscape, with swelling string melodies, booming blows from a timpani drum, and the vastness of a full choir lend the *Star Wars Saga* a timeless sound that communicates the operatic nature of the *Star Wars* narrative and its tone. The decision to use a romantic score with a full symphony orchestra was deliberate on the part of both John Williams and George Lucas. The scores for *Star Wars* films are ubiquitous in pop culture, with melodies such as, “The Imperial March,” “The Force Theme,” and the *Star Wars* “Main Title Theme” being some of the most easily recognizable pieces of music in film. The grandiose symphonies of Williams's works inspired the large-scale sound of the music of Hans Zimmer.

The work of Hans Zimmer indicates a diversion away from classical film scoring through the use of experimentation in both the instruments that are utilized, but also in how melodies are written. Notably, Zimmer does indeed make use of a full studio orchestra and choir, but his use of electronics and unconventional instruments set him apart from his early contemporaries. Zimmer's scores are notable for their epic scale and atmosphere inducing orchestration, with each of his works having their own unique sound, such as the use of the church organ in the score for

¹²⁸ The Kennedy Center. “In Conversation with John Williams and Deborah Rutter | The John Williams 90th Birthday Celebration,” July 29, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKOTbpoH-d0>.

Interstellar (2014).¹²⁹ Hans Zimmer was able to popularize experimentation outside of the established convention of the Western symphonic orchestra. Rather than modulating tones and utilizing a tonality within the context of a symphony, Zimmer embraced the use of electronics and unconventional instruments in writing the scores in his filmography. The final step of the evolution in film scoring, in the context of the early 21st century, would be the music of Ludwig Göransson.

Where Zimmer experimented and heralded the interaction between technology and music, Göransson refined it. Furthermore, Göransson's music is a greater reflection of the globalization of the twenty-first century. This is reflected in his scores for the *Black Panther* duology, as he traveled to West Africa and Mexico to study local music and to record local artists to best represent those ethnic groups and communities.¹³⁰ While this seems obvious, given the fact that the films highlight indigenous nations and their cultures, this was unprecedented at the time. With a greater sense of globalization, worldwide cultural recognition in twenty-first century music is able to reflect not just on the tone of a film, its plot, or a specific character, but also the location of where the film takes place and accurately represent the culture it shows. By paying respect to other cultures through the genuine study and application of their musical traditions, they are better represented musically in a film. The ethnocultural reflections in the music of Göransson's scores are especially notable when compared to scores from his predecessors, particularly in how Hans Zimmer and Göransson both depict a fictional nation within Africa.

¹²⁹ Elegyscores. "Hans Zimmer - Making of *Interstellar* Soundtrack," December 3, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_8t2VlwK4w.

¹³⁰ Hernandez, Jeanette. "Meet the Artists Who Represented Indigenous & Mexican Communities in 'Wakanda Forever' Soundtrack." Remezcla. Remezcla, November 23, 2022. <https://remezcla.com/music/indigenous-mexican-artists-black-panther-wakanda-forever-soundtrack/>.

In 1991, Walt Disney Studios tapped Hans Zimmer to craft the score for their animated epic *The Lion King*. The score for the film is emblematic of Zimmer's style, given its feature of a choir, the heavy utilization of brass instruments, and the emphasis on percussion. The film's story takes place in Africa, in a nondescript fictional nation of animals. The plot is derived from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, as the main protagonist is a prince who is ostracized from his nation and family, and learns to cope with his own shortcomings along with grieving the death of his own father. The prince then returns to lay his claim on the throne and take his rightful place as the king, and undermine the rule of his power-hungry uncle who usurped and killed his father.

The film's art direction is meant to reflect the environment of the African jungles and savanna biomes. Yet, the score for the film is in the Western musical tradition, featuring a symphony orchestra and choir. The main orchestral theme for the film, entitled "King of Pride Rock," features a full choir, French horns, string sections, and woodwinds. This orchestration directly contrasts that from the way that approached composing for *Black Panther* (2018), specifically in the theme, "Wakanda," with its use of the talking drum beating the name "T'Challa" in three syllables and Baba Maal singing the opening vocals in Igbo.¹³¹ The shift in orchestration reflects an evolution in film music that can better reflect ethnocultural diversity on a global scale that ends up enhancing the experience of the film. The score for *The Lion King* utilizes Western musical instrumentation and orchestration to depict the African savanna, the jungle, and the characters that inhabit those environments. Nearly thirty years later, *Black Panther's* score conveys a West-African civilization and its people by utilizing instruments from West Africa and recording local instrumental and vocal musicians. Göransson does indeed use European symphonic instruments, such as the French horn or the violin, but their use is sparse,

¹³¹ The Hollywood Reporter. "Composers Hans Zimmer, Terence Blanchard & Ludwig Göransson," November 28, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lp9H-0EKCVs>.

with the emphasis on instruments and musical traditions that are indigenous to the area in which the film would take place, immersing the audience into the film more so than it would have if the score was composed in the same manner as *The Lion King*. Notably, Zimmer praised Göransson for his work on *Black Panther* in achieving the musical immersion that the score for the film elicits.¹³² This example serves as a prime indicator of how Hollywood film scoring has evolved over time, such that new instruments are utilized, musical experimentation is encouraged and refined, and music is better able to reflect the diversity of ethnocultural groups.

The way in which film scoring has evolved over time coincides with Berlioz's writings on how music ought to grow and change over time. Returning to the work of John Williams, his scores are musically vast and filled with sweeping string and brass melodies. The composer utilizes the conventions of Western musical tradition with the dramatic flair of neo-romanticism. The way in which the numerous themes within the *Star Wars Saga* are performed is very similar to the sweeping melodies of Berlioz's musical works, as they are able to elicit emotional responses from their audience that represent a narrative idea. The scores for the *Star Wars Saga* could be mistaken for symphonic masterpieces even without the films they accompany, given the excellence of Williams's orchestrations. Williams is therefore the first step in the evolution of modern film scoring, because of his conventional utilization of the symphonic and choral orchestra, such that he uses the Western conventions that Berlioz articulated in his *Treatise*. Subsequently, Hans Zimmer and his works were utilized as the following step in the evolution of modern film scoring given his propensity towards musical experimentation, both in terms of using technology, such as the Colossus AS100 Synthesizer, and extraordinary instrumentation, such as the 'Tin Sheet' in the *Man of Steel* (2013) score.¹³³ Zimmer frequently made use of the

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ "Colossus AS100 Classic." Colossus Synthesizer. Analogue Solutions LTD. Accessed November 27, 2022. <https://www.colossus-synth.com/colossus>.

symphony orchestra and a choir, but would intersperse traditional orchestration with the experimental instruments or recording methods that would eventually define his career as one of the most prolific composers currently working. The technological shifts and experimentation ubiquitous with Hans Zimmer's compositional style are conceptually grounded by Berlioz's own writings on musical evolution, specifically in his discussion that he was not the first, nor would he be the last composer to break or bend conventional rules of composition for the purpose of a story.¹³⁴ Thus, Zimmer's compositions mark a shift toward technology and experimentation with how film scores are written. This shift in technology and emphasis on experimentation are refined by Ludwig Göransson in his filmography. Göransson was selected as the final stage of the evolution of film music for not only the excellence of his work, but also for the experimentation and adaptability inherent to his compositional style. Each of his musical works have their own musical identity that corresponds with the narrative that they accompany. The music for *Tenet* (2020) is technologically advanced and plays with how the human ear listens to music as time moves forward. Meanwhile, the music of *Black Panther* (2018) and *Black Panther: Wakanda Forever* (2022) is a celebration of indigenous cultures and their musical traditions, which are either delegitimized or go unnoticed by established Western musical conventions. Additionally, the score for *The Mandalorian* (2019-2023) redefined the music of *Star Wars*, as the music for the series is a total detraction from the Romantic compositions of John Williams in favor of the technologically advanced sound from the series. Therefore, the advancement of film scoring techniques and creative processes into the twenty-first century displays how Berlioz's conception on the evolution of music and storytelling applies to film music.

¹³⁴ Berlioz, Hector, Jacques Barzun, Elizabeth Csicsery-Rónay, and Hector Berlioz. "On the Richard Wagner Concerts ." Essay. In *The Art of Music and Other Essays (A travers chants)*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005, p. 207.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

The purpose of this overarching analysis was to, in short, provide credit where it is due. Hector Berlioz is often neglected in the history of music, critically regarded for his *Symphonie Fantastique* and *Treatise upon Modern Instrumentation and Orchestration*, but not much else.¹³⁵ Many of his works remain unperformed, and his written works are often unnoticed in music academia.¹³⁶ The works of Berlioz were critically divisive during his lifetime, with the composer's music was either adored or reviled by French music academia and European intelligentsia. As such, his presence in modern discourse is not as prevalent as his contemporaries, like Wagner.

Berlioz and his music were mocked for the same dramatic flair that earned Wagner his popularity in the history of music. Berlioz's orchestration techniques, including that of the *idée fixe*, influenced Wagner's compositions, particularly those which utilized his now ubiquitous leitmotifs, such as in *Tristan und Isolde* (1859).¹³⁷ Furthermore, Berlioz's conception of how music volume, venue, and location affect the audience experience was unprecedented during his lifetime and exemplified in his orchestration and premiere of the *Grande Messe des Morts*.¹³⁸ The composer's penchant for the dramatic, emotional, and expressive elements of music are indicated in each of his works, especially within his definitive programmatic work, the *Symphonie Fantastique*. His focus on the audience's experience of music and how a composer

¹³⁵ Gerald E. H. Abraham. "The Influence of Berlioz on Richard Wagner." *Music & Letters* 5, no. 3 (1924): 242. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/726783>.

¹³⁶ Ibid

¹³⁷ Ibid. Pg 248.

¹³⁸ Stiefel, Andrew. "Ludovic Morlot Returns to His Roots with a Momentous Recording of Berlioz's *Requiem*." *Seattle Symphony*. Seattle Symphony, August 30, 2018. <https://www.seattlesymphony.org/en/beyond-the-stage/berlioz-requiem>

can utilize space, sound, and instrumentation to achieve heightened physical and emotional responses from the audience was unprecedented during his lifetime.

Despite the advancements in Romanticism, the invention of the *idée fixe*, and narrative priority expressed in his music, Berlioz was outshined by Wagner in the history of programmatic music. Wagner's operas and symphonic works are behemoths of musical culture, while his philosophies on the advancement of music in the essay entitled *Zukunftsmusik* (*Music of the Future*) undermined the artistic legitimacy of programmatic works, including those of Berlioz, while establishing an aesthetic precedent for musical principles like atonality, as utilized by Arnold Schoenberg.¹³⁹ Even though Berlioz's musical works and philosophies are more conceptually similar to the modern film score, Wagner has been credited with heralding the techniques that are synonymous with the art form.

Having completed the intended analysis, it is clear that Berlioz, as both an artist and a writer, has been recently experiencing a resurgence in both popularity and positive critical response. The once divisive *Symphonie Fantastique* is commonly programmed in numerous orchestras, and his *Requiem* has received numerous performances. Legendary Maestro Leonard Bernstein referred to Berlioz's *Symphonie* as "brilliant" and "masterful."¹⁴⁰ Other works, such as *Harold en Italie*, *Te Deum*, and *Lélio* have all been performed and recorded for massive audiences.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, Berlioz's contributions to modern film music have been highlighted in educational textbooks, and his integral contribution to the history of programmatic composers such as Debussy, Strauss, and Wagner, is credited.¹⁴² Music scholars are beginning to

¹³⁹ Gerald E. H. Abraham. "The Influence of Berlioz on Richard Wagner." *Music & Letters* 5, no. 3 (1924): 248. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/726783>.

¹⁴⁰ *Berlioz Takes a Trip* | Leonard Bernstein. YouTube. New York Philharmonic, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjVwM1nRK8Y&>.

¹⁴¹ Huizenga, Tom. "The Legacy of Composer Hector Berlioz." *Broadcast. The Morning Edition*. Washington, DC: NPR, December 11, 2003. <https://www.npr.org/2003/12/11/1543865/the-legacy-of-composer-hector-berlioz>.

¹⁴² Hanning, Barbara Russano, and J. Peter Burkholder. "The Early Romantics." Essay. In *Concise History of Western Music*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2014, pp. 426–30..

acknowledge the contributions that Berlioz made to not only film music, but to music history in general, as an artistically gifted Romantic composer, especially with his unique perspectives on artistry, music aesthetics, and the narrative role music occupies when set to a story.

The overarching analysis provided was meant to elucidate how Berlioz as a composer and writer applies to film music not in a general sense, but with specific effects impacting the composition and presentation of film music to the audience. Specifically, his conception of how music ought to evolve in accordance with whatever narrative it accompanies. These ideas are seen in the selection of film composers presented, such that a practical application of Berlioz's theories and musical ideas was articulated. The manifestation of the *idée fixe* in the modern use of the leitmotif is ubiquitous with the practice of drafting a film score. In addition, the priority given to achieving a balance between artistic integrity and audience experience can be seen throughout the methods and collaborative efforts by which Hollywood film scores are written. His acoustic theory serves as a conceptual justification for the modern use of surround sound technologies, such that the audience's experience of music is enhanced, with a history that traces back to 1940.

As it were, the legacy of Berlioz is finally receiving the revitalization that is deserved by the composer and his impact. The application of his theories to modern film scores exemplifies their soundness in regard to programmatic and narrative music, given how well they are able to account for how modern film scores are drafted and how they have developed over time, from John Williams to Ludwig Göransson. In conclusion, the musical compositions and literary works from Hector Berlioz are fundamentally impactful to the way that film scores are developed, written, recorded, and performed, such that the modern cinematic experience is indebted to the music, literature, and artistic vision of Hector Berlioz.

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