BA Creative Music Production

Professional Project Prep

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Influencing The Audience Through Film Scoring

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Abstract

This research project aimed to explore what techniques can film composers implement in order to achieve desired responses from a viewing audience. Three varying films were used as control content, with three scores written for each, with each of them utilising various compositional devices in order to gain particular outcomes and to anticipate responses from subjects groups, who would partake in surveys recording their reactions to the films, and these responses were analysed and whether or not these compositional devices were effective was discussed.

The project gathered research from various journal articles and academic sources to inform decisions regarding the concept of leitmotif, which proved to be an essential skill utilised in the compositions, with the majority of participants leaning towards the desired outcomes set out by the compositions. Another factor in the compositions was the ideas formed by leading film composers. Interviews and articles relating to composers which inspired the pieces were researched, and the specific devices which they utilise were implemented into the scores, which also proved to be a mostly effective tool in achieving desired responses from the audience.

The experiment proved fruitful for the most part, with the majority of participants connecting themes to particular characters or emotions, and the techniques informed by proven composers were also effective in influencing the subjects viewing of the films, despite some missteps in the composition where these responses were not achieved.

Acknowledgments

Table of Contents

Introduction

Film scoring is one of the greatest assets film makers have when moulding their stories. Their ability to portray emotions through sound and enrich the narratives of pictures is an essential tool for a director. The film composer possesses the ability to completely transform the tone of a scene, weave a narrative, and can have the audience in the palm of their hands, but why is this?

That is what this project explores, how film composers can take advantage of human psychological reactions to affect the viewer's response to the characters, narrative, and atmosphere of a film. This project aims to answer the primary research question, *'Can a composer elicit desired emotional reactions by exploiting psychological responses, and implementing techniques used by proven composers.* This is explored using a combination of journal and online articles, which have delved into how the mind is affected by music and scoring when watching a film, whereby researchers have looked at what techniques can be implemented to exploit emotional responses, and interviews with established composers where they dissect their process and explain how they created the right score for a given project, and produced desired emotions from the audience.

The process of this project is as follows, the first step being the compositions themselves. Using the information gathered from both the journal articles and the inspiration from leading composers, three scores have been composed for three different short films/excerpts, with these being,

- *Hachiko*, a story of a dog who after his owner's death finds himself stranded at a train station.
- *Lost*, a mother and son make their way through a hospital all the while being followed by a mysterious creature.
- *Lost Lane United*, fighting boredom, a young man from Dublin employs his friends to start a Sunday league football team, with the games being played the morning after binge drinking sessions.

Each score attempts to illicit different emotional responses from the viewer. These three films are shown to participants in a subject group, and they answer a survey after viewing each film, with the questions concerning how they felt about various characteristics of the film.

this data is then recorded and it's seen if the techniques implanted through the research are effective in achieving the desired response from audience members.

Literature Review

Introduction

The literature review in this project centres on two thematic ideas which are essential to the understanding of the experiment and escort the writing process in the correct direction to answer the questions put forward in this study. The two themes implemented to make this a successful project are,

- Film Music's ability to influence the audience.
- Inspiration from Leading Film Composers

Film Music's Ability to Influence the Audience

Understanding what is happening in the human mind that triggers emotional responses from music in film is an essential aspect of this project. These ideas help the composer understand what points need to be hit to make their audience feel the emotion they're trying to convey. Key resources have been implemented in helping to understand how film music can influence the viewer, even perhaps with them being unaware. The first of these resources being the journal article written by Jessica Green (Green) entitled 'Understanding the Score: Film Music Communicating to and Influencing the Audience'. In this article, Green delves into various devices film music has that can affect audience members perceptions, for example film music's 'Power to Suggest Connection or Themes' (3), 'Music's Ability to Identify and Suspend Reality' (4), and 'Thematic Transformations' (8). Understanding these concepts is essential to the composition of the pieces, as the ideas put forward can influence decision making. Looking at 'Music's Ability to Identify and Suspend Reality', Green explains that emotions the film is trying to portray, or narrative ideas which are progressing, would not be as easy to convey without music. This concept is extremely important in the writing as the music in these films portray what is happening on screen to guide the audience, as some of this could be lost in translation without it.

She also delves into 'Musical Convention' (6), for example the idea of leitmotifs[1] in film music to help audiences connect pieces of the story together. The term leitmotif, literally translating to 'leading motive', was first introduced by writers exploring the work of Richard Wagner, applying it to the 'representative themes' that characterize his works, although this technique had been used since Mozart's work. Leitmotifs are employed when a composer

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[1] A recurrent theme throughout a musical or literary composition, associated with a particular person, idea, or situation.

wants to illustrate a story through melody and harmony, and most frequently is attributed to characters in a given medium, Wagner's being opera. One of Wagner's most famous uses of leitmotif is in his Ring Cycle, an opera cycle split into four parts, Das Reingold, Di Walkure, Siegfried, and Gotterdammerung, with the characters in the cycle being represented by their own leitmotifs. These themes change throughout the course of the opera depending on the characters' experiences and feelings (Blakeley). The leitmotif is now an essential aspect of film composing, informing the audience of thematic ideas and narrative focuses, and the techniques implemented by Wagner are still adopted in modern film composing.

Some of the most influential and recognisable examples of leitmotifs used in motion pictures are often attributed to John Williams, with a classic example being the main theme from *Jaws*, this two-note phrase instantly informs the audience that the shark is nearby, even if it is not seen on screen. While leitmotifs are often attributed to characters, they can also evoke settings, emotions, or a combination of all three (Binder). Another John Williams piece, 'the Imperial March' theme from *Star Wars* is a primary example of this, featuring throughout the series to represent the character of Darth Vader, with the theme having an evolving mood and feel depending on the action on screen, even over the course of multiple films. this is achieved through variations in harmony, melody, and tempo, among other compositional devices. You can label this way of approaching leitmotifs as 'Thematic Transformations', a concept also explored in Green's article.

Thematic transformations also fall under the category of musical convention. To explain this concept Green quotes Roger Hickman in her article (8),

> *"Thematic transformation helps to create variety and gives support to dramatic situations. In the simplest terms, a leitmotif can be altered when it recurs during a film. The alteration can be a change of instrumentation, tempo, or harmony. Through these transformations, the changing mood or state of a character can be depicted.".*

This idea is an essential aspect of scoring to picture, and can narratively guide the audience through the film, and provide context to scenes and characters without words. To give an example of how these concepts are implemented in the composition of the films used in this project, the idea of the character leitmotif is an essential aspect of the score for *Lost Lane United,* due to the factor that the film features multiple leading characters and their own specific themes will vary through the course of the film as it reflects their inner feeling at different stages throughout the narrative, thus allowing the audience to both connect the

music to a given character, but also allow them to understand the characters successes and struggles. Looking at *Hachiko*, the idea of the emotive leitmotif is utilised with a specific theme for when Hachiko is feeling joy, this theme also adapts throughout the piece.

Another important concept which Green writes on is the idea of 'Playing Counter to the Image' (10). This idea states that music can either resemble or contradict what is happening on screen. When music is played counter to the image on screen, the audience 'must make sense of the contradiction and what purpose it serves' (10), This is a concept implemented in the composition for *Lost Lane United*, as there is scenes where the image will be a positive moment but the score should underline impending sadness. Established film composers will use techniques such as leitmotifs frequently to convey the story and themes of a film through music, but every individual composer has their own techniques and systems which they utilise to influence the audience.

Inspiration from Leading Film Composers

While understanding how the mind responds to music in film and exploiting these responses is important, another key factor in achieving a positive result is taking inspiration and advice from leading film composers and looking at what techniques and methods they implement in their writing process to achieve their desired goals. Multiple resources, which for the most part are interviews with these composers, are utilised to assess creative decisions in the writing process to help achieve desired outcomes. An example of one of these interviews is with Thomas Newman, conducted by Rick Beato (Newman). During this discussion, Newman delves into his thought process while writing some of his most successful scores, and he delves into key concepts film composers should be aware of. For example, the idea of looking at music in 'primary colours', referring to using simple triads[2] to paint these emotional moments, rather than larger 7th or suspended chords[3]. He also delves into the idea of 'suspense vs melancholy', where a score should have moments of suspense and tension to make a melancholic release more satisfying. Both concepts mentioned are essential to the composition of *Hachiko*.

Looking at the composition of *Lost*, other resources and inspirations are implemented into the music, one of these being Brian Reitzell (Reitzell), who in conversation about his work on *Hannibal*, describes the use of chimes and bells, and how he approached writing this score,

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[2] In music, a triad is a set of three notes that can be stacked vertically in thirds.
[3] A suspended chord, or sus chord, is a musical chord in which the major or minor third is omitted and replaced with a perfect fourth or a major second.

and achieving a 'heightened state of reality'. Another resource imperative to the writing of *Lost* is the online article by Michelle Darling (Darling) dissecting how the score for *Halloween*, works in creating an unsettling feel. The article focusing on how particular note sequences written by John Carpenter create the unsettling mood in the picture. The main theme's piano motif heavily features tritones[4], minor 6ths[5] and minor 2nds[6], which all lend themselves to create the piece's signature sound, the article also states the pulsating rhythm and low, synthetic brass and strings all work together to create the dissonant score which generates this unsettling effect. these compositional devices are all implemented into the composition of *Lost*.

With regards to the final film *Lost Lane United*, Jon Brion's work on *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, is a key inspiration, with an article written by Clare Nina Norelli (Nina Norelli) being an essential resource in assessing decision making. She delves into how Brion's music mirrors what is happening to the characters and what their internal state is feeling. What makes Brion's work on this picture interesting is in terms of the timbre[7] of the music, which helps to reflect what is happening onscreen rather than melodically like the other examples. An example is how a key feature of the music is the sound of reverse tape loops, which represent how the protagonist Joel is living through his memories in reverse. Similar ideas are implemented into *Lost Lane United*, with warm, lush synthesizers sounds being heard when the characters are content, and thinner, less pleasant sounds being used when they are unhappy, or in the case of the chosen clips, the sounds are thinner to represent how the lead characters relationship isn't full formed yet and only beginning to blossom.

Another key inspiration on this film is Nicholas Britell's score for *If Beale Street Could Talk*. In an interview with 'SoundWorks Collection' (Brittel), Britell dissects different methods and approaches he took when composing the score. Some ideas he presents which are implemented into the *Lost Lane United* score, include how he uses melodic shapes or contours[8] to convey feelings. He uses the melody on his work 'Agape' as an example, explaining that the upward horn melody is conveying the feeling of hope. A melody which also features in this piece is one which recurs throughout the film, another example of

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[4] In music theory, the tritone is defined as a musical interval spanning three adjacent whole tones.
[5] The minor sixth interval consists of two notes with eight semi-steps distance.
[6] A minor second is the same as one half-step. It is the smallest musical interval.
[7] In music, timbre, also known as tone colour or tone quality, is the perceived sound quality of a musical note, sound, or tone.
[8] Used to refer to the shape of a melody over time.

leitmotif, this time in a more contemporary fashion. Concepts like this also informed decision making regarding the questions posed to the subject group, with a question like 'which emotion did you feel the piano expressed?' being put into operation.

Conclusion

The two themes explored in the literature review were essential guidelines while composing the music for the films being used as control content in the experiment portion of the project. The responses the brain has to film music explored by journal articles as well as techniques implemented by composers are utilised in order to test are there systems that can be used to gain a desired response from an audience. These key concepts such as leitmotifs, thematic transformation and suspense vs melancholy are all essential tools in a film composer's arsenal and are all executed in the final compositions. As well as creatively, the themes explored in the literature review help inform decision making on the questions asked to the subject group, leading to a clear and concise conclusion to the project.

Methodology

Introduction

The aim of this project can be condensed into the research question, *'Can a composer elicit desired emotional reactions by exploiting psychological responses, and implementing techniques used by proven composers.* The process was deducted using empirical research, and the data collected qualitatively using a subject group. This data has been collected using surveys in order to deduct how the participants responded to each film, and assessing whether the techniques implemented were successful in achieving the desired user response. The control content used in the experiment is the two short films, *Hachiko* and *Lost*, and two excerpts from the feature film *Lost Lane United*, each of these films vary greatly and the music reflects the genre of each piece. The creative decisions regarding the composition of the pieces have been informed by the research explored in the literature review.

Method 1

The first method before the actual experiment portion of this study was the composition of each score. The compositional decision making was assessed by the research gathered and analysed in the literature review, and using these ideas the music was written with responses expected from the participants in the subject group. For instance, the idea of musical conventions and leitmotifs presented by Jessica Green were implemented in each piece. in *Lost* for example, there is a piano motif representing the mother and son's relationship, with each time it occurs in the film being slightly varied melodically, depending on the action on screen. During a peaceful moment the melody resolved in a more tonic[9] fashion, whereas if there is a tense moment on screen the melody is less diatonic[10], and the note sequences used by John Carpenter in *Halloween* will be assessed and executed. Another example of a similar approach is with the *Lost Lane United* score, with the various characters themes transforming at different points in the film to represent how they are feeling at a given point. Due to this being a feature film, in the survey portion, rather than having one continuous clip of the film there would be two clips from different points in the film, in order to display the use of evolving leitmotif, and particularly character leitmotif.

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[9] In music, the tonic is the first scale degree of the diatonic scale and the tonal centre or final resolution tone that is commonly used in the final cadence in tonal classical music.
[10] Any stepwise arrangement of the seven natural pitches forming an octave without altering the established pattern of a key or mode—in particular, the major and natural minor scales.

Ideas pulled from a wide variety of composers have been applied to each film, for example Randy Newman's (Baumbach) idea of treating the music like a narrator, which was an idea applied in *Hachiko*. Other examples involved the sources explored in the literature review, such as Jon Brion's approach to portraying the narrative through the music's timbre (Nina Norelli), or how Thomas Newman (Newman) approaches his scores with the idea of creating suspense to inform the audience there is drama unfolding, for there to then be a melancholic release. The music has been composed also bearing in mind the questions which were to be posed to the subject group, for example there were themes written portraying characters and emotions where it was expected that the audience will make these associations.

Method 2

The second method is the beginning of the experiment portion of the project, where questionaries were filled out by a subject group and the collection of their initial responses to each film. The questions were designed specifically to judge whether the ideas presented both by journal articles and established composers are effective in drawing the desired responses from the audience. The questions written centre on characters, atmosphere, and narrative, and feature a mix of multiple choice and open-ended questions, leaving room for the participants to be specific on their views. Some examples of questions which were used are as follows.

- 'Which musical element did you feel represented the lead character'?
- 'What feeling did you feel the woodwind evoked'?
- 'Did you notice any repeated musical elements'?

The subject group aimed to include a mix of musicians, film makers and those not involved in any realm of the arts. This is to judge whether the techniques implemented would garner the desired reaction from all forms of film goers, or if these different backgrounds had any effect on the viewer's experience watching the films. The questionnaire form was sent to each participant electronically for them to do in their own time, as attempting to do them all in person would lead to wasted time, and gathering a strong enough number of participants would have been more difficult. Instructions were attached along with the form so the subject group members were aware of the procedure and how to structure the viewing, with each participant having to watch the chosen film first before reading the question, and then having the option to re watch the film one more time. Trial runs were utilised in order to judge whether the experiment flowed well and if there are were factors that may spoil the research, as well as general phrasing issues in the question to avoid comprehension issues. Some

results from the initial tests were that the subjects should be able to watch the film more than once, which was the initial idea.

Method 3

The final method of the project is the recording of the data collected and the analysis of whether the project was a success or failure. The data was collected, and it was assessed whether exploiting psychological responses and utilising established composers' techniques are effective in achieving desired reactions from audience members. The process of collecting the qualitative data was informed by the book by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke entitled 'Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners' (Braun and Clarke). This resource delves into what makes effective qualitative research projects, having many interesting outlooks on collecting information this way. This resource is important in creating a successful experiment and assuring that the resources in the literature review can be adapted by a composer to influence film audience members. The online resource 'How to Do Thematic Analysis: Step-by-Step Guide & Examples' (Caulfield), also informed decision making during the analysis portion of this experiment.

Conclusion

The research process brought together many key areas that benefited the composition for the films as well as adopting specific techniques or strategies. The methodology put forward helped lead to the clearest and most concise conclusion to the aims set about by this project, utilising a tried and tested resource to inform decisions on the questions themselves and the structure of the experiment. By carrying out this study, this project will attribute to the knowledge of film scoring techniques, while being valuable for both creative and research reasons.

Looking first towards the results from *Hachiko*, of the 21 subjects who undertook the survey, 11 were musicians, 3 were film makers, and 7 were neither. When asked if they felt that the music guided them through the story, 90% choose yes, while 10% chose no. When posed with the question 'how did the main piano theme make you feel?' 48% of participants chose joyful, 10% chose tense, 10% chose upset, while 33% chose other. Given the question 'did you notice any transformation (changes) in the main theme of the score through the course of the film?' 71% chose yes while 29% chose no. When asked how they would describe the middle section of the film (1:10-2:15)?, 57% chose suspenseful, 38% chose sad, 5% chose other while no participants felt it was fun. Lastly, asked the question 'how would you describe the final section of the film?' 71% chose Melancholic, 10% chose happy, 19% chose other, while no one chose the option of scary (See Appendix A1).

17 subjects took part in the survey for *Lost*, with 8 of these being musicians, 3 of them film makers, and 6 neither. When asked if they heard any repeated musical elements, only one of the 17 partakers felt they didn't. Posed with the question 'which musical element did you feel represented the mother and son?' 59% voted piano, 35% chose Windchimes and bells, 6% chose strings while no one chose the 'other' option. Asked which musical element they felt represented the monster, 53% chose strings while 47% chose the windchimes and bells, no participants felt the piano or other options represented this character. When asked if they heard any transformation (changes) with the piano through the course of the film, 59% chose no while 41% felt they did. Lastly, when asked if they felt the music was unnatural or set outside of reality or set in reality, 100% of subjects felt it was set outside of reality (See Appendix A2).

There were 20 participants in the *Lost Lane United* survey, with 10 of those being musicians, 3 being film makers, and 7 which were neither. Asked after viewing both clips which element they felt represented the two characters, 85% were in favour of woodwind, 15% felt the synths did, and no subjects chose piano or other. When asked what feeling the woodwind evoked, 50% of subjects chose the feeling of hope, 25% picked happiness, a further 20% chose other and 5% chose sadness. The next question posed to the group was 'does this music make you think there will be a positive outcome for the couple?' with 95% choosing yes, and the other 5% choosing no. Asked whether they noticed any differences in the timbre of the instruments between the two scenes, 70% chose yes, while the other 30% chose no (See Appendix A3).

16

Thematic analysis is the chosen form for the evaluation of the results. This method of analysis is ideal given the use of surveys in this experiment, and the requirement to interpret the subject groups responses in the context of this project. An approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (Braun and Clarke) will be utilised in order to asses this data. Their concept of 'coding' the data and condensing them into themes is a method which can be used in this analysis. The approach involves collecting the responses left by the subject group, and answers which show a connection to a particular theme are grouped together. Thematic analysis can be criticised due to its subjective nature, however due to the compositions having a framework for the themes chosen, it is still best fit for this experiment. The themes which have been informed by the framework from this project are:

- 'Emotive Leitmotif'.
- 'Character Leitmotif'.
- 'Devices from composers'.

These themes were informed during the composition portion of the project, with particular responses expected from the subject group, this aspect means the approach taken is deductive.[11] A latent approach[12] (Caulfield) will also be utilised in order for this experiment to prove fruitful.

Analysis of 'Hachiko'

Analysing the results from *Hachiko*, as the majority of subjects felt the music guided them through the story, Randy Newman's concept of treating the music like a narrator is an effective tool in film scoring, as it can accompany the audience through various different stages of emotion, this falls under the theme of 'devices from composers'. The main piano theme providing the majority of participants with the feeling of joy was the desired outcome, as the main theme is played whenever Hachiko is content or happy. Some important points which came from participants who selected the 'other' option were:

- 'All the above at different stages in the film', showing that the concept of thematic transformation was utilised effectively'.
- 'Both joyful and sad at different parts of the film'.

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[11] A deductive approach involves coming to the data with some preconceived themes you expect to find reflected there, based on theory or existing knowledge.
[12] A latent approach involves reading into the subtext and assumptions underlying the data.

- 'Music reflected the visuals, happiness, sadness, threat etc so there was more than one emotion as such'.

Interestingly these last two points were made by film makers, who noticed both the use of the music as a guide, as well as thematic transformation having an effect on a viewer. These responses fall under the theme of 'emotive leitmotif'.

This theme is expanded upon further through the next question where 71% of subjects noticed changes in the main theme through the course of the film. The main differences that were noticed were that the main theme progressively got sadder throughout the piece, while some noticed the use of different motifs. Musicians would frequently refer to the changes with musical terminology, with subjects giving their thoughts such as:

- 'Different motifs played depending on the situation on the screen, i.e the man bringing the dog food'.
- 'Key changes and sequences'.
- 'Changing to minor notes or slightly different ideas in between transitions points in the short film'.

In contrast to this, those subjects from non-musical or film making backgrounds who noticed any changes, would refer to them based more on the emotions themselves rather than the compositional devices implemented, for example:

- 'Joyful at the start tense in the middle and sad at the end'.
- 'Got sadder'.

The majority of subjects feeling the middle was suspenseful and the end melancholic re affirms Thomas Newman's theory of 'suspense vs melancholy', and how having both work together can have an effect of the audience, without the suspenseful build in the middle of the film, the melancholic resolve wouldn't have been as impactful. Regarding the thoughts about the final section of the film, those who chose 'other' said:

- '50/50 he misses his owner but can only get to him in his dreams'.
- 'Freeing'.
- 'If with final, you mean the last 10 seconds, I'd say happy. If it's the last minute minus the last scene, I'd say melancholic'.

Deducting the results of *Lost*, the majority of participants noticed the piano as the musical element which was repeated the most, with the next nearest being the bells. As before, the majority of those who did not notice were neither musicians or film makers, with musicians able to understand the compositional devices being implemented, stating they noticed elements such as:

- 'Piano theme at start and end'
- 'The piano motif at beginning and near the end, returning drones/ chimes'
- 'Piano melody at start and end'

The bulk of subjects feeling the piano represented the mother and son is a successful result, with the theme appearing three times throughout the film, with each time being at a different point in the pairs journey through the hospital, this is an effective example of the theme of 'character leitmotif'. However, there was a lack of clarity between the chimes and bells and the strings representing the monster which doesn't adhere to the plan laid out. The chimes were supposed to be the strongest link to the monster but this was not evident enough in the music. When asked if they noticed any changes in the piano theme, only five subjects noticed the darker tonality of the motif when the monster appeared, meaning perhaps this composition device was too subtle, especially since the majority of those who noticed were musicians, who made statements such as:

- 'Discordant during the monster bits, more gentle generally'
- 'More dissonance when the monster appeared. But this could have been chimes and bells though'
- Starting rather inconspicuously before entering the lift, the theme becomes darker as 'the monster approaches'

The last question proved positive as all participants felt the music was unnatural, with Brian Reitzel's idea of having horror music be set in 'a heightened state of reality', being an essential tool in the composition of *Lost*, also tying into the theme of 'devices from composers'.

Analysis of 'Lost Lane United'

Looking towards the reactions from the *Lost Lane United* survey, the greater part of subjects chose the woodwind as the element which best represented the two characters, which is in

line with the motive for this piece of music and 'character leitmotif'. Tying into this, 'emotive leitmotif' and 'devices from composers', is the next question regarding the feeling which the woodwind evoked, where the majority of participants chose hope. This was the desired emotion the woodwind was to represent, taking inspiration from Nicholas Brittel's idea of using melodic contour to achieve desired emotional effects, in particular his technique of using upwards melody to convey the feeling of hope. The 'other' options that were said were, 'giddiness', 'melancholy', 'love', and 'anticipation'. A downfall of the composition of the film is evident through the next question, 'does this music make you think there will be a positive outcome for the couple?' The intention was for the music to have an underlying darkness to it in order to insinuate that the couple's relationship won't last, however this wasn't achieved as the vast majority of the subjects felt it was a positive outcome awaiting the couple.

In terms of how the timbre of the instruments changed between scenes, based on Jon Brion's work and on the theme of 'devices from composers', the majority of subjects heard a change, however nearly all of these were musicians and film makers. A lot of the terminology used to describe the change in sounds was musical, with participants sharing thoughts such as:

- 'In the night club scene the kind of glistening woodwind sounds gave a greater scene of hope I felt and the change worked really well the timbre changed gradually and with the timbre change it evoked more of a connection for the viewer'
- 'Change in octave to evoke more emotion'.
- 'Music got fuller in the 2nd scene, more bass and other percussive elements'

While film makers would analyse the scenes emotionally and in terms of the narrative:

- 'The second scene the music was fuller, it the first scene it didn't sound as hopeful as there was less of a dramatic build up, it also sounded softer in the second scene'.
- 'I think in the first scene, the timbre evoked a sense of expectation, more like a flutter, while in the second it seems more rounded'.

This may show that film makers and composers can latch onto elements with more ease, and notice these changes in the music and narrative better than the average film goer.

Discussion

There are multiple key points which can be taken from the results of this experiment, with many of the desired outcomes set out during the composition of the pieces being achieved, and with them some fascinating insights into how audiences perceive music in film, and how effective different compositional devices are.

Overall, it appears the use of leitmotif and the concepts applied from established composers were successful when it comes to the composition of *Hachiko*. The subjects took note of the emotional progression of the piece as it followed the titular character, showing the strength in applying thematic transformation as way to portray the emotions and the characters on screen. As well as this the concepts used by Randy and Thomas Newman were both effective in achieving the desired outcome from the composition of *Hachiko*, including writing music in 'primary colours' in order to portray emotions, which proved effective with the majority of subjects connecting the main theme with the feeling of joy, with his other technique of utilising 'suspense vs melancholy' also proving to be an important tool.

In *Lost*, the use of character leitmotif was not as strong as in the previous film regarding the monster, with the lesser part of the subject group feeling that the chimes and bells represented this character. However the piano evoking the mother and son character proved to be successful and participants did notice a change in this theme as the film progressed, with John Carpenter's work on *Halloween* informing the notes which were used when the tension rose. Implementing Brian Reitzel's idea of having music in a 'heightened state of reality' also proved to be an effective tool in the composition.

Discussing the *Lost Lane United* survey, character leitmotif was successfully implemented into the composition with the majority connecting the woodwind to the lead characters, as well as with the feeling of hope, a compositional choice informed by Nicholas Brittels work, showing effective use of composers techniques into the score. Including aspects of Jon Brion's work also proved fruitful as using timbre to portray characters inner emotions was effective in its execution. The idea of 'playing counter to the image', (Green) however was not successful in giving the audience the feeling that the couple's relationship would not last.

A key point which comes from the research in the literature review is the strength of leitmotif in film composing. The age old technique, which has become less common through the years due to the growth of a more tactile approach to film music, is extremely effective in guiding the audience through a films narrative and accenting it's emotional beats. Leitmotif can

connect an audience audibly to a character, working together with the action on screen to build an association with the characters, the results from the survey back up this approach with many participants being able to associate musical elements to chosen characters, thus this concept is a strong tool for the composer in order to influence the viewer in the direction which they desire.

Another important aspect of Leitmotif is that it can portray the emotions on screen through music, and work to support the direction the films want to lean the audience into emotionally. Whether it's hope or fear, implanting strong use of emotive leitmotif can push the audience towards the composers vision and guide them through the narrative. Through the course of the survey, many participants were able to take note of and attribute particular compositional choices with the desired emotions the composer wished to make them feel.

It was found that taking inspiration from leading composers, and implementing their own specific techniques is an effective tool in order to influence the audience and improve the composers compositional skills. Both with use of musical devices and timbre, taking on the ideas that proven film composers utilise in their own scores can expand the composers creations and achieve desired effects from the initial plan in the writing stage.

A finding from the project which proved interesting was the difference in results between musicians, film makers, and those who are neither. The terminology used by musicians would step into the realm of music theory, using key words such as 'motif' and 'dissonance', perhaps indicating that musicians see and hear film music differently, with their thought process leading away from the emotion of the pieces and more towards the technical elements included. On the contrary, film makers were able to grasp the emotions the music was set out to portray, and would use emotive language like 'joyful', or 'sadder', as well as having deeper insights on the narrative of the films. Those who were neither found it the most difficult to connect themes to characters and emotions, although there was still a majority who were able. Especially concerning the questions including the emotive leitmotifs, there was greater success than the character leitmotif, showing that due to a lack of musical or film background they can't connect melodic techniques to characters and the action on screen, but the overall feel and harmonic quality of the music is easier for them to connect with.

Conclusion

This project aimed to explore what techniques film composers can exploit in order to extract desired responses from the films audience. These techniques included the age old concept of leitmotif, and explored deeper aspects of this such as character leitmotif and emotive leitmotif. Through carefully chosen resources including journal articles from experts in this field, leitmotif and its strengths were explored and implemented into the composition of three different films. In addition to this, compositional devices used by leading film composers were researched, and these were also utilised in the composition of the scores for the three films. Through the use of surveys, whether all of these techniques were effective tools in the compositions was recorded, and analysed using the basis of thematic analysis, which informed the strength of the analysis put forward.

It was deducted through these surveys that these techniques by in large were effective in achieving desired emotional responses from the subject group. The majority of responses were in favour of what the composer set out to achieve from implementing strong leitmotif, and employing ideas put forward from leading composers in the field.

In terms of how the experiment could be improved, having the subject groups for each film have more consistency would have been ideal, as it would lead to stronger results. If the project were able to be developed further, being able to record responses in person and in an enclosed environment would also lead to a better viewing experience, it was not as feasible as sending the surveys electronically as there would have been far less participants, and there wouldn't have been a wider group to record. However given the resources, the subjects being in a viewing space for the films before taking the survey would benefit the project.

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Appendix A

A1- *Hachiko* survey

https://forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPageV2.aspx?subpage=design&FormId=e5V92hEVQk

qy9Xj4R_jIegrYmUfkf5ZEusoamIY6XgFUQUQyOVNKN0IzUDFSVDdVS1RSVjFJMzFQ

TS4u&Token=de4a2962a0144838ac7cfd1359a343bc

A2 – *Lost* survey

https://forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPageV2.aspx?subpage=design&FormId=e5V92hEVQk
qy9Xj4R_jIegrYmUfkf5ZEusoamIY6XgFUQUxFS0pGRlFWRTFYQjlCT1YwTTk2Wk1X
Mi4u&Token=cecc6f438c4146dfbbc7c7a537e91522

A3 – *Love Lane United* survey

https://forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPageV2.aspx?subpage=design&FormId=e5V92hEVQk
qy9Xj4R_jIegrYmUfkf5ZEusoamIY6XgFUQzFMVElGRlpPREczTjZCU1VSMlZUQzRYN
i4u&Token=0d606a2b092746d7ac590f44c17d7c69