

GAME X FILM MUSIC: A STUDY OF *FINAL FANTASY*'S  
EMPLOYMENT OF FILM MUSIC TECHNIQUES

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by

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The video game industry has grown immensely since the advent of home video game consoles. “Over the past three years, video game sales have overtaken film sales, with video and Blu-ray sales dropping by 6 percent to US \$29 billion while video game sales rose 20 percent to US \$32 billion in 2008.”<sup>1</sup> With the rise in video games, video game music’s popularity has also spread: “The video game industry, projected to be worth US \$68 billion (S \$99 billion) by 2012, has given rise to a new demographic of music fans – gamers who dig the tunes coming out of their favourite video games.”<sup>2</sup> Orchestral concerts of video game music have become more frequent; they may include music from such series as *Metal Gear* and *Final Fantasy*.<sup>3</sup> As a growing force in the music scene, video game music contributes to gamers’ interest in video games, which contributes to the sales for video games.

The roleplaying video game genre series *Final Fantasy* is one of the most popular in the world, having sold over 60 million copies collectively between 1987 and

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<sup>1</sup> “Games Bigger Hit Than Films,” *The West Australian*, December 26, 2011, MAI section, First Edition.

<sup>2</sup> Eddino Abdul Hadi, “Tune in to Video Games; Video Gamers Are Not Just Playing, But Also Attending Concerts of the Music Featured in Games,” *The Straits Times*, June 19, 2009, LIFE! – LIFE MUSIC section.

<sup>3</sup> Rachael Boon, “Gamers Play to Live Music; At the Video Games Live Concert, Gamers Will Get to Play on a Giant Screen to the Accompaniment of a Full Orchestra,” *The Straits Times*, April 23, 2009, LIFE! – LIFE ARTS section.



2004.<sup>4</sup> The composer for most of the series, Nobuo Uematsu, has gained a large audience, particularly in Japan from where he hails.<sup>5</sup> Deborah Borda, the president of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, likened Nobuo Uematsu's work to a "well-made film score."<sup>6</sup> By taking a closer look at the music of *Final Fantasy*, this thesis suggests that Borda may be right in comparing it to films.

### 1.1 Literature Overview

Zachary Whalen, in his thesis "Play Along: Video Game Music as Metaphor and Metonymy," mentions the term "ludology."<sup>7</sup> Ludology, as defined by the *Oxford Dictionary*, is "the study of games and gaming, especially video games," which focuses on the actions and events of the games.<sup>8</sup> "Ludological" music theory has yet to be established as an academic field; the tools to study video game music are lacking. The related field of film theory or film music theory may offer assistance, but to this point, few scholars have connected them.

Though some scholars have written books or articles about video game music, there remains only one scholarly work written from a music theorist's perspective: Jason Brame's masters thesis "Examining Non-Linear Forms: Techniques for the Analysis of

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<sup>4</sup> Matthew Mirapaul, "Video Fantasy Replaces Mozart (But Who's Keeping Score?)," *The New York Times*, May 10, 2004, Section E; Column 4; The Arts/Cultural Desk, Late Edition – Final.

<sup>5</sup> Mirapaul.

<sup>6</sup> Mirapaul.

<sup>7</sup> Zachary Whalen, "Play Along: Video Game Music as Metaphor and Metonymy," Master's thesis (University of Florida, 2004), 1.

<sup>8</sup> Oxford Dictionaries: The World's Most Trusted Dictionaries, "Definition of ludology," Oxford Dictionaries Online, [http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/american\\_english/ludology?region=us&q=ludology/](http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/american_english/ludology?region=us&q=ludology/) (accessed November 28, 2011).

Scores Found in Video Games.”<sup>9</sup> Video game scholar Karen Collins has written three books about video game sound: *From Pac-Man to Pop Music* (2008), *Game Sound* (2008), and *A Bang, A Whimper, and A Beat* (2011). GameSound.org, a site dedicated to archiving works written about interactive sound in games, features ten articles on their site and seventy-one articles on their external curated articles page. Many of these articles are written from an industrial point of view or from the world of film or literary theory. They often address sound, but rarely do they tackle the actual music. As an example, one of the articles, “In The Know: Voice Over in *Flash Gordon*, *Star Wars*, *The Big Lebowski* and *Alan Wake*” by Kenneth Young, describes using scrolling text or voice over narrative at the beginning of movies as “cheesy and lazy” in the films *Flash Gordon*, *Star Wars*, and *The Big Lebowski*.<sup>10</sup> After establishing this, Young critiques the video game *Alan Wake* in the same manner. One collection titled *Screenplay* does tackle the connection of video games to film, presenting a collection of essays written about “games-in-the-light-of-cinema.”<sup>11</sup> The essays, including “Watching a Game, Playing a Movie: When Media Collide” by Sacha A. Howells and “Run Lara Run” by Margit Grieb, pertain to visual elements shared by both film and video games, presenting no music theoretical analysis.

In the few articles, theses, or books that do exist on video games and touch on music, ludology scholars so far have focused on differences between film musics and video game musics. Karen Collins, in her book *Game Sound*, stresses the disparity

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<sup>9</sup> Jason Brame, “Examining Non-Linear Forms: Techniques for the Analysis of Scores Found in Video Games,” Master’s thesis (Texas Tech University, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth Young, “In the Know: Voice Over in *Flash Gordon*, *Star Wars*, *The Big Lebowski* and *Alan Wake*,” Gamesound.org: Sound in Interactive Media, <http://gamesound.org/2010/in-the-know-voice-over-in-flash-gordon-star-wars-the-big-lebowski-alan-wake/> (accessed November 28, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> Geoff King and Tanya Krzywinska, ed. *Screenplay: Cinema/Videogames/Interfaces* (London: Wallflower Press, 2002), 2.

between film music and video game music production: “It is important to note that there are specific differences in the production processes between film and games that impact the final sound of the game.”<sup>12</sup> Most video game scholars emphasize the random order of possible events in video games lending further to the difference from the linear form of films. Highlighting this deviation from film, Collins dedicates a chapter of *Game Sound* to nonlinearity in video games: “The most significant problem facing game composers is the nonlinear basis of games... games are largely unpredictable in terms of the direction the player may take, and the timings involved.”<sup>13</sup>

Karen Collin’s first book about video game music is *From Pac-Man to Pop Music*, which covers a brief history of video games from the arcade to the home console and computer. She focuses on the evolution of the interactive multimedia technology and the cultural inclusion of popular music in video games. Her second book, *Game Sound: An Introduction to the History, Theory and Practice of Video Game Music and Sound Design*, focuses on the interactivity feature of video games touching on immersion, the production of game audio, and the technological constraints on video game sound. She occasionally includes transcriptions of some video game scores, but uses industry terms to describe the music. Like her first book, Collins focuses primarily on technology in *Game Sound*. In her most recent book, *A Bang, A Whimper, and A Beat: Industrial Music and Dystopia*, Collins examines the industry’s concept of dystopian aesthetic. In all three books, Collins does not utilize music theory methods to explore the audio in video games.

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<sup>12</sup> Karen Collins, *Game Sound: An Introduction to the History, Theory, and Practice of Video Game Music and Sound Design* (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2008), 105.

<sup>13</sup> Collins, 142.

Despite emphasizing the differences between video games and film, Collins promotes film music analytical methods when examining video game music: “there are theories and discussions drawn from film studies throughout [*Game Sound*], as there are certainly some similarities between film and games.”<sup>14</sup> While establishing similarities, she does not follow up on them; Collins focuses her study on the differences, perhaps to bring attention to the budding video game music field.

Like Collins, Jason Brame points towards a disparity between video game music theory and film music theory. Brame also notes within his introduction that there “is a lack of theoretical tools available to aptly analyze the scores to video games.”<sup>15</sup> Brame invents one tool, presenting a method for analyzing video game scores using real-time game score graphs (RTGSGs) and music object relation graphs (MORGs) in his thesis “Examining Non-Linear Forms: Techniques for the Analysis of Scores Found in Video Games.”<sup>16</sup> With these graphs Brame provides a method for tracing music events that occur when certain programmed triggers are met. Mentioning that video games differ from film in that they are non-linear while films are linear, the graphs are specifically created for and applied to video game music’s non-linear attribute. Like Collins, Brame focuses on how video games are different, but he does use tools from music theory, including Schenkerian-like analytical graphs. His primary topic, however, is the graphs, which essentially show the form of how all music of a game may flow from one piece to another.

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<sup>14</sup> Collins, 5.

<sup>15</sup> Brame, 1.

<sup>16</sup> Jason Brame, “Examining Non-Linear Forms: Techniques for the Analysis of Scores Found in Video Games,” Master’s thesis (Texas Tech University, 2009), 26 – 29.

An earlier scholar of video game music, Zachary Whalen presents a study of video game music through the terms “metaphor” and “metonymy” in his thesis “Play Along: Video Game Music as Metaphor and Metonymy.”<sup>17</sup> Whalen makes note of the similarities between film music and video game music, but also stresses that the interactivity aspect of video games makes video game music different from other multimedia. While using some film music theory terms –diegetic and nondiegetic–most of his analysis comes from literary theory. He uses the terms “metaphor” and “metonymy” to show the difference between the video game music’s correlation to the game’s “story” (providing mood, characterization) and the game’s “mechanics,” or rules (suggesting when an enemy is approaching).

Scholars who do touch on video games and music – Collins, Brame, and Whalen – may mention film music, but focus on how video games are different. It is important to mention the non-linearity of video games. The audience for film watches from beginning to end with no interruptions while the player of video games has the option to revisit certain places during the course of the narrative in any order (with limitations depending on narrative progress). There are also differences in technology: video game music is programmed, may have quality limits depending on the console, and can loop. Video game music also includes the additional function of “rewarding” the player with music signaling the achieved goal.<sup>18</sup>

In order to study video game music, one must be aware of the terminology of video games and these differences from other multimedia. But even with the disparity between video games and film, there is no reason to reinvent the wheel. As analytical

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<sup>17</sup> Zach Whalen, “Play Along: Video Game Music as Metaphor and Metonymy,” Master’s thesis (University of Florida, 2004), 2.

<sup>18</sup> Whalen, 3.

techniques and terminology originally designed for film music have been used for other multimedia, like television shows and commercials, there is no reason these tools should not be imported for use with video game music if they prove applicable. Visual and musical similarities between narrative film music and role-playing video games (RPGs, defined later in this chapter) exist, and because of these similarities, one may apply film music terminology to the study of RPG video game music. Using the *Final Fantasy* series as a test case, this thesis demonstrates that video games borrow both visual and musical conventions from films: opening title forms, leitmotifs, and style topics.

## 1.2 Terms and Methods

This thesis references many video game industry-accepted terms, which must be defined in order to approach video game music studies. Since this thesis covers video game music through tools provided by film music studies, film music terms must also be recognized. The following paragraphs define terms crucial to this study.

As the closest element of video games to film, the “cut-scene” is a set short movie that progresses the story or provides cinematic information about the narrative past.<sup>19</sup> There are three types of cut-scenes: “full-motion video,” “computer-graphic,” and “in-game.” The “full-motion video” (FMV) is a cut-scene that includes live-action actors assuming the roles of the game characters generally with computer-rendered environments.<sup>20</sup> “Computer-graphic” (CG) cut-scenes are produced by computer artists

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<sup>19</sup> Whalen, 4.

<sup>20</sup> Geoff King and Tanya Krzywinska, ed. *Screenplay: Cinema/Videogames/Interfaces* (London: Wallflower Press, 2002), 114.

and animators using more powerful renderings than seen while playing the game.<sup>21</sup> The last version is an in-game cut-scene that uses “the graphics and physics engine that powers the game itself.”<sup>22</sup>

The games analyzed in this thesis are of the role-playing game (RPG) video game genre, a genre in which the player (the individual playing the video game) controls a set of predetermined characters that progress in level and ability within a narrative. The characters that are directly controlled by the player are known as “playable characters,” or PCs. The *Final Fantasy* series of RPGs normally contain different modes of gameplay throughout the game: the “field map,” the “world map,” and “battle.” The “field map” is a general term used for any map in which the player can explore with the PC. The “field map” (usually the same as world map) generally has a designated character model used to explore the environment. The “world map” includes a controllable “world map” character model to travel across the world to specific locations (different “field maps”), usually cities – the world map is usually not proportional with the used character model. Additionally, RPGs feature occasionally stronger or more challenging enemies known as “bosses,” usually found at the end of “dungeons.” The term “dungeon” refers to a narrative “field map” in which the player must use the party of PCs to survive “random encounters” and puzzle elements in the dungeon to progress. A “random encounter” is a battle mode event that occurs by chance according to programmed predetermined percent

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<sup>21</sup> King and Krzywinska, ed., 115.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

chances triggered by “each step” of the player character model. When examining older video game graphics, a term for the pixilated characters is “sprite.”<sup>23</sup>

Film music theory terms are also used within this thesis. These terms include diegetic, nondiegetic, “mickey-mousing,” leitmotif, and style topics. All of these terms, with the exception of diegetic and nondiegetic, are explained further in subsequent chapters. Diegetic refers to music that exists within the film narrative’s world, i.e. the characters within the narrative are aware of the music’s existence.<sup>24</sup> Nondiegetic refers to music that exists outside of the film narrative’s world, i.e., only the audience is aware of the music.<sup>25</sup>

Striving for an organized approach to video game music theory in the RPG video game genre, this thesis utilizes music theoretical analysis to compare film and videogames’ use of title music, leitmotifs, and style topics. The following chapter discusses narrative films and the *Final Fantasy* series’ use of title music and the opening visuals. The next chapter provides a comparison of leitmotifs in film and videogames including themes for groups of characters, individual character themes, love themes, and themes for entire series. Finally, Chapter 4 describes how both films and videogames employ musical style topics including the heroic style topic, the Native American style topic, and the clumsy character style topic.

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<sup>23</sup> “Sprite: a computer graphic that may be moved on-screen and otherwise manipulated as a single entity.” *Oxford Dictionaries*. <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/sprite?region=us&q=sprite/> (accessed May 2, 2012)

<sup>24</sup> Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (London: The British Film Institute, 1987), 33.

<sup>25</sup> Gorbman, 33.



## CHAPTER 2: OPENINGS

The music composed for film titles sets the stage for the audience, acting as a transition from our “real” world to the diegetic film world.<sup>26</sup> As film practices evolved, so did opening visual and musical styles. Certain opening types became conventions, including the overture form and popular song. The classical Hollywood overture derived from opera and theater.<sup>27</sup> As an example of the popular song opening, the *James Bond* series opens with colorful silhouettes of semi-nude women and guns dissolving into other images of the James Bond world. The music that accompanies the *James Bond* openings resembles popular song from the time the movie was made; for example, *Live and Let Die* (1973) features opening music written and performed by Paul McCartney.

Video games emulate film openings visually and musically. They often borrow film title conventions, referencing a specific film or an entire film genre. Games like *Final Fantasy* (1987) follow the overture example put forward by films like *Star Wars* (1977), while today, games like *Uncharted* (2007) follow narrative formats found in adventure films such as *Indiana Jones* (1981). This chapter presents the title sequences’ visual and musical similarities between films and video games including *Star Wars* (1977) and *Final Fantasy* (FF, 1987) and *Final Fantasy VIII* (FF8, 1999) and Spaghetti

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<sup>26</sup> James Buhler, *Hearing the Movies: Music and Sound in Film History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 165.

<sup>27</sup> Buhler, 165.

Westerns. First, this chapter describes film openings with text or aural narrative expositions starting with silent film. Second, this chapter demonstrates the text narrative exposition and ABA musical form similarities between *Star Wars* and *FF*. Finally, this chapter compares Western openings from *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (GBU, 1966) and *The Wild Bunch* (1969) with *FF8*'s opening credits.

## 2.1 Text and Openings

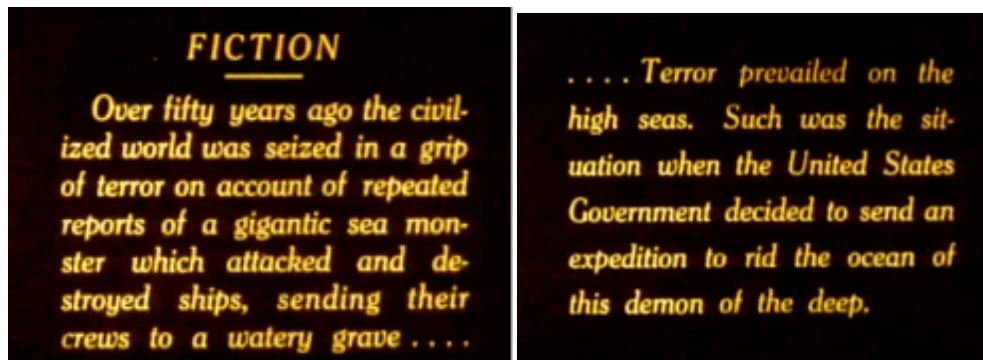
Before talkies, silent films relied on intertitles to present narrative exposition to the audience.<sup>28</sup> This included explanatory text and written dialogue. These films began with text to help the audience understand the setting. The music underscoring the text set the stage and mood for the narrative: “music removes barriers to belief; it bonds spectator to spectacle, it envelops spectator and spectacle in a harmonious space.”<sup>29</sup> *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1916), directed by Stuart Paton, provides a good example of starting film with text to set the stage. Based on the novel, the film perhaps required the text to prepare the audience for its “fantasy” world. Example 2.1.1 shows screenshots of the opening text.

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<sup>28</sup> Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1987), 43.

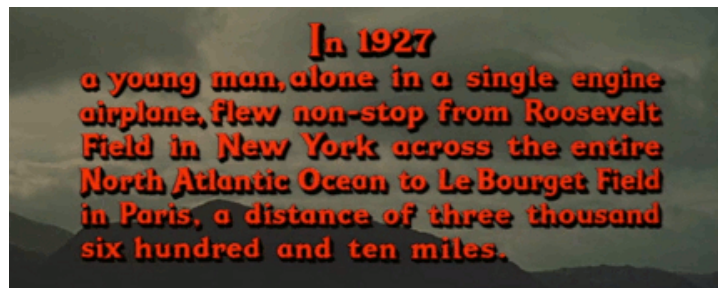
<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

**Example 2.1.1: *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (00:01:41; 00:02:04)<sup>30</sup>**



While silent film progressed to “talkies” many epic and fantasy films continued to begin their story with narration. This expositional information could now be expressed through voiceover as well as through written word. As an example, Billy Wilder’s *The Spirit of Saint Louis* (1957), with music by Franz Waxman, presents narrative text to begin the movie immediately after the title credits (see Example 2.1.2).

**Example 2.1.2: *Spirit of Saint Louis* Opening Text (00:01:35)<sup>31</sup>**



<sup>30</sup> Stuart Paton, dir., DVD, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1916, Universal Film Manufacturing Company, 2008).

<sup>31</sup> Billy Wilder, dir., DVD, *The Spirit of St. Louis* (1957; Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., 2006).

An example of vocal narrative exposition, the film *Princess Bride* (1988), directed by Rob Reiner with music by Mark Knopfler, opens with a grandfather narrating the fantasy's opening lines to his grandson; Example 2.1.3 provides a screenshot.

**Example 2.1.3: *Princess Bride*; Grandfather reads grandson a fantasy story**

**(00:01:57)<sup>32</sup>**



2.2 *Star Wars* and *Final Fantasy*: Openings

Like film directors, video game developers seek to tell stories through their RPGs, and they utilize familiar methods from film. To entice their players to play, they immerse the player into the story's universe through opening cut scenes, short videos in which the player has no interaction. Most RPG openings consist of these pre-rendered computer-graphic movie clips (CG).<sup>33</sup> With no player interaction, these cut scenes are much like film.

The first *Final Fantasy* (1987, *FF*), with music by Nobuo Uematsu, was created for the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES). As with silent film's lack of voice, this

<sup>32</sup> Rob Reiner, dir., DVD, *The Princess Bride* (1987; Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios Inc., 2007).

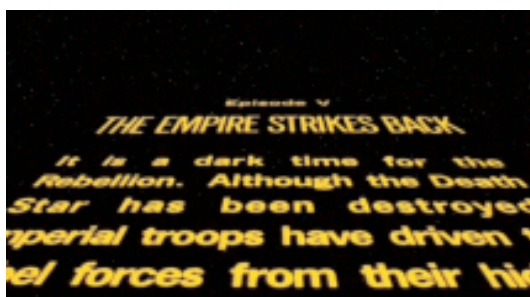
<sup>33</sup> Sacha A. Howells, "Watching a Game, Playing a Movie: When Media Collide," in *ScreenPlay: Cinema/Videogames/Interfaces*, ed. Geoff King and Tanya Krzywinska (London: Wallflower Press, 2002), 114-115.

home console system did not often project live-recorded sounds since it only had a 1-bit short sampler.<sup>34</sup> Instead, the NES system relied on built-in MIDI for all sound effects and music. The only way to tell a specific story quickly through this medium required text. The first RPG games used title cue cards similar to those from silent film as shown in Example 2.1.1.

While early video games' opening intertitles may resemble silent film, video games' later arrival allowed video game creators to also borrow later film techniques for their openings. The first *Final Fantasy* and *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* (*Empire*, 1980) – with music by John Williams – show striking visual and musical similarities. As you can see in Example 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, both *Empire* and *FF* borrow the silent film technique of beginning with narrative text to immerse the viewer/player in their story worlds. Both texts are light-colored on a darker background and scroll from the bottom of the screen to the top.

### Example 2.2.1: *The Empire Strikes Back* Opening Narrative Text Screenshot

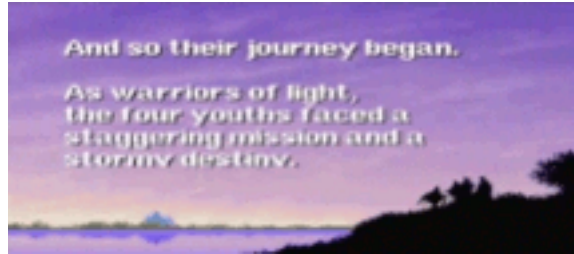
(00:00:57)<sup>35</sup>



<sup>34</sup> Karen Collins, *Game Sound: An Introduction to the History, Theory, and Practice of Video Game Music and Sound Design* (London: The MIT Press, 2008), 25.

<sup>35</sup> Irvin Kershner, dir., DVD, *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back* (1980, Lucasfilm Ltd., 2004).

### Example 2.2.2: *Final Fantasy* Narrative Text Screenshot<sup>36</sup>



In addition to the similar opening visuals of scrolling text, *Empire* and *FF* share musical similarities. Both *Empire*'s and *FF*'s main title themes share an ABA musical form. *FF*'s title occurs after defeating the first boss, a challenging enemy fought at the end of a dungeon, rather than starting the film with the title like *Empire*, but the similarities between *Empire*'s and *FF*'s title music forms are unmistakable.

*Star Wars* opens with a grand orchestral work in ternary form, which separates into three sections: A, B, and a return to A. Example 2.2.3 breaks down each section, showing the start of the melody and the instrumentation. Section A provides the main theme sounding in horns and supported with timpani rhythms. Section B can be identified by a more lyrical theme – played primarily by strings – with significantly less percussion accompaniment.




So, *Empire*'s title music exhibits an ABA form that begins with a militant horn theme, moves to a softer string section, and returns to the main horn theme. As seen in Example 2.2.4, much like *Empire*, *FF*'s title music begins with a main theme A section, moves to a softer B section, and returns again to the main A theme. While horns announce *Empire*'s theme, *FF* doubles horns with strings. The decision to use both horns

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<sup>36</sup> Hironobu Sakaguchi, creator, Square Enix Co., Ltd., PS Video Game, *Final Fantasy* (1987; Infogrames Entertainment, SA, 2003).

and strings for the main melody could arise from the constraints placed upon the Nintendo Entertainment System's (NES) sound capability. According to Collins, the MIDI selection included 128 instruments, though some of these were dedicated to sound effects instead of actual instrument sounds.<sup>37</sup> While *Star Wars* has a full orchestra, *FF* uses the NES MIDI sounds in an attempt to emulate an actual orchestra. Perhaps mixing the MIDI strings and MIDI horns provided a fuller sound than just horns, like the full orchestral sound of a film. Despite this small instrumentation difference, both themes share the same form, basic instrumentation, and even motivic characteristics such as an initial melodic P4 and militant accompaniment. This "heroic" and motivic similarity will be discussed further in Chapter 4, but I will briefly discuss it here.

**Example 2.2.3: *Empire Strikes Back* Opening Form**

<p><b>A</b></p> <p><math>\text{♩} = 104</math></p> <p>Trumpet </p>	<p><b>B</b></p> <p><math>\text{♩} = 104</math></p> <p>Trumpet </p>	<p><b>A</b></p> <p><math>\text{♩} = 104</math></p> <p>Trumpet </p>
<p>Melody: Horns</p> <p>March rhythms</p> <p>Strings/Timpani Accompaniment</p> <p>Brass Fanfare</p> <p>C Major</p>	<p>Melody: Strings</p> <p>Lighter Accompaniment</p> <p>Few Horn Calls</p>	<p>Melody: Horns</p> <p>March rhythms</p> <p>Strings and Timpani Accompaniment</p> <p>Brass Fanfare</p>

<sup>37</sup> Collins, 50.





**Example 2.2.6: *Final Fantasy* Theme, A Section, mm. 1-5**



The B sections of the openings from both *Star Wars* and *Final Fantasy* (the opening five measures are shown in Example 2.2.7 and Example 2.2.8) exhibit a similar phrase structure: a parallel period. The *Star Wars* B section uses the first two measures again in measures 5 and 6. New material is presented in the following measures (not shown in Example 2.2.7). The *Final Fantasy* B section also repeats material from measures 1 and 2 in measures 5 and 6 (measure 6 not shown), though transposed (same rhythms). The measures following the measures shown in Example 2.2.8 of the *Final Fantasy* B section also present new material. Both parallel phrase structures are symmetrical (4 + 4 measures).

**Example 2.2.7: *Star Wars* Theme, B Section, mm. 1-5**



**Example 2.2.8: *Final Fantasy* Theme, B Section, mm. 1-5**



The *FF* main theme carries over into most other *FF* titles and returns as the main theme in *Final Fantasy XII* (*FF12*, 2006). Though each *FF* game is independent, not sharing a story or universe with the other *FFs*, this shared theme creates an identifying force that binds all the games together, similar to how *Star Wars*' main theme relates to all six films, the cartoon series, and video games. While the *Star Wars* theme always opens the movies, the *FF* theme appears in different locations and can most frequently be found during the ending credits instead of as the primary theme for *FF* games. This will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

## 2.3 *Final Fantasy VIII* and Westerns

### 2.31 Western Films

While *FF*'s opening shares musical and visual similarities with *Star Wars*, *Final Fantasy VIII* (*FF8*, 1999) recalls Westerns. Spaghetti Westerns such as *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1966), directed by Sergio Leone with music composed by Ennio Morricone, and *The Wild Bunch* (1969), directed by Sam Peckinpah with music composed by Jerry Fielding, present gritty cowboy stories about gunmen in the lawless west. Most openings in this style use “rotoscoped” animations and still shots from the film. “Rotoscoped” refers to the method of tracing live-action film movements for each

frame, usually with solid colors.<sup>38</sup> For example, *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* opens with still shots of each of the main characters rotoscoped in different colors, resembling faded photos.<sup>39</sup> With this technique, Sergio Leone presents portions of the story's Spaghetti Western universe, setting the stage much as written narrative text does in silent films, *Star Wars*, and *Final Fantasy*. Examples 2.31.1, 2.31.2, and 2.31.3 show a still for each of the good, the bad, and the ugly characters, respectively.

**Example 2.31.1: Clint Eastwood as “The Good” *GBU* Opening Still (00:00:35)**



**Example 2.31.2: “The Bad” (00:00:56)**



**Example 2.31.3: “The Ugly” (00:00:57)**



<sup>38</sup> Emily Anne Kausalik, “A Fistful of Drama: Musical Form in the *Dollars* Trilogy,” Master’s thesis (Bowling Green State University, 2008), 24.

<sup>39</sup> Sergio Leone, dir., DVD, *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1966; Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., 2006).

During this visual onslaught of shots from the film, Spaghetti Western music plays. The main theme is heard in three different ways: with a soprano recorder (flute-like wind instrument), an “ah” vocalization, and a bass ocarina (a clay flute).<sup>40</sup> Example 2.31.4 shows the melody for the opening phrase with the soprano recorder and the vocalized “ah” in tenor. After this theme is presented, a drumbeat ostinato plays for the remainder of this opening. This beat resembles a film cliché Native American drumbeat, which is discussed further in Chapter 4. This drumbeat ostinato features three quarter notes followed by two eighth notes per measure at a moderate tempo (shown in Example 2.31.5).

**Example 2.31.4: *GBU* Opening Theme**

Example 2.31.4 shows the melody for the opening phrase with the soprano recorder and the vocalized “ah” in tenor. The notation is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 116. The Soprano Recorder part consists of five measures, each containing a quarter note followed by an eighth rest, with a dotted quarter note on the fifth measure. The Tenor part consists of five measures, each containing a quarter note followed by an eighth rest, with a dotted quarter note on the fifth measure. The notes are: Soprano Recorder (G4, A4, B4, C5, D5) and Tenor (G3, A3, B3, C4, D4).

**Example 2.31.5: *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* Bass Drum Ostinato**

Example 2.31.5 shows the bass drum ostinato. The notation is in 4/4 time with a tempo of 116. The pattern consists of three quarter notes followed by two eighth notes, repeated four times. The notes are: Bass Drum (G2, A2, B2, C3, D3).

<sup>40</sup> Kausalik, 44.

As the opening progresses, the music gradually adds more instruments including brass, strings, and a snare drum. The snare drum compliments the steady Native American beat with a rhythm, shown in Example 2.31.6, that resembles a galloping horse or a military beat.

**Example 2.31.6: Snare Drum Addition for *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly***



This modification continues until the opening's end and the film's narrative beginning.

Constant accompanying percussion seems to be common for Spaghetti Westerns; other examples include *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964) and *The Wild Bunch* (1969). As you can see from Examples 2.31.7, 2.31.8, and 2.31.9, *The Wild Bunch*, like *GBU*, also include rotoscoped character images, though it is rotoscoped strictly in black and white. *The Wild Bunch* features a military snare drum during the opening sequence. Example 2.31.10 shows the snare drum entrance rhythms. The faster rhythms are sixteenth triplets that resemble the militant drum rolls. These triplets lead directly into a drum roll, which occurs simultaneously with the movie title in the opening. When not playing triplet figures, the snare drum plays simple quarter or eighth beats in common meter. While not an ostinato, the drum rhythms are variants to the entrance triplet rhythms, shown in Example 2.31.10.

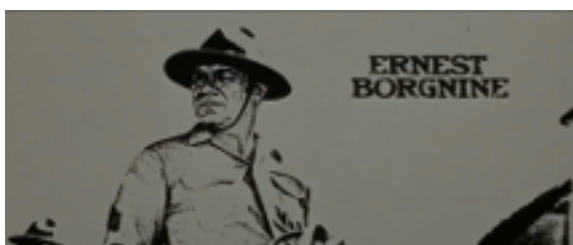
**Example 2.31.7: *The Wild Bunch* Opening Still Title (00:00:36)<sup>41</sup>**



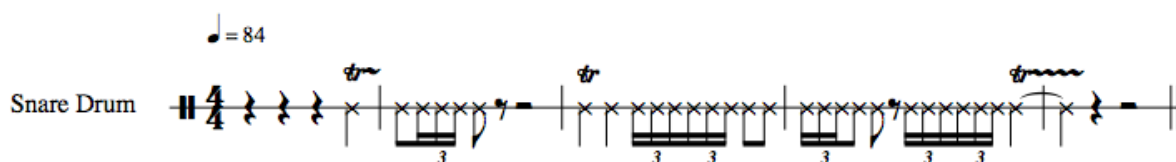
**Example 2.31.8: William Holden Credits Shot (00:00:58)**



**Example 2.31.9: Ernest Borgnine Credits Shot (00:01:09)**



**Example 2.31.10: *The Wild Bunch* Snare Drum**



A common visual element of Western films, both in *GBU* and *The Wild Bunch*, is the cowboy persona. Most characters in Westerns wear a cowboy hat, a leather belt, and hang a leather gun holster at their hip. Also, they frequently wear jackets, pants, boots,

<sup>41</sup> Sam Peckinpah, dir., DVD, *The Wild Bunch* (1969; Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., 2006).

and sometimes gloves. Most gun holster belts hang diagonally on the character's hip as seen in *The Wild Bunch* in Example 2.31.11.

**Example 2.31.11: *The Wild Bunch* Gun Holster (00:18:16)**



*Shanghai Noon* (2000), also features Western visual themes.<sup>42</sup> Example 2.31.12 shows the bandit gang in *Shanghai Noon*. This gang features the diagonally-hanging gun holsters and leather ammo belts across the chest as well. The middle gang member features his hip belts crossed, with two gun holsters across his chest.

**Example 2.31.12: Roy O'Bannon's Former Bandit Gang (01:41:08)**



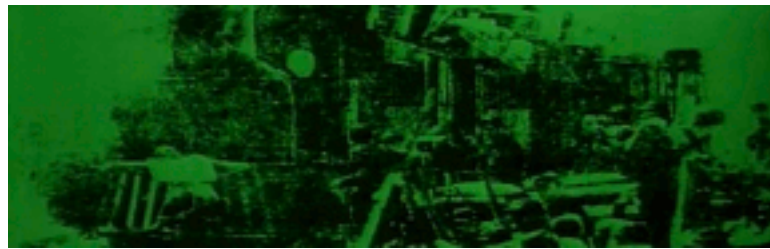
Like leather belts and revolvers, another image common to many Westerns is trains. A common transportation device for the Western world, trains go directly through

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<sup>42</sup> Tom Dey, dir., DVD, *Shanghai Noon* (Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2000).

towns and sometimes appear in the open plains as the only sign of civilization. Examples 2.31.13 and 2.31.14 show stills of the train from *GBU* and the train tracks as the “wild bunch” trots into town. Example 2.31.15 shows a still of the train Roy O’Bannon decides to rob at the beginning of the *Shanghai Noon*. Revolvers, trains, hanging or crossed leather belts, and cowboy hats are all frequent visual elements in Western films.

**Example 2.31.13: Train Still in *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (00:02:25)**



**Example 2.31.14: Train Tracks in *The Wild Bunch* Opening (00:01:20)**



**Example 2.31.15: Train in *Shanghai Noon* (00:06:24)**





### 2.32 Final Fantasy VIII

Although containing more sci-fi fantasy elements than a typical Spaghetti Western, *Final Fantasy VIII* (FF8, 1999) borrows visual and musical elements of Western films to create a new *Final Fantasy* experience for its players. After using an edgy post-apocalyptic world in *Final Fantasy VII* (FF7, 1997), FF8 creators set the story in a similar modern sci-fi fantasy world. FF8 focuses on a 17-year-old mercenary who falls in love with a girl around his age.

Visually, this game borrows Spaghetti Western character designs. The opening credit sequence of the game occurs before the main menu when the game is loaded. This opening expresses this Western connection through a militant musical theme attached to black and white screenshots of characters and places in the game, much like the rustic realistic feel of gritty Spaghetti Westerns. These characters display costumes recalling the Old West. The design of each character reflects a modern-era individual with some punk or outlaw fashion preference. Each character wears clothing that reflects the personality of that character, including the main character Squall Leonheart.

In the opening credit sequence Squall wears a black leather jacket with fur around the neckline, black leather gloves, a white shirt with a metal chain necklace showing his symbol (a lion named Griever), black pants, crossed leather belts like a cowboy's with two revolver holsters, and black boots (Example 2.32.1).

**Example 2.32.1: Squall Leonheart screenshot from opening of *Final Fantasy VIII*<sup>43</sup>**

Squall carries a signature gunblade, a sword with a gun design as a handle, which functions in “energizing” the blade. Recalling Westerns, the gunblade reflects a classic revolver in design. Example 2.32.2 is another screenshot from the opening that shows Squall’s signature weapon. With his boots, crossed belts, revolver-like weapon, and his tendency to act as the “lone wolf,” Squall of *FF8* suggests the influence of Spaghetti Westerns.

**Example 2.32.2: Squall’s Gunblade**

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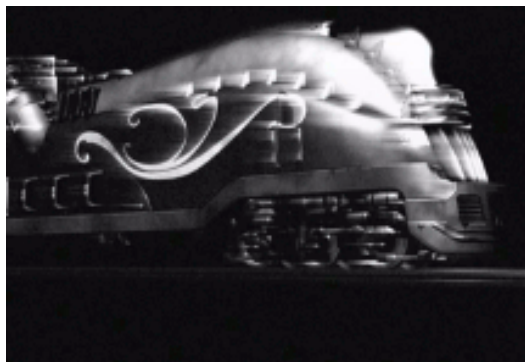
<sup>43</sup> Yoshinori Kitase, dir., PS Video Game, *Final Fantasy VIII* (Square Electronic Arts L.L.C., 1999).

**Example 2.32.3: Irvine Kinneas Still in *FF8* Opening Credits**

Squall Leonheart is not the only character that demonstrates the Western feel in *FF8*. Irvine Kinneas, a companion of Squall encountered at the second mercenary headquarters, wears a cowboy hat, a trench coat, chaps, and a gun based on a double-barreled shotgun. Example 2.32.3 presents a still of Irvine from the opening credits of *FF8*. Here, his hat and gun over his shoulder are visible.

Along with Squall and Irvine's cowboy look, *FF8* features many trains as a key form of transportation. The first official mission of Squall as a full-fledged mercenary involves jumping onto a train from another moving train to steal a particular train car. A still of the train they jump onto captured from the opening credits is shown in Example 2.32.4. This train heist recalls many Western films' train sequences, including *The Wild Bunch*, *The Good the Bad and the Ugly*, and *Shanghai Noon*.

#### Example 2.32.4: Train Still in *FF8* Opening Credits



Examples 2.32.1, 2.32.2, 2.32.3, and 2.32.4 are all stills from the opening credits of *FF8*. These stills are from scenes throughout the video game and outline the plot. They recall the openings of *GBU* and *The Wild Bunch*, which use rotoscoped stills of scenes from the story. *GBU* uses stills from throughout the entire film, which gives a visual plot summary of the story. *The Wild Bunch*'s opening consists of rotoscoped stills that occur in between live action sequences, still portions of the narrative story's beginning. *FF8* includes stills from cut-scenes throughout the game, like *GBU*, but has the black and white style found in *The Wild Bunch*. Although not necessarily rotoscoped, the CG graphics of *FF8*'s opening credits are rendered and digitally stylized in some fashion similar to rotoscoping.

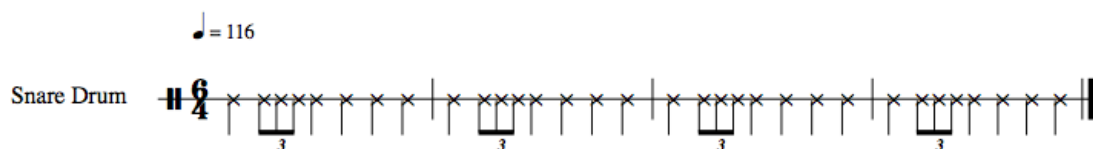
Borrowing more than just opening visual conventions, *FF8* also hints towards the musical style of Spaghetti Westerns. Their first similarity is instrumentation: a flute melody (*FF8*'s is shown in Example 2.32.5) with percussion accompaniment. While *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*'s (*GBU*) opening theme consists of a Native American drumbeat and a native flute, *FF8* features a snare drum beat with a flute.

As with Spaghetti Westerns, *FF8*'s main theme plays throughout the opening with the accompaniment modified so as to not lose the audience's interest. Example 2.32.6 shows the basic marching snare drum ostinato from *FF8*'s opening credits. Though *FF8* lacks a Native American beat, the opening shares the military snare drums akin to *GBU* and *The Wild Bunch*. Perhaps a closer likeness exists between *FF8* and *The Wild Bunch*, which opens with a marching snare drum, guitar strums, and orchestrated themes accompanying occasional black and white stills during the opening sequence. *FF8*'s snare drum ostinato (example 2.32.6) consists of all quarter beats except the second beat of every measure, which is a eighth triplet figure. This resembles *The Wild Bunch*'s militant snare drum accompaniment, which includes a triplet figure snare drum.

**Example 2.32.5: *FF8* Opening Flute Melody**



**Example 2.32.6: *FF8* Snare Drum Beat**



*FF8*'s opening theme begins with the ostinato rhythm of Example 2.32.6 in strings. After two measures of the string ostinato figure, snare drums join the ostinato

and a flute begins the melody. After this first melodic phrase, timpani are added to the ostinato. The ostinato continues throughout the entire opening title sequence. This gradual instrumental layering is similar to *GBU*'s use of a simple native drum ostinato, then added extra percussion like snare drums and a shaker later in the opening. *The Wild Bunch* features a similar build up starting with only snare drums and adding more instruments including strings as the opening progresses.

So, *FF8* shares visual and musical similarities with the opening credits of *GBU* and *The Wild Bunch*. The visual similarities include character costume designs, trains, and stylized stills. The musical similarities are a woodwind melody, simple military percussion ostinato accompaniment, and building orchestration. Example 2.32.7 is a table of these similarities.

**Example 2.32.7: Western Openings Comparison Chart**

	Spaghetti Western <i>GBU</i>	Western Film <i>The Wild Bunch</i>	Video Game <i>FF8</i>
<b>Visuals</b>	-Cowboy costumes: leather belt, boots, and jacket  -A world with trains as main transportation  -Colored rotoscoped faded stills for opening	-Cowboy costumes: leather belt, boots, and jacket  -A world with trains as main transportation  -Black and white rotoscoped stills for opening	-Cowboy costumes: leather belt, boots, and jacket  -A world with trains as main transportation  -Black and white stills for opening
<b>Melody</b>	-Melody: Soprano Recorder, Electronically altered “Ah” vocals, and Bass Ocarina	-Melody: Flute, horns, strings, and guitar	-Melody: Flute, strings, and other woodwinds.
<b>Percussion</b>	-Native American bass drum, galloping Snare Drum	-Military rolling snare drum with triplet figures	-Military snare drum with triplet figures

### CHAPTER 3: LEITMOTIFS

Not only do video game creators borrow opening title music and visual techniques from film, but they also utilize leitmotifs. Most films, including *Star Wars* and *Captain Blood*, utilize leitmotifs. Film scholar Royal Brown defines leitmotif as “a musical motif, often quite brief, that... comes to be associated with a character, a place, a situation, [or] a thing.”<sup>44</sup> *Captain Blood*, a 1935 swashbuckling film with music by Erich Wolfgang Korngold, includes themes for the hero, Peter Blood, and for his relationship with Miss Bishop. Similarly, *Star Wars* (1977) composer John Williams employs leitmotifs for everything from main characters to the Force itself. This leitmotivic practice finds its origin in Wagnerian drama, though its film use is generally more obvious, making leitmotifs easier for the audience to memorize and identify.<sup>45</sup> Musical themes that simultaneously occur with a character, a group of characters, an object, an event, or a location function as signals for these ideas.<sup>46</sup> When these themes occur throughout the narrative, they accumulate different meanings based on what character, object, or event occurs with the theme.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Royal S. Brown, *Overtones and Undertones: Reading Film Music* (England: University of California Press, 1994), 98.

<sup>45</sup> James Buhler, *Hearing the Movies: Music and Sound in Film History* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2010), 200.

<sup>46</sup> Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1987), 27.

<sup>47</sup> Gorbman, 27.



Like film, video games deploy leitmotifs. Composers including Nobuo Uematsu and Koji Kondo, for example, create themes that link with characters, places, or actions throughout the game. This practice can be noted in various series, particularly Japanese-made RPGs including Square Enix's (Squaresoft) *Final Fantasy*, Capcom's *Breath of Fire*, Namco's *Tales* series, and Squaresoft's *Dragonquest* series. In RPGs, leitmotifs play an important role: they identify playable characters, or PCs, a common term for a character in which the player has control during battles or on an explorable field. Most characters are coupled with their own themes, especially when they are first introduced to the player. The lead protagonist throughout his/her journey assembles a large party of these characters as friends or allies, giving the player access to all their individual abilities and resources. Most characters identified with a musical theme are playable.

This chapter details how both films and video games employ leitmotifs to identify characters, romance, and even to connect a series of stories (i.e. trilogies or collections of media sharing a title). First, this chapter will explain how films like *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* (*Empire*, 1980) and *Captain Blood* utilize leitmotifs for groups of characters and individual characters. Video game franchise *Final Fantasy* implements leitmotifs in the same way; like *Star Wars*, *Final Fantasy XII* and *Final Fantasy VII* each have a theme associated with its protagonist. Second, this chapter will examine the Romance films *Casablanca* (1942) and *Titanic* (1997) and their love themes. Like these two films, *Final Fantasy VIII* (FF8, 1999) follows this practice with a love theme for Squall Leonheart and Rinoa Heartilly. Finally, this chapter concludes with a description of how film series like *Star Wars* and *James Bond* and the video game series *Final Fantasy* use a single theme to unify a series of stories sharing a title name.

### 3.1 Leitmotif for Groups of Characters

#### 3.11 The Group Theme in Film

*Empire's* opening, like other films, introduces themes later attached to events or characters within the movie. The main theme from *Star Wars* connects with any of the protagonists, either individually or as a group. Kathryn Kalinak highlights how the main theme music for *Star Wars*, composed by John Williams, returns throughout the original trilogy series: it announces the rebels, the rebel base on Hoth in *Empire*, and Luke when he first appears on screen.<sup>48</sup>

##### Example 3.11.1: Star Wars Leitmotif, mm. 1-4



Example 3.11.1 shows this theme in its original form in *Empire* (00:00:36).<sup>49</sup> The opening theme begins with a brass fanfare and then the melody starts with trumpets accompanied by timpani, brass, and strings. During the film, other instruments, such as French horns, play this leitmotif.

A screenshot in Example 3.11.2 shows the scene at the rebel base when Leia Organa realizes she must order the retreat of the rebels. As she voices this decision, a horn plays the main theme. The main theme during this event differs from its original appearance. Example 3.11.3 shows the transformed leitmotif for this scene. Instead of a

<sup>48</sup> Kathryn Kalinak, *Settling the Score: Music and Classical Hollywood Film* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 201.

<sup>49</sup> Irvin Kershner, dir., DVD, *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back* (1980; Lucasfilm Ltd., 2004).

full fanfare brass section, timpani, and *forte* trumpets, low strings and timpani drone underneath the horn theme during Leia's orders to evacuate. The theme itself is played with longer notes and altered rhythms. The changed leitmotif repeats the same pitches of measures 1 and 2 of Example 3.11.1, the original leitmotif, but its rhythm is elongated. Where the original theme has eighth-note triplets, the transformed theme has quarter-note triplets. In measure 3 and 4 of the new version Example 3.11.3, pitches from measure 2 of Example 3.11.1's original motif are transposed up a major second. This deviation expresses increasing tension felt by the fleeing rebels.

**Example 3.11.2: Leia Orders Rebel Retreat, *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* (00:32:06)<sup>50</sup>**



**Example 3.11.3: Star Wars Leitmotif Transformation**



<sup>50</sup> Irvin Kershner, dir., DVD, *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back* (1980; Lucasfilm Ltd., 2004).

In *Star Wars: A New Hope* (*A New Hope*, 1977), the *Star Wars* main theme is first quoted after the credits when Luke first appears.<sup>51</sup> A screenshot in Example 3.11.4 shows Luke Skywalker with his Uncle Owen when he first is shown on screen (on right). When his Aunt May calls him from off screen, Luke runs to answer. At this point, the main *Star Wars* theme plays with pastoral harmonies. Example 3.11.5 shows the theme heard with this introduction of the Luke Skywalker character. The melody appears exactly as the theme in the title opening except that there is no pick up and the tempo is faster at 120 M.M.

**Example 3.11.4: Luke's First Appearance in *A New Hope* (00:17:11)<sup>52</sup>**



**Example 3.11.5: Star Wars Main Theme as Luke Appears**



While the main theme in *Star Wars* functions as a leitmotif for the rebels, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001), directed by Peter Jackson with music by Howard Shore, features a leitmotif for the group responsible for assisting Frodo

<sup>51</sup> George Lucas, dir., DVD, *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* (1977; Lucasfilm Ltd., 2004).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

on his quest to destroy the ring. This group is named “The Fellowship of the Ring.” A theme is associated with the group at the council where the group is formed. Example 3.11.6 shows the beginning of the fellowship theme. Example 3.1.7 shows a screenshot of all nine members at the forming of the fellowship.

**Example 3.11.6: The Fellowship Theme in *Lord of the Rings* (mm. 1-5)**



**Example 3.11.7: *The Fellowship of the Ring* is Formed (01:33:20)<sup>53</sup>**



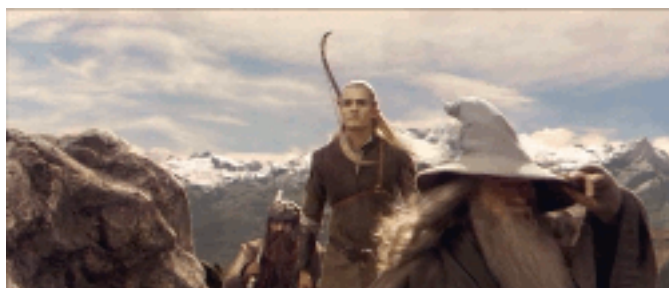
During this scene, the fellowship’s theme is heard for the first time when Gandalf supports Frodo, the second hobbit [from the left] (played by Elijah Wood) in Example 3.11.7.<sup>54</sup> The theme continues as the others join the group. The theme is carried by horns and strings supported by strings and timpani. This first occurrence begins on C. Example 3.11.6 shows the horn melody as the horn enters at 1:33:04 after a short interruption of the fellowship theme with the “The Shire” theme.

<sup>53</sup> Peter Jackson, dir., DVD, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (New Line Home Entertainment, Inc., 2002).

<sup>54</sup> Doug Adams, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring: Complete Recordings: Annotated Score* (Reprise, WEA, 2006), 9.

Example 3.11.8 shows a screenshot of the traveling fellowship band led by Gandalf.<sup>55</sup> During this travel scene, the theme is repeated verbatim but transposed to A. Brass carries the theme, including the horn. Rolling timpani and strings support the *forte* brass theme. Throughout the theme, all nine members of the fellowship come into view, ending with Aragorn at the rear of the traveling line. The theme is reinforced as the group theme for the collection of individuals that agreed to help destroy the evil ring carried by Frodo.

**Example 3.11.8: The Fellowship Travels (01:35:59)**



At the end of the film, Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas decide to track and rescue the missing hobbits Merry and Pippin after the fellowship has been broken. When they decide to pursue the kidnapped hobbits, the theme is repeated transposed to D. This theme occurs at a faster tempo and is supported by strings. Timpani enter during the last phrase of the melody at measure and begin a militant rhythm.

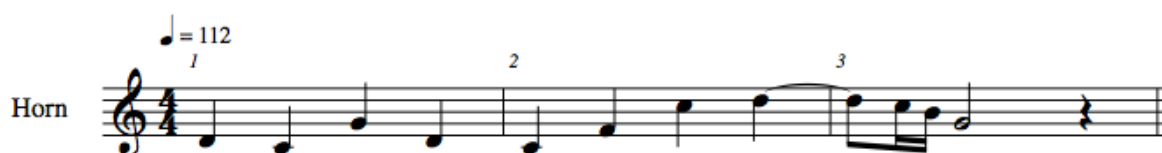
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<sup>55</sup> *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, 01:35:54.

### 3.12 The Group Theme in *Final Fantasy XII*

Following the film tradition of *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings*, *Final Fantasy XII* (FF12, 2006) includes a group theme for the playable characters, or PCs. The theme, shown in Example 3.12.1, includes a fanfare opening in horn leading to a quick descending line in measure 3. The first time the player hears the theme is during the opening credits sequence where Princess Ashe is marrying the prince of Dalmasca. As the screen centers on Ashe and her husband, shown in Example 3.12.2, the theme shown in Example 3.12.1 begins and is supported by strings and marching percussion. Already, the theme is attached to one of the PCs, Ashe.

#### Example 3.12.1: *Final Fantasy XII* Group Theme



#### Example 3.12.2: *FFXII* Group Theme as Princess Ashe Appears for First Time<sup>56</sup>



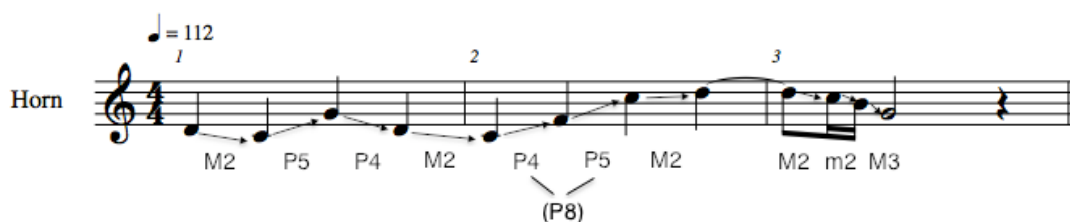
<sup>56</sup> Hiroyuki Ito and Hiroshi Minagawa, directors, PS2 Video Game, *Final Fantasy XII* (Square Enix Holdings Co., Ltd., 2006).



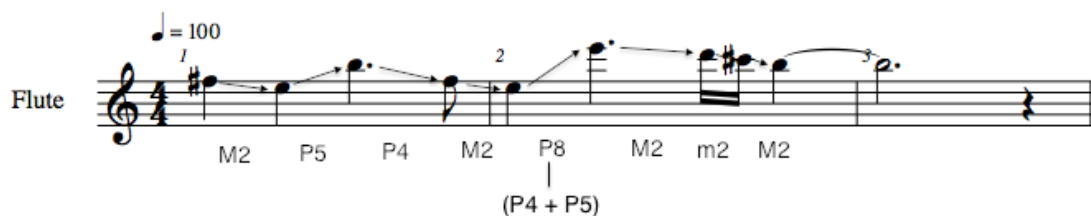


Example 3.12.5 shows the intervals of the theme's first occurrence during Ashe's wedding. Arrows between the notes provide the general contour shape. Example 3.12.6 shows the group theme intervals during a conversation between Vaan and Basch. A comparison of these two themes using contour analysis reveals their similarity. The same four intervals are found in both Example 3.12.5 and 3.12.6: down a M2, up a P5, down a P4, down a M2. At this point, Example 3.12.5 ascends through a P4 and P5 ending on the third beat of m. 2. In Example 3.12.6, what had been the P4 and P5 of m. 2 are combined to provide a P8 instead. Example 3.12.5 then goes higher a M2 to the D on beat 4 of m. 2. Example 3.12.6 instead skips the M2 ascent and begins the descent after the P8. While these two incidents of the leitmotif are not entirely the same in rhythm and pitch, the overall contour shape is the same, ascending and descending at similar points in the melody. Furthermore, the intervals are almost exactly identical for six out of eight intervals in Example 3.12.6 when compared to 3.12.5. After examining the intervals and contours of Examples 3.12.5 and 3.12.6, it is clear that Example 3.12.6 is a variant of the first group theme occurrence (Example 3.12.5).

#### Example 3.12.5: *FFXII* Intro Group Theme Interval Analysis



### Example 3.12.6: *FFXII* Group Theme Interval Analysis



## 3.2 Individual Character Leitmotifs

### 3.21 Individual Character Themes in Film

Like *Star Wars*, *Captain Blood* opens with a main theme that later underscores the hero's success. Example 3.21.1 shows the opening credits where the audience hears Captain Blood's theme for the first time; this theme is shown in score form in Example 3.21.2. Although the *Star Wars* main theme can refer to any of the main characters, the *Captain Blood* theme refers to the hero as the theme appears only in scenes with him present. This leitmotif identifies the hero to the audience and announces him to the audience at various times within the film. In *Hearing the Movies*, Buhler details *Captain Blood*'s leitmotifs, describing them as "direct," signifying the appearance or mention of a given character.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>57</sup> James Buhler, *Hearing the Movies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 198.

**Example 3.21.1: Title Screenshot from *Captain Blood* (00:00:12)<sup>58</sup>**



**Example 3.21.2: *Captain Blood*'s Main Theme ("Peter Blood's Theme"); mm. 1-7**



Captain Blood's theme is played by trumpet accompanied by rolling snare drums, arpeggiated harp and strings, and other brass. Since Blood's first appearance coincides with the main theme heard in the opening credits, Peter Blood's leitmotif suggests that he is the protagonist. This connection in dialogue and physical appearance of Errol Flynn's character, Peter Blood, signifies that he is the "Captain Blood" referred to in the title.

Example 3.21.3 provides a screenshot of Peter Blood as first seen in *Captain Blood*.

Here, Blood's theme is heard in quiet low brass before he arrives on screen, starting at 00:02:28 as the interior of Dr. Peter Blood's residence is shown. Perhaps the audience might mistake the initial candlelit silhouette of Blood's servant as Blood, creating an anticipation of the true hero. After the theme finishes, Dr. Peter Blood arrives on screen right.

<sup>58</sup> Michael Curtiz, dir., DVD, *Captain Blood* (1935; Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., 2005).

**Example 3.21.3: Enter Stage Right, Dr. Peter Blood in His Residence (00:02:42)**



From this point on in the film, the audience follows protagonist Dr. Peter Blood through his life as a doctor, slave, and pirate captain. After acquiring a boat with his band of former slaves, Dr. Peter Blood, now as Captain Blood, sets sail for a new life accompanied by the main theme. Example 3.21.4 shows Blood issuing the orders to sail in the name of freedom as the theme plays.

**Example 3.21.4: Captain Peter Blood Sets Sail (01:01:54)**



*A New Hope* (1977) also features a theme for the protagonist, Luke Skywalker. When Luke first appears, he is presented with the *Star Wars* main theme. As the audience becomes familiar and comfortable with his character, a new theme attaches to him. In *A New Hope*, Luke Skywalker expresses his ambitions to his Uncle Owen,

suggesting over dinner that he should attend the space academy with his friends. His uncle refuses, telling him he must stay longer to help with the harvest season. A troubled Luke, as shown in Example 3.21.5, excuses himself and gazes into the distance towards the two setting suns. At this point, the audience hears a new theme: “Luke’s Theme.” The beginning of his theme, shown in Example 3.21.6, is played by a French horn and accompanied by harp and strings.

**Example 3.21.5: Luke Gazes towards the Setting Suns in *A New Hope* (00:25:46)<sup>59</sup>**



**Example 3.21.6: Luke’s Motif, mm. 1-5**



Luke’s theme is recalled in *Empire*. Luke, shown in Example 3.21.7, dangles by his feet from the ceiling of an ice cave on the planet Hoth. An off-screen monster can be heard eating and Luke realizes he will be next if he does not take action. He attempts to use the Force to summon his out-of-reach lightsaber as shown in Example 3.21.7. He tries twice

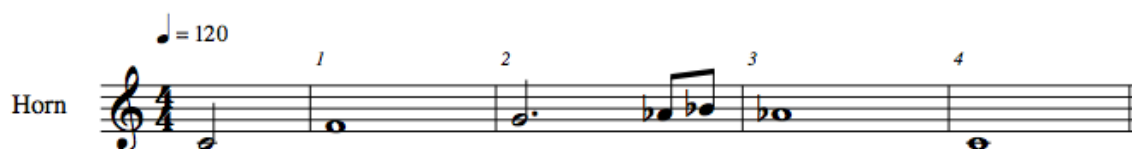
<sup>59</sup> George Lucas, dir., DVD, *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* (1977; Lucasfilm Ltd., 2004).

to no avail. Luke's leitmotif is quoted during his third and final attempt, in which he successfully summons his lightsaber and defeats the monster. Luke's theme appears with elongated rhythms and only quotes the first phrase of the original leitmotif; this new altered version is shown in the transcription in Example 3.21.8. The notes of Example 3.21.8, beginning on C, outline the same intervals of mm. 1-2 of the leitmotif's original occurrence (Example 3.21.6, including the pick-up note).

**Example 3.21.7: Luke Uses Force to Summon Lightsaber in *Empire* (00:09:32)<sup>60</sup>**



**Example 3.21.8: Luke's Theme in Ice Cave**



<sup>60</sup> Irvin Kershner, dir., DVD, *Star Wars Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back* (1980; Lucasfilm Ltd., 2004).

### 3.22 Individual Character Themes in *Final Fantasy*

Many similarities exist between the visuals that accompany Vaan's leitmotif from *FF12* and Luke's from *Star Wars*. In *FF12*, Vaan, the main character, dreams of one day captaining his own airship. This mirrors Luke Skywalker's aspirations of becoming a star pilot in *A New Hope*. During both scenes, the young characters stare off into the distance, one at a passing airship and one at setting suns. Example 3.22.1 shows a screenshot of the cut-scene where Vaan tells Penelo of his dream. The theme accompanying his dream perhaps resembles the *FF12* group theme, also in horns. The resemblance lies in measure 4 of Example 3.22.2 where the theme begins a descent passage with similar duple rhythms. This eighth-note falling contour recalls the two sixteenth notes found at the end of the *FF12* group theme. This scene begins with Penelo's theme as she has made her first appearance in the game. When Vaan describes his true aspirations, Vaan's theme begins.

#### **Example 3.22.1: Still of Vaan Speaking of His Aspirations in *FFXII***







that begins as they cross the snowy landscape seems to be associated with her (see Example 3.22.4).

**Example 3.22.3: Terra's First Appearance in Opening Title Sequence in *FF6*<sup>63</sup>**



**Example 3.22.4: Terra, Biggs, and Wedge Running in the Snow**



Example 3.22.5 shows the theme as it appears during the opening credits shown in Example 3.22.4. Terra's theme is played here by a bassoon and accompanied with military snare drum, strings, and horns.

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<sup>63</sup> Yoshinori Kitase and Kiroyuki Ito, directors, PS Video Game, *Final Fantasy VI* (1994; Square Electronic Arts L.L.C, 1999).

### Example 3.22.5: Terra's Theme



After playing the “slave crown” mind-controlled unnamed girl attacking an innocent mining town with robots, the player encounters a small story scene where a monster trapped within a large transparent crystal, known in the game as an “eidolin,” magically removes the girl’s slave crown and defeats Biggs and Wedge. The girl awakens inside a friendly old man’s house. After being prompted for a name by the old man, Terra manages to remember her name. Before naming her, a short description of her character follows, as shown in Example 3.22.6: “A mysterious young woman, controlled by the Empire, and born with the gift of Magic...” During this event, Terra’s theme plays. Her theme is played by a MIDI harp and accompanied by strings. The theme is the same as when it first appeared, but this time transposed from G minor to A minor. With both musical occurrences early in the game, the leitmotif strongly attaches to Terra.

### Example 3.22.6: Terra Wakes Up



## 3.3 Themes of Love

### 3.31 *Casablanca* and *Titanic*

In addition to announcing characters or character groups, using a leitmotif to signify love occurs frequently in film. The love theme is usually also associated with the female lead. In *Hearing the Movies: Music and Sound in Film History*, Buhler writes, “Despite the ease with which we can identify love themes, their signification is somewhat ambiguous because they generally refer both to the heroine and the romantic relationship between hero and heroine.” This presents love themes and films through a male-dominated point of view. Buhler continues, “The music suggests that [the heroine] is essentially identical to that relationship.”<sup>64</sup> Director Michael Curtiz’s *Casablanca* (1942) and James Cameron’s *Titanic* (1997) conform to this practice.

In *Casablanca*, freedom fighter Rick Blaine and Ilsa, a resistance leader’s wife, fall in love for the second time. Upon meeting Ilsa, the audience is presented with a diegetic version of the main love theme. The theme entitled “As Time Goes By,” music

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<sup>64</sup> Buhler, 198.

and lyrics by Herman Hupfeld, is in popular song form, alternating verse and chorus, and has lyrics (the first part of the melody is shown in Example 3.31.2). Throughout the film, the melody undergoes variations, adapting to different scenes and events that Rick and Ilsa undergo. The leitmotif changes in orchestration, tempo and dynamics, rhythm and meter, and key.<sup>65</sup>

The first time the audience hears the love theme in *Casablanca* is when Ilsa shows up at Rick's establishment. After listening to a female performer at the club, Ilsa calls Sam, the pianist. She asks him to play "the" song for her, implying "As Time Goes By." When Sam says he does not remember it, Ilsa hums the melody (a screenshot is shown in Example 3.31.1). Sam reluctantly begins playing the melody on the piano. She interrupts him briefly to ask him to sing as well as play. Again, he reluctantly obliges, singing the words along with the melody presented in Example 3.31.2.

**Example 3.31.1: Ilsa Hums "As Time Goes By" in *Casablanca* (00:32:34)<sup>66</sup>**




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<sup>65</sup> Buhler, 201.

<sup>66</sup> Michael Curtiz, dir., DVD, *Casablanca* (1942, Turner Entertainment Co. and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., 2003).

### Example 3.31.2: “As Time Goes By” Theme



When Rick enters, he hears the song and quickly rushes over to Sam to ask why he is playing it. When he reaches Sam, he notices Ilsa, his former Parisian lover. The theme is then transferred from diegetic piano to nondiegetic strings. This theme is attached to both Rick and Ilsa and the relationship between them.

Shortly after their encounter, Rick stays at the bar late and asks Sam to play the song. A flashback sequence begins, showing Rick and Ilsa together in Paris. Example 3.31.3 shows a scene of them together on a couch.

### Example 3.31.3: Rick Flashbacks to Their Time in Paris to “As Time Goes By”

(00:40:50)



Here, the melody is carried by strings and appears in the D Major.

Although the love theme is not present in it, there is a scene where Rick and Ilsa dance face-to-face and hand-in-hand (Example 3.31.4 shows a screenshot). A dance scene frequently appears in the romantic genre and usually includes dancing in a face-to-face manner as shown below.

**Example 3.31.4: Rick and Ilsa Dance (00:40:30)**

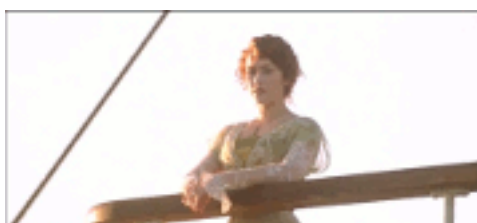


*Titanic* (1997) similarly contains a popular song, alternating verse and chorus, as a love theme leitmotif for the relationship between male and female lead and also just for the female lead. The love song “My Heart Will Go On” was written by James Horner and Will Jennings. Unlike *Casablanca*, the main love theme does not exist in the film’s world; it is always nondiegetic. Variations appear throughout the film as in *Casablanca*.

The first appearance of the theme occurs when Jack, the male lead (played by Leonardo DiCaprio) sights Rose (played by Kate Winslet) standing on the upper level of the Titanic. Example 3.31.5 shows two screenshots: the first Jack seeing Rose and the second Rose noticing Jack. The theme played in this sequence, shown in Example 3.31.6, is only a fragment of the full song and seems to be quoting the melody line of the

verse. The melody begins on a whole note D. A version of the verse shown later in Example 3.31.8, this theme is associated with the pair of characters Jack and Rose.

**Example 3.31.5: Jack and Rose See Each Other in *Titanic* (00:36:11, 00:36:16)<sup>67</sup>**



**Example 3.31.6: “My Heart Will Go On” Theme Fragment**



After getting to know him, Rose makes the decision to begin a romantic relationship with Jack despite their disparate social status. Example 3.31.7 shows Rose approaching Jack at the bow. As soon as she begins speaking with Jack, the theme, shown in Example 3.31.8, begins. This time, the theme is a fully realized melody from the verse of the

<sup>67</sup> James Cameron, dir., DVD, *Titanic* (1997, Paramount Pictures and Twentieth Century Fox, 1999).

popular song that the audience only hears with its lyrics at the ending credits of the movie. Then, a female soprano singer (Sissel Krykjebø) vocalizes the theme shown in Example 3.31.8. A piano, harp, and strings accompany the melody.

**Example 3.31.7: Rose Goes to Jack to Begin Their Secret Love (01:20:39)**



**Example 3.31.8: The Love Theme**



Similar to *Casablanca*, the couple in *Titanic* dance face-to-face as shown in Example 3.31.9. Like *Casablanca*, the love leitmotif is not present during this dance scene.

**Example 3.31.9: Jack and Rose Dance (01:07:13)**





### 3.32 *Final Fantasy VIII*: A Story of Love

*FF8* (1999) includes many of these films' visual and musical elements. *FF8* focuses on a romance between seventeen-year old protagonist Squall Leonheart and seventeen-year old Rinoa Heartilly. Most scenes including the two develop their relationship, and composer Nobuo Uematsu created a pop song as a leitmotif for these moments. This song exists diegetically, presumably heard by characters within the world. In the video game, the song is presented as "Eyes on Me," written by Rinoa's mother, Julie, for Squall's father, Laguna. Unfortunately for Laguna and Julie, their romantic entanglement ended tragically: Laguna was sent off to war and never returned. Rinoa and Squall perhaps play out this unfinished romance. The theme, without words, is played when they meet and dance for the first time (Example 3.32.1). For the rest of their relationship, especially during the most dramatic moments, the song accompanies their romantic story.

They dance in time to a waltz version of "Eyes on Me," shown in Example 3.32.2. Since they dance synchronized with the song, the player assumes its diegetic status--that the characters are hearing the same song as himself/herself. The waltz version of "Eyes on Me" uses the verse from the full song; like *Titanic*, the full song is only heard at the end of the story during the credits. This version of the theme played during their dance occurs in F Major and is presented in strings.



### Example 3.32.3: Still of Rinoa and Squall



A version of the love theme plays during this scene, as shown in Example 3.32.4. While entitled “Rinoa’s theme” the melody follows the chorus melody of the full “Eyes On Me” song (Example 3.32.5a and Example 3.32.5b show beginnings of the verse and chorus of the ending credits version of “Eyes on Me” sung by Faye Wong). The song is played by a MIDI glockenspiel and is supported by strings and harp. As Rinoa’s theme contains the main love theme, her theme also identifies her and Squall’s relationship.

### Example 3.32.4: Rinoa and Squall Meet Again on Train to “Rinoa’s Theme”

(mm. 1-7)

Glockenspiel

$\text{♩} = 70$

1 2 3

4 5 6 7

### Example 3.32.5: Verse and Chorus of “Eyes on Me” in Ending Credits

#### 3. “Eyes on Me” Verse (mm. 1-7)

Soprano

#### b. “Eyes on Me” Chorus (mm. 1-7)

Soprano

This love theme leitmotif occurs several times throughout the game, both verse and chorus melodies, always connected with Squall and Rinoa (or Laguna and Julie).

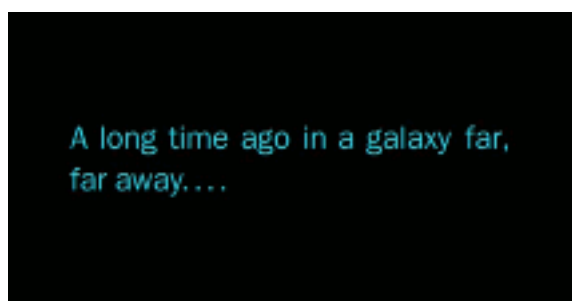
## 3.4 The Series Theme

### 3.41 The Series Theme in Film

In addition to group themes, individual character themes, and love themes, both film and video game creators may also utilize a theme for an entire series under the same title. Films series like *Star Wars* and *James Bond* include a series theme to identify and connect the collection of stories. These themes occur during the title sequence and

contain visual elements similar to other films within the same series. For example, every *Star Wars* film and other audio-visual media of the same name include the main *Star Wars* musical theme, shown in Example 3.41.3. As well as sharing a musical theme, many series share visual cues that ensure the audience the connection between the series.<sup>69</sup> Examples 3.41.1 and 3.41.2 show screenshots of the visuals accompanying the opening phrase and the main title shared with all *Star Wars* films.

**Example 3.41.1: *Star Wars* Opening Text Before Title<sup>70</sup>**



**Example 3.41.2: *Star Wars* Title Logo**



The *Star Wars* main theme is heard along with the title and narrative on-screen exposition text in each *Star Wars* film. Example 3.41.3 shows this theme. The title theme occurs in the same key and tempo in each film.

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<sup>69</sup> Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1987), 90 – 91.

<sup>70</sup> George Lucas, dir., DVD, *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* (1977; Lucasfilm Ltd., 2004).

### Example 3.41.3: *Star Wars* Theme



Similar to the *Star Wars* series, the *James Bond* series also contains thematic musical and visual elements that occur in each iteration. Every *James Bond* film includes a scene where the James Bond character is shown in a view through a gun barrel. He is always shown on screen entering on the right and turning to his left and shooting towards the audience's point of view. A blood effect covers the screen from top to bottom after the gunshot. Example 3.41.4 shows a screenshot of this scene in *James Bond: Live and Let Die* (1973), directed by Guy Hamilton with music by George Martin. During this shot, the *James Bond* main theme plays; it is shown in Example 3.41.5. All *James Bond* films include this opening sequence early in the film and play the same musical motif. The theme is played by trumpet and electric guitar accompanied by bass, strings, and percussion.

### Example 3.41.4: James Bond Shoots Camera in *James Bond: Live and Let Die*

(00:00:32)<sup>71</sup>



<sup>71</sup> Guy Hamilton, dir., DVD, *James Bond: Live and Let Die* (1973, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios Inc., 2006).

### Example 3.41.5: *James Bond* Theme



### 3.42 *Final Fantasy* Series Themes

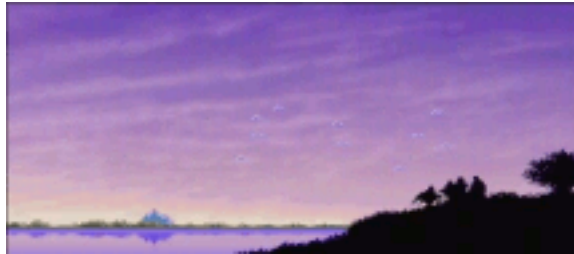
While not all the *Final Fantasy* games share the same setting or “universe” with each other, like *Star Wars* and *James Bond* they contain common elements that connect each game to the series, unifying them. First, most *Final Fantasy* games begin with a flock of white birds flying over a castle. Second, every *Final Fantasy* has original concept art created by Yoshitaka Amano. Finally, the main theme appears in all subsequent numbered *Final Fantasy* games, though not always at the opening. According to Claudia Gorbman, this use of a “thematic score provides a built-in unity of statement and variation.”<sup>72</sup>

Beginning with the first game, a common visual element in the *FF* series is a flock of white birds (presumably doves) flying through the sky over a distant castle. Example 3.41.1 shows a screenshot of the opening sequence from the first *Final Fantasy* (*FF*, 1987) where the white birds are present. Following the first *Final Fantasy*’s opening visual theme, the opening credit sequence of *Final Fantasy IX* (*FF9*, 2000)

<sup>72</sup> Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1987), 91.

includes white birds flying over a distant castle, shown in Example 3.41.2. The opening sequence for *Final Fantasy XII* (FF12, 2006) also begins with white birds flying over a distant castle, as shown in Example 3.41.3.

**Example 3.41.1: *Final Fantasy* Title Screenshot with Flock of Doves (White Birds)**<sup>73</sup>



**Example 3.41.2: *Final Fantasy IX*'s Use of White Birds**<sup>74</sup>



**Example 3.41.3: *Final Fantasy XII*'s Use of White Birds**<sup>75</sup>



<sup>73</sup> Hironobu Sakaguchi, creator, PS Video Game, *Final Fantasy* (Infogrames Entertainment, SA, 2003).

<sup>74</sup> Hiroyuki Ito, dir., PS Video Game, *Final Fantasy IX* (Square Electronic Arts L.L.C., 2000).

<sup>75</sup> Hiroyuki Ito and Hiroshi Minagawa, directors, PS2 Video Game, *Final Fantasy XII* (Square Enix Holdings Co., Ltd., 2006).



In addition to the white birds, the *Final Fantasy* series games also include the main title in the same font with stylized art by Yoshitaka Amano. Example 3.41.4 shows the first *FF* with this title form (from the remake on the Playstation, 2003). The main title text for *FF12* also uses the same font and has artwork by Yoshitaka Amano, shown in Example 3.41.5. Like *FF9*, the title for *FF12* uses the same font and artwork by Yoshitaka Amano, shown in Example 3.41.6.

**Example 3.41.4: *Final Fantasy* Title with Yoshitaka Amano Art**



**Example 3.41.5: Title Art with *Final Fantasy* “Main Theme”**



**Example 3.41.6: *FF12* Title Art**



The *Final Fantasy* main theme, shown in Example 3.41.7, appears in all the *Final Fantasy* games, mostly during the ending credits. Three of the *Final Fantasy* games (*FF*, *FF9*, and *FF12*) feature the main theme in the beginning, much like *Star Wars* and *James Bond*. The main theme from the first *Final Fantasy* is quoted in *FF9* when the title shows at the end of the opening sequence. The version of the main theme appearing in this iteration is shown in Example 3.41.8. While not the whole melody, the quote includes the opening bars of the main theme in *Final Fantasy*, now in E. This theme is carried by horns and supported with military percussion and strings. *FF12* uses the main theme from *Final Fantasy* for its own opening sequence, now in Bb. Example 3.41.9 shows the version of the main theme as it appears in *FF12*. The *FF12* main theme is a fully orchestrated version of the original *FF* theme, including strings and winds carrying the melody, military percussion (this time with timpani), and brass accompaniment. The main theme uses the exact same form, ABA, and even uses the same instrumentation for the main melodic parts as *FF*. While the *FF* series is not as consistent as film series—the stories do not all take place within the same narrative universe and do not always feature the main theme during the opening sequence--the *Final Fantasy* series, like *Star Wars* and *James Bond*, employs common visual and musical elements to unify the series as a whole.

**Example 3.41.7: *Final Fantasy* Series Theme as Heard in the First *Final Fantasy***

$\text{♩} = 120$

1 2 3 4

P4 M2 P5 m7 m2 M2 M2 m2

5 6 7 8

**Example 3.41.8: Main Theme in *FF9***

$\text{♩} = 120$

Violin

1 2 3 4

P4 M2 P5 P8

**Example 3.41.9: *FF12* Main Theme**

$\text{♩} = 120$

Violin

1 2 3 4

P4 M2 P5 m7 m2 M2 M2 m2

5 6 7 8

## CHAPTER 4: STYLE TOPICS

Video games, like films, can employ music to set the stage for narrative with opening title music and to identify characters, places, or events with leitmotifs. Video game music, like film music, also utilizes style topics to identify mood, character, and setting. Leonard Ratner in *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* examined style topics found in music of the classical era. Style topics, according to Ratner, are “characteristic figures [that] ...were associated with various feelings and affections [while] others had a picturesque flavor.”<sup>76</sup> He illustrates several topics including “dance,” “military,” “hunt,” “storm,” and “stress.”<sup>77</sup>

One of these, the hunt topic, appears frequently in films and video games. Ratner demonstrates that the hunt topic is in 6/8 or 3/4 meter and contains fifths. Expanding on Ratner’s research, Raymond Monelle, in *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military, and Pastoral*, includes a history of hunting horns and how hunting calls were adapted for classic music. Monelle presents information regarding the hunt topic’s origin and characteristics, describing it as “[evoking] the nobility, the outdoors, the forest, adventure, and action.”<sup>78</sup> Monelle identifies the signifier of the hunt topic as “based on

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<sup>76</sup> Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form, and Style* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1980), 9.

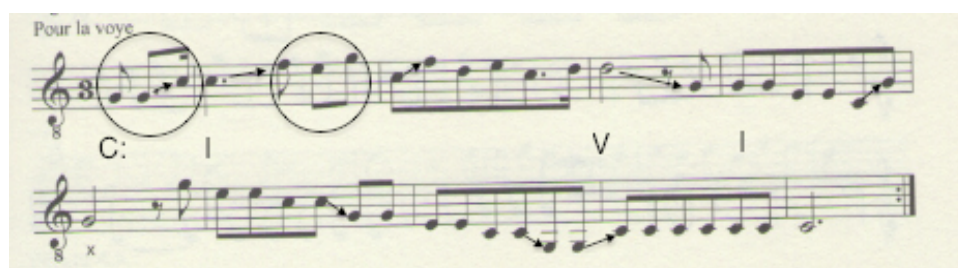
<sup>77</sup> Ratner, 9 – 21.

<sup>78</sup> Raymond Monelle, *The Musical Hunt Topic: Hunt, Military, and Pastoral* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2006), 35.

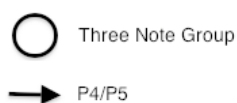
the calls of the brass hunting horn.” These simple hunting horns “sounded a single note, and their calls were therefore merely rhythmic.”<sup>79</sup> As these horns improved, a melodic repertoire emerged with triadic arpeggio movement in  $\frac{3}{4}$  and  $\frac{6}{8}$  meter. See Example 4.0.1 a and b for examples of hunting call melodies found in Monelle’s work. The characteristics of these hunting melodies include 1) arpeggiated movement, 2) frequent perfect fourths (P4) and perfect fifths (P5), 3) groups of three notes, and 4) prolonged notes.

#### Example 4.0.1: Hunting Call Melodies<sup>80</sup>

##### a. Hunting Call in $\frac{3}{4}$



##### b. Hunting Call in $\frac{6}{8}$



<sup>79</sup> Monelle, 35.

<sup>80</sup> Monelle, 45 – 46.

First, the melodies of Example 4.0.1 consist primarily of arpeggios. While not always expressing a full triad, Examples 4.0.1a and 4.0.1b contain several tertian intervals. These intervals suggest harmonic progressions or chords. The instrument's design contributes to the melodies' use of tertian leaps. As a tube with no valves, without artificial means the instrument can only play notes of the overtone series. A basic representation of the overtone series on C can be seen in Example 4.0.2. In the overtone series, a series of naturally occurring pitches based on pitch frequencies, certain intervals are prominent in certain registers.<sup>81</sup> Each instrument has registers that are more “comfortable” for the instrument and player. The third register of the overtone series is natural for the hunting horn. The third register of the overtone series starts on the third C in Example 4.0.2, marked with the number 4 underneath. Here, the overtone series proceeds in thirds: C, E, G, Bb. Because of these thirds, the most comfortable range of the horn leans towards triadic movement.<sup>82</sup>

#### Example 4.0.2: Overtone Series<sup>83</sup>



<sup>81</sup> Don Michael Randel, ed. *Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 2000), 7.

<sup>82</sup> Monelle, 43 – 44.

<sup>83</sup> Randel, 5.

Most of the notes in Examples 4.0.1 a and b are notes from the I (or tonic) chord. While the examples in 4.0.1 primarily outline the I chord, the V chord appears occasionally. Example a exhibits only one location where a half cadence can be heard through the melodic suggestion of a V chord: this is marked with the V symbol in measure three. Example b also contains one possible V chord marked in measure five. Because of their dependence on third movement, these hunting melodies are similar to military calls: “these calls are mainly triadic, like military trumpet calls.”<sup>84</sup>

Second, these melodies often begin with a rising perfect fourth (P4) from the fifth scale degree. For example, the first interval encountered in both melodies is a P4 indicated with the thin arrow in Examples 4.0.1a and b. P4s and P5s occur more often than step movement, their frequency lagging behind only thirds.

Third, in addition to containing perfect fourths, perfect fifths, and other intervals arpeggiated from the triad, Ratner establishes that the hunt topic is characterized by  $\frac{3}{4}$  or  $\frac{6}{8}$  meter. Since  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter has three beats per measure and  $\frac{6}{8}$  meter has two beats per measure subdivided into groups of three, hunting calls exhibit groups of three notes. Example 4.0.3 a and b demonstrate the beats and beat subdivisions of both meters. The first example, 4.0.3a, shows  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter where three quarter note beats occur per measure. When subdividing the beat (breaking each beat into equal parts) the second measure of Example 4.0.3 counts out the pairs of eighth notes per beat: 1 &, 2 &, and 3 &. As there are three pairs of eighth notes,  $\frac{3}{4}$  retains the grouping of three feel.

Example 4.3b shows  $\frac{6}{8}$  meter, a compound meter with two dotted-quarter note beats. In compound meter, beats are subdivided into groups of three. The subdivision of the beats is represented in the second measure of 4.0.3b (“1 la li” is one counting system

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<sup>84</sup> Monelle, 49.

used for counting subdivisions in compound meter). The spread of three eighth notes per beat with two beats per measure resembles eighth-note triplets applied to the simple meter 2/4, shown in Example 4.0.3c. Example 4.0.3c displays 2/4 meter's two beats per measure, the subdivision of two eighth notes per beat, and two groups of eighth note triplets in the last measure. These triplets in simple meter essentially borrow the sound or feel of compound meter. The borrowing of compound meter rhythms in simple meter happens often in the heroic topic.

### Example 4.0.3: Simple and Compound Meter

#### a. $\frac{3}{4}$ Meter: 3 Beats



#### b. $\frac{6}{8}$ Meter: 3 Note Subdivisions



#### c. $\frac{2}{4}$ Meter with eighth-note triplets





The 6/8 hunting call in 4.0.1b contains three-note groups with syncopated dotted rhythms. Example 4.0.1b begins with the fifth scale degree as well though with a large emphasis on the syncopated rhythm. As 6/8 has two beats made of three eighth-note groups, the meter's grouping suggests a triplet feel from beat to beat. The hunting melody in Example 4.0.1a has three eighth-note groups although they do not complete a beat. The first group occurs over a two-beat duration starting with an eighth note, moving to a dotted eighth-note, and ending with a sixteenth note. The second group is simply three eighth notes that move into eighth-note pairs.

Fourth, many of the “hunt” melodies include simple rhythmic figures most with a quarter note or prolonged note on the downbeat. The hunting call in  $\frac{3}{4}$  from Example 4.0.1 begins with a G3 leaping to a C4, a P4 interval from the fifth scale degree to the first scale degree. When outlining triads, the rhythms usually follow the same three-note figure. For Example 4.0.1a, this is streaming eighth notes. Example 4.0.1b uses a three-note group with a dotted rhythm: an eighth note, a dotted eighth note, ending with a sixteenth note.

Three-note figures, arpeggiated movement, and prominent fourths and fifths are prominent in heroic quality themes in films and video game musics to signal the hunt topic. In *Hearing the Movies: Music and Sound in Film History*, James Buhler writes, “Style topics are an effective means of musical characterization. Fanfares, military calls, and hunting calls are specific musical topics.”<sup>85</sup> Although both Ratner and Monelle prefer the term “hunt topic,” Buhler identifies a similar “heroic topic.” For this study, the “heroic topic” film terminology will be used for both film and video game music,

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<sup>85</sup> Buhler, 203.

because the characteristic hunt figure can be found heralding most heroic protagonists in films.

Along with the hunt (or heroic) topic, other style topic associations occur frequently in film and videogame music. This chapter will demonstrate style topic similarities between film music with videogame music beginning with the heroic topic, then detailing the Native American topic, and ending with the gentle giant style topic. First, *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* (*Empire*, 1980) and *The Sea Hawk* (1940) will be compared with a heroic theme from *Final Fantasy VI* (*FF6*, 1994) and *Final Fantasy VII* (*FF7*, 1997). Second, “Indian” (Native American) topics from *Walt Disney’s Peter Pan* (*Peter Pan*, 1953) will be compared with Native American themes from *Final Fantasy VII*. Third, the simple-minded gentle giant topic found in *The Princess Bride* (1987) and *Iron Giant* (1999) is compared with a character’s theme from *Final Fantasy IX* (2000, *FF9*).

## 4.1 Heroes of Films and Video Games

### 4.11 Film Heroic Themes

Many films employ the heroic topic to announce the arrival of the “good guy” and to identify the genre of film. Film scholars such as Buhler have studied films with these topics including *Star Wars* and *Captain Blood*. For example, the main theme from *Star Wars* exhibits many heroic topic attributes (Example 4.11.1). First, the instrumentation includes marching drums, strings, and brass supporting the main trumpet melody. While the traditional hunt topic uses a hunting horn melody, the heroic topic may use the

trumpet, another brass instrument, instead. Second, the main theme exhibits many three-note groups as triplet rhythms. In Example 4.11.1, the triplets are circled. Third, the *Star Wars* main theme includes many perfect fourth (P4) and perfect fifth (P5) intervals. Arrows mark the P4/P5 intervals in Example 4.11.1. Finally, the harmonic content of this theme is similar to that of the hunt melodies in Example 4.0.1: the theme also uses the tonic triad (I) and the dominant triad (V). These harmonies are marked by I and V in Example 4.11.1. Similar to the hunting calls in Example 4.0.1, the *Star Wars* main theme prolongs higher notes with repeated quick figures leading to these high notes. So, *Star Wars* main theme exhibits several musical elements of the heroic style topic.

**Example 4.11.1: *Star Wars* Heroic Main Theme<sup>86</sup>**

Trumpet

♩ = 104

1 2 3 4

I V

○ Three Note Group

→ P4/P5

The theme from *The Sea Hawk* (*Sea Hawk*, 1940), directed by Michael Curtiz with music composed by Erich Wolfgang Korngold, features similar heroic qualities. First, the trumpet theme is carried by a brass section and supported with timpani. Example 4.11.2 shows *The Sea Hawk*'s main theme. Second, although there are no triplets, the rhythms are in a slightly divided group of three notes: one eighth note

<sup>86</sup> George Lucas, dir., DVD, *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* (1977; Lucasfilm Ltd., 2004).

followed by two sixteenth notes and ending with a note of longer duration (an eighth note, two eighth notes tied together, or a quarter note). The three-note groups are circled; most are ascending triads. Third, like the hunt melodies, the *Sea Hawk* main theme includes perfect 4/5 intervals. There is a repeated D up to motion and the perfect interval at the start of the melody (Bb to F) is embellished with the arpeggio of the tonic triad. The tonic triad encompasses most of the main theme much like the hunt melodies. Despite missing the triplet element of the heroic topic, the brass instrumentation, the three-note groupings, P4/P5s, and tonic triad arpeggiation all point to a heroic quality theme similar to hunting calls.

**Example 4.11.2: *Sea Hawk* Heroic Main Theme by Erich Wolfgang Korngold<sup>87</sup>**



4.12 Locke Cole: *FF6*'s Male Hero

Like *Star Wars* and *Sea Hawk*, *FF6* also announces a “heroic” character with the heroic topic. Shortly after the game’s protagonist, Terra, falls unconscious for the second time, the player encounters Locke Cole. This scene is shown in Example 4.12.1. It begins with an old man who hid Terra, a previously controlled PC, from soldiers standing in the living area of his house. Only the sounds of opening doors, created via MIDI sound effects, can be heard as a stranger enters the old man’s house through the back

<sup>87</sup> Michael Curtiz, dir., DVD, *The Sea Hawk* (1940; Turner Entertainment Co. and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc., 2005).

door. He proceeds to open the door from the bedroom leading to the hallway where he encounters the old man. After a comment from the old man about Locke's thieving career, Locke's shocked sprite is brought to the center of a black screen where white text describes his character: "Treasure Hunter and trail-worn traveler, searching the world over for relics of the past." As soon as the background shifts to a black screen for Locke to slide from the bottom right of the screen to the center, his theme music begins.

**Example 4.12.1: Locke's Entrance from *Final Fantasy VI*<sup>88</sup>**



Locke's theme includes many heroic style topic qualities. First, Locke's melody, shown in Example 4.12.2, is played by a MIDI horn--supported by strings for smoother

<sup>88</sup> Yoshinori Kitase and Kiyoyuki Ito, dir., PS Video Game, *Final Fantasy VI* (1990; Square Electronic Arts L.L.C, 1999).

sound--much like the heroic themes from *Star Wars* and *Sea Hawk*. Second, it includes three-note groups in the form of triplet figures, shown circled in measures 4 and 6 in Example 4.12.2. Third, the melody has many perfect fourth and fifth intervals indicated with arrows in the example. Finally, the music includes some of the same harmonies as heroic style topic themes. Example 4.12.2 shows the Roman numeral analysis of the theme's first phrase. The theme consists primarily of the tonic chord. With horn instrumentation, triplet rhythms, P4/P5 intervals, and simple harmonies, Locke's theme demonstrates the same musical elements found in the heroic style topic of film music. The song continues for the rest of the scene until the player successfully saves the unconscious Terra as the hero Locke.

**Example 4.12.2: Locke's Theme by Nobuo Uematsu**

Horn

$\text{♩} = 120$

1 2 3 4

I V IV I

5 6 7 8

bVII I

○ Three Note Group

➔ P4/P5

## 4.2 Native American Topic: Indians and Red XIII

### 4.21 Native Americans in Film

According to Claudia Gorbman in “Scoring the Indian: Music in the Liberal Western,” classical Hollywood movie scores represent Native Americans “by means of a small inventory of stable and unambiguous musical conventions.”<sup>89</sup> “Indian” signifiers include 1) a tom-tom percussion rhythm in 4/4 meter with an accented first beat, 2) a modal melody, 3) a solo flute or strings playing the main melody, and 4) accompaniment by pastoral harmonies. Pastoral harmonies include open fourths and fifths.<sup>90</sup>

The Indian style topic can be found as early as silent film cue music. Example 4.21.1 shows the “Indian Music” melody from the *Sam Fox Moving Picture Music* collection of cue music for silent film (1913). In-house keyboardists used these cue sheets during the silent film era. These cue sheets serve as a good representation of early style topics.

In this example from the *Sam Fox* cue sheet book, accent marks occur in the right hand on beats 1 and 2 in measure 3, so Example 4.21.1 already includes the first element of the Indian topic: an accent on the first beat. While the majority of the piece is in A minor, measures 13-15 express the A pentatonic scale. Most Indian topics feature the pentatonic scale, a scale comprised of five notes. There are two types of pentatonic scales: hemitonic and anhemitonic. The hemitonic scale includes semitones, or half-steps, within the five notes. The anhemitonic scale, more characteristic of the Indian topic, omits any semitones; at the smallest interval, the scale includes whole steps.

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<sup>89</sup> Claudia Gorbman. “Scoring the Indian: Music in the Liberal Western,” in *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*, ed. Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh (California: University of California Press, 2000), 235.

<sup>90</sup> Gorbman, 235-237.

Example 4.21.2 includes the five notes of A anhemitonic used at the end of the *Sam Fox* cue: A, C, D, E, and G. The B at the end of the *Sam Fox* cue is a non-pentatonic passing tone pointing to the return of A minor. Since the two lowest notes of the A anhemitonic pentatonic scale are a minor third apart, this pentatonic scale has a minor inflection.

The cue's minor melody is accented by simplistic harmonies; the open fifths and octaves provide a pastoral accompaniment to the melody. This accompaniment remains throughout the entire passage. While silent films typically had a keyboard player playing these cues, full orchestral scores later employed use of percussion for the main beat and strings and woodwinds for the melody. Perhaps if this cue were orchestrated, a solo flute or string would play the main melody.

#### Example 4.21.1: Sam Fox Indian Cue Music<sup>91</sup>

INDIAN MUSIC

J. S. ZAMECNIK.

Allegro moderato.

<sup>91</sup> Sam Fox, *Sam Fox Moving Picture Music: Volume I* (Sam Fox Pub. Co., 1913), 3.



**Example 4.21.2: A Pentatonic Scale for “Indian Music”**



A recognizable stereotype in film, the Native American style topic is often found in Westerns and cartoons. Walt Disney’s *Peter Pan* (1953, music composed by Oliver Wallace) exhibits this topic when the Lost Boys encounter the mysterious “Indians” in Neverland. Accompanying the natives when they first appear is a repeating quarter-note ostinato on drums in 4/4 with the strongest accent on beat one, an element of the Indian topic. After being captured by these natives, the Lost Boys encounter their chief. During this encounter, a common “Native American” beat occurs played diegetically by the Indians in the background (Example 4.21.3). This rhythm is represented in Example 4.21.4.

Taking the “red man” stereotype literally, Walt Disney’s *Peter Pan* colors its Indians with red flesh tones. The chief of the tribe is a red man, as shown in Example 4.21.5. Furthermore, each Indian is decorated with a feather atop their head, with the chief sporting a large headdress of feathers. Also, one can note the war paint on the cheeks of many of the Natives. Conforming to the visual stereotype of Native American “red men,” Disney’s *Peter Pan* heightens the stereotype by adding Indian style topic music.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, and Hamilton Luske, directors, DVD, *Walt Disney’s Peter Pan* (1953, Walt Disney Home Entertainment, 2007).

The topic expands beyond just a tom-tom beat when the lost boys ask: “What makes the red man red?” The chief answers the lost boys with song; Example 4.21.6 shows the melody. The melody conforms to the pentatonic scale stereotype. Example 4.21.7 shows the Bb pentatonic scale used for the chief’s song: Bb, Db, Eb, F, and Ab (with the Bb repeated at the octave). The melody in 4.21.6 contains notes only from this scale, Bb, Db, and Eb. This pentatonic scale is anhemitonic, or has no semitones, like the end of the *Sam Fox* cue song shown in Example 4.21.1. *Peter Pan*’s melody, however, skips the minor key and is completely pentatonic. The song lacks stacked harmonies for the first verse of the song, but has a minor inflection from the minor third of the scale. The accompaniment includes a single line played in strings, the beat from the bass drum, and a group of Indians chanting on a single pitch.

**Example 4.21.3: Lost Boys Tied Up with Drummers in Background (00:35:35)**





Besides *Peter Pan*, Tom Dey's *Shanghai Noon* (2000), with music by Randy Edelman, associates Native Americans with the Indian style topic. The first encounter with Native Americans in the film occurs when Jackie Chan's character Chong Wang sees a young boy fleeing from another clan of violent Native Americans. The first visual sign of the Native Americans is a close up of the feathers tied to one of the pursuing warriors' spear. Example 4.21.8 shows a screenshot of these feathers.

**Example 4.21.8: *Shanghai Noon* Native American Feathers Fly by Camera**  
**(00:21:36)<sup>93</sup>**



Following the action scene of Chong Wang defeating the hostile Native Americans with Kung Fu, the chief of the young fleeing boy's clan hosts a party honoring Chong Wang's heroics. During this party, the Native Americans pass a peace pipe around to a quarter note beat on bass drum. Chanting accompanies the beat. Example 4.21.9 shows a screenshot of the celebration. The chief, on the right, wears a multi-feathered headdress similar to *Peter Pan*'s Indian chief. The chief in *Shanghai Noon* also wears white war paint streaks on his cheek. Another clansman, on the left, also wears

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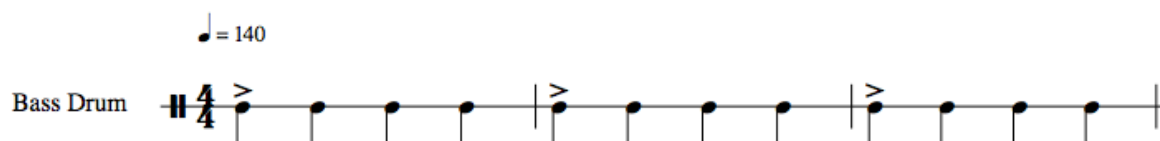
<sup>93</sup> Tom Dey, dir., DVD, *Shanghai Noon* (Buena Vista Home Entertainment, Inc., 2000).

two feathers atop his head. The drum rhythm and chanting persists throughout the entire scene. Example 4.21.10 shows the Native American bass drum beat in 4/4 meter.

**Example 4.21.9: Chong Wang at Native American Celebration (00:26:21)**



**Example 4.21.10: *Shanghai Noon* Native American Drum Beat**

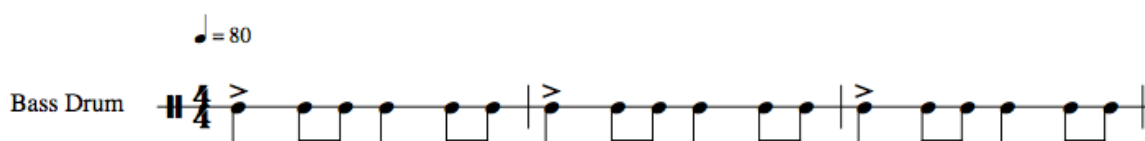


With accents on the downbeats of each measure, Example 4.21.10 demonstrates the Native American quarter-note rhythm on the bass drum. Another rhythm is used for the action scene, which is similar to both *Peter Pan* and *FF7*'s Red XIII character theme (*FF7* will be discussed in more detail in the following section). When the horse-riding hostile Native Americans close in on the fleeing boy, a quarter-eighth-eighth pattern begins, the same rhythm featured in *Peter Pan* and *FF7*. Example 4.21.11 shows a screenshot of the action scene and Example 4.21.12 shows this drum beat. With accents still on the first beat of measures, this drumbeat keeps to the Native American music style topic as well as using the same eighth-note embellishments as *Peter Pan* and *FF7*.

**Example 4.21.11: *Shanghai Noon* Chong Wang vs. Hostile Natives (00:22:48)**



**Example 4.21.12: Native American War Drum Beat**

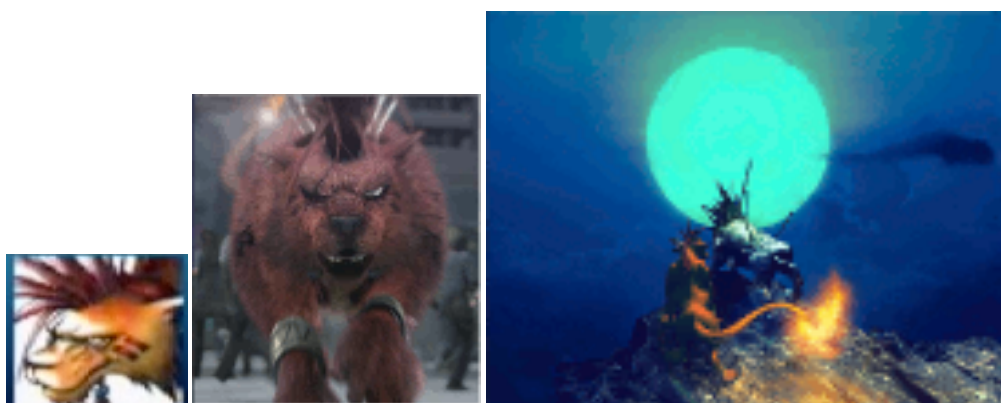


## 4.22 The *FF7* Native American Character: Red XIII

*Final Fantasy VII* (*FF7*, 1997) also features style topics to define characters and areas. Nobuo Uematsu composed the music for *FF7* and he links the character known as Red XIII with Native American music. Red XIII is not the typical RPG party member due to his species. All playable characters (PCs) in the *Final Fantasy* series are bipedal until Red XIII in *FF7*. Also, he is the first obviously “Native American” character, though not the first tribal one. This character can be described as a mixture of a wolf with a red lion. As shown in Example 4.22.1, he sports a lion’s tail tipped with fire, a bird of prey’s feather atop his head, and war paint markings on his left and right cheeks.

Red XIII is marked as a Native American by name (being “Red”) and visually by feathers, war paint-like marks, and the feather on his head. While not a humanoid, Red XIII portrays all of the cliché visual characteristics expected of a “red man” though as a red beast.

**Example 4.22.1: Red XIII Images (From Left to Right: *FF7* In-Game Menu Portrait, *FF7 Advent Children* Movie, and Concept Art from Game Booklet)<sup>94</sup>**

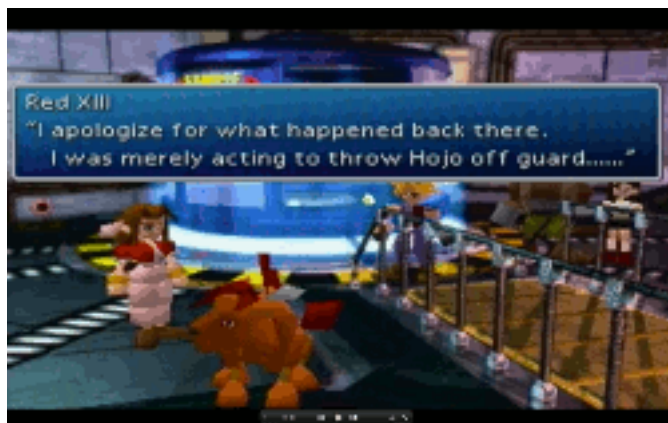


The player’s first encounter with Red XIII, shown in Example 4.22.2, occurs in the first city on the first disc (out of three Playstation game discs). When the protagonist of *FF7*, Cloud Strife, storms the Shinra Headquarters to save Aerith Gainsborough, he finds evil scientist Professor Hojo attempting to force Aerith and Red XIII to mate in an experiment in order to preserve both “endangered species” (Aerith is an ancient human race). Cloud, with the assistance of his party members, halt the experiment and rescue both Aerith and Red XIII, adding Red XIII as the fifth party member.

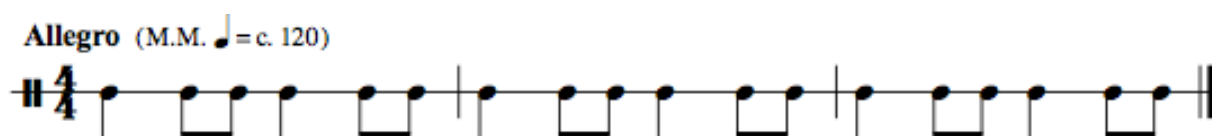
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<sup>94</sup> Yoshinori Kitase, dir., PS Video Game, *Final Fantasy VII* (Sony Computer Entertainment America Inc., 1997).

### Example 4.22.2: Screenshot of First Encounter with Red XIII



### Example 4.22.3: Native American Topic Drum Rhythm (Red XIII Theme Percussion)



Red XIII's theme's accompaniment, shown in Example 4.22.3, is a tribal drum beating continuously in 4/4 meter with a shaker accenting beats 1 and 3. Uematsu adds two eighth notes leading into beats 1 and 3, accenting them. Removing these embellishments, one can find the constant quarter note drum flow that is common for the Native American topic. As mentioned in the previous section, this same eighth-note embellishment of the quarter-note rhythm marks Indians in both *Peter Pan* and *Shanghai Noon*.

The melody for the A section of Red XIII's theme, shown in Example 4.22.4, is in E minor-inflected pentatonic. Example 4.22.5 shows the full E pentatonic scale of his

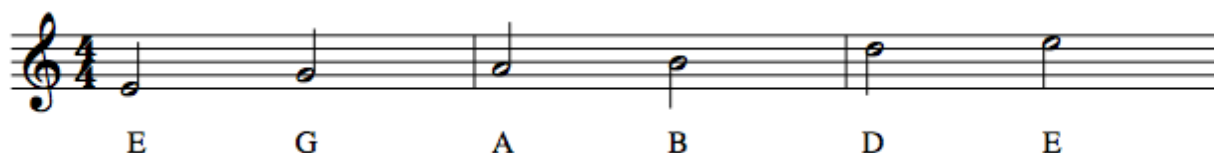


theme: E, G, A, B, and D (with the E repeated at the octave). Red XIII's theme begins with E as the prominent note followed by G as the next prominent note in measure 5 (a minor third). Like *Peter Pan*, this minor third is outlined and stressed in this theme. In Red XIII's melody, each note, except D, of the anhemitonic scale (E, G, A, B, D) is emphasized through repeated notes and a decorative note a minor second or major second below leading to each emphasized scale degree. The emphasized notes of the scale are shown with boxes in Example 4.22.4. The only minor second present is the F# passing tone in measure 5. This note, while not part of the anhemitonic scale, is present in E minor and functions as a leading tone to the G. Each leading note is shown with an arrow pointing toward the pitch it decorates. The bass line constitutes Red XIII's entire theme (the only melodic portion). Perhaps an allusion to his simple animal nature – he is the first *Final Fantasy* playable character that walks on all fours -- his theme seems just a skeletal rhythm and bass.

**Example 4.22.4: Red XIII's Theme (Emphasized Pentatonic Scale Notes in Boxes)**

The image displays the musical score for Red XIII's Theme, specifically the Electric Bass part. The score is written in 4/4 time and E minor. It is divided into three systems of staves. The first system (measures 1-4) shows the initial bass line with the note E highlighted in a box. The second system (measures 5-8) shows the continuation of the theme, with the note G highlighted in a box. The third system (measures 9-12) shows the final part of the theme, with the notes A and B highlighted in boxes. Arrows point to the F# passing tones in measures 5 and 10, indicating their function as leading tones to G and B respectively.

**Example 4.22.5: E Pentatonic Scale for Red XIII's Theme**



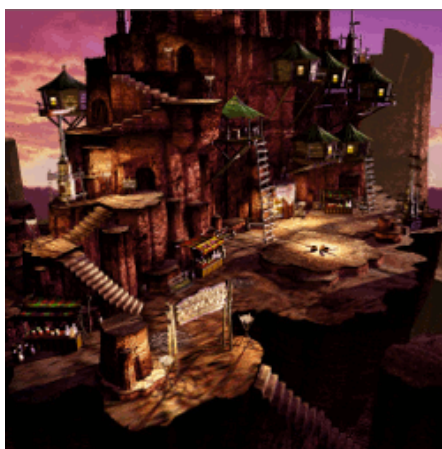
Red XIII's theme does not entirely follow the Native American musical conventions. The B section of his theme introduces different instrumentation, adding a harp and crystals. Yet this section of his theme keeps the constant native drums. This other section seems more "ethereal" and may be interpreted as "mysterious" or as marking the scientific experiments conducted on Red XIII by Professor Hojo. Regardless of the difference of this B section, with the player's first hearing of Native American topic music associated with an exotic animal character sporting cliché visual indicators of "Indianness" in the A section, the player labels Red XIII as the Native American character of *FF7*.

Red XIII's theme perhaps is a foreshadowing of when the party arrives at his birthplace, Cosmo Canyon. The Cosmo Canyon theme, also in E pentatonic (the same minor-inflected pentatonic shown in Example 4.22.5), contains a full melody on what sounds like MIDI flute. When the party first arrives at Cosmo Canyon, the player hears this town's theme (Example 4.22.8). The Cosmo Canyon theme seems to be built upon Red XIII's theme, or vice versa. Since the player encounters Red XIII before Cosmo Canyon, the native drums and pentatonic bass line are first associated with Red XIII. Chronologically, it would seem Cosmo Canyon's theme is a continuation of Red XIII's

theme. However, since the Cosmo Canyon theme has a melody (Red XIII's does not), it would seem that Red XIII's theme could be perceived as an extension of or derived from the Cosmo Canyon theme.

The town features Native American-like architecture nestled into a setting resembling Southwest American landscapes. A screenshot of Cosmo Canyon is shown in Example 4.22.6. A picture of the North American Canyon de Chelly is shown in Example 4.22.7. Cosmo Canyon's location is in a similar landscape, including red canyon walls and homes built within the canyon's walls. Although *FF7* is in a dystopian setting--a world with deceptive companies using gritty steam technology or industrial era technologies--adding native visual and musical aspects to a community within this world conveys Native Americans. Uematsu's scoring compliments the town despite its existence in a grungy techno setting.

**Example 4.22.6: Cosmo Canyon Screenshot**



### Example 4.22.7: Canyon de Chelly<sup>95</sup>



Cosmo Canyon's theme contains much of the same harmonic and accompanying material of Red XIII's theme. This theme takes the topic further by adding a Native American midi flute emulating pitch bending. This theme can be broken into two sections, A and B. The A section, shown in Example 4.22.8, presents a pentatonic melody that departs and returns to an E pitch embellished with various rhythmic ideas derived from the accompanying percussion. This section is repeated twice with no variations before proceeding to section B. Where Red XIII's theme shifts from the "native" material to a section containing a crystal sounds that suggest his mysterious nature, Cosmo Canyon instead provides an answer to its first section by moving the melodic content an octave higher and completing a full parallel phrase structure straying slightly from the pentatonic mode while maintaining the feel (the melody includes an F# and some passing notes between the E pentatonic notes). The B section of Cosmo Canyon's theme is shown in Example 4.22.9.

<sup>95</sup> Photo.net, "Holes in the Ground," <http://photo.net/travel/great-trips/holes/> (accessed May 1, 2012).

### Example 4.22.8: Cosmo Canyon Theme Section A



### Example 4.22.9: Cosmo Canyon Theme Section B



*FF7*, therefore, seems to follow both the Native American visual clichés and the musical style topic found in both *Peter Pan* and *Shanghai Noon*. Visually, both films and the video game feature Native American bird feathers on the head and war paint on cheeks. Both *Peter Pan* and *FF7* contain a literal “redman” character. Musically, like *Peter Pan* and *Shanghai Noon*, Red XIII’s theme features a bass drum beat based on quarter notes with two eighth notes between quarters. Shakers are found in Red XIII’s theme and *Shanghai Noon*’s Native Americans vs. Chong Wang scene. Finally, minor-inflected pentatonic modes are used in *Peter Pan*, *Shanghai Noon*, and Red XIII’s theme.

### 4.3 Large Clumsy Character Theme

#### 4.31 The Clumsy Lout in Film

Wally from *Mildred Pierce* (1945), Inspector Jacques Clouseau from *The Pink Panther Strikes Again* (1976), and Fezzik from *The Princess Bride* (1988) are all examples of comedic, clumsy characters in film. Akin to “mickey mousing,” a film music technique where the music follows the action on screen, the music accompanying all these characters shares common features that suggest comedy, clumsiness, and sneakiness. The comedic character in silent film was often accompanied by music in cue sheet books called “mysterious – burglar music” or “the grotesque.”<sup>96</sup> The cue sheet from the *Sam Fox* collection for “mysterious – burglar music” is shown below in Example 4.31.1.

**Example 4.31.1: Sam Fox Mysterious Burglar Cue Music<sup>97</sup>**



<sup>96</sup> Buhler, 224.

<sup>97</sup> Sam Fox, *Sam Fox Moving Picture Music: Volume I* (Sam Fox Pub. Co., 1913), 16.

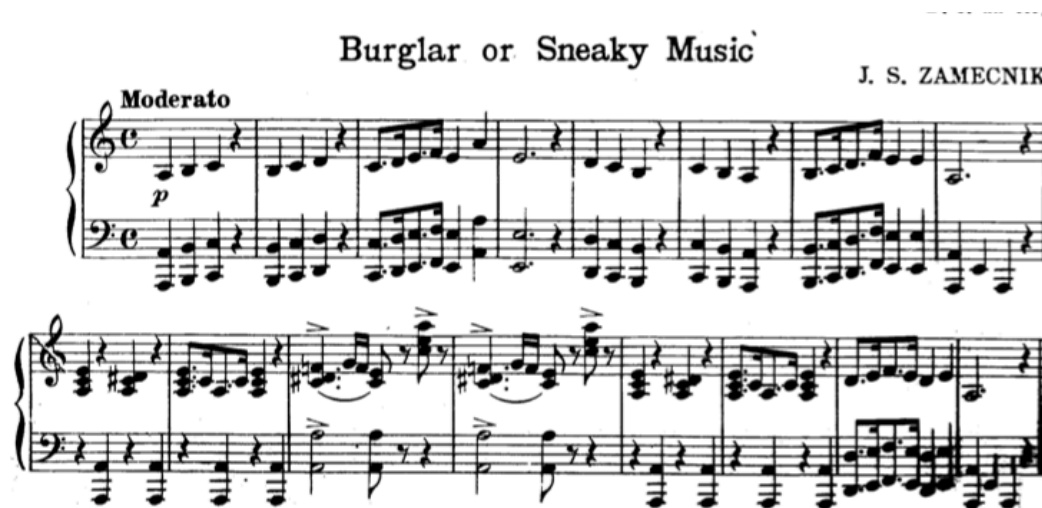
The “mysterious” theme begins with low bass lines in octaves moving either by step or thirds. As seen in measure 3 of Example 4.31.1, some rhythms are dotted, with a syncopated, lopsided sound. Towards the end of the piece, measures 12 through 16, the left hand bass and right hand treble alternate in hocket fashion. The term “hocket” refers to the “alternation of two or more voices with single notes or short groups of notes, one part sounding while the others rest.”<sup>98</sup> Perhaps this hocket is an early example of the awkward “lumbering” of comedic, clumsy characters. The “mysterious” song stays in piano dynamic, alluding to the sneaky “burglar” feel. The second section of the song, beginning at measure 9, after the double bar, includes a melody descending from treble into the bass register. So, from this example, comedic and clumsy characters may be musically represented with low bass pitch, dotted syncopation, alternating bass and treble in hocket fashion, quiet volume level, and a passage with descending bass to low register.

The *Sam Fox Moving Picture Music: Volume 2* also includes “mysterious” or “burglar” music. Example 4.31.2 shows the “Burglar or Sneaky Music” sheet music from this second volume. This second example also includes a low register melody, a hocket section towards the end of the piece, *piano* volume level, and a low descending passage in bass to the lower register.

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<sup>98</sup> Don Michael Randel, ed. *Harvard Concise Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 2000), 223.

**Example 4.31.2: Sam Fox Burlgar or Sneaky Cue Music<sup>99</sup>**



A comedic and perhaps clumsy character appears in the film *The Princess Bride* (1988), directed by Rob Reiner with music by Mark Knopfler. Fezzik, played by Andre the Giant, towers over the other characters in the film. Although maybe not clumsy, Fezzik is initially presented as comedic or slow-witted: often, Fezzik ends his sentences rhyming with the last dialogue speaker, and as hired muscle he seems unable to make decisions, asking the criminal mastermind Vizzini, “What is my way?” when unsure how he would ambush the hero Westley. After Vizzini tells him to use a rock, Fezzik trudges over to pick up a rock (shown in Example 4.31.3).

<sup>99</sup> Sam Fox, *Sam Fox Moving Picture Music: Volume 2* (Sam Fox Pub. Co., 1913), 22.



**Example 4.31.3: *Princess Bride*'s Fezzik Grabs Rock to Await Wesley (00:25:37)<sup>100</sup>**



Later in *Princess Bride*, Fezzik reunites with a drunken criminal comrade Inigo, as seen in Example 4.31.4, and nurses him back to full strength while explaining the current events of the kingdom. During this scene, “The Friend’s Song” plays.<sup>101</sup> This song is associated with both Fezzik and Inigo. Together, both Fezzik and Inigo represent a large clumsy character: Fezzik is large and Inigo is drunkenly clumsy. Despite sharing the theme, the stylistic elements of the music reflect the comedic and clumsy character with a low bass line, bass and strings trading off in hocket fashion accompanying the brass and tuba theme, and *piano* volume. Example 4.31.5 shows some of these stylistic elements from passages of the song.

**Example 4.31.4: Fezzik Nurses Inigo (01:02:13)**



<sup>100</sup> Rob Reiner, dir., DVD, *The Princess Bride* (1988; Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios Inc., 2007).

<sup>101</sup> *Princess Bride Soundtrack*.

### Example 4.31.5: Theme When Fezzik is Present with Inigo

$\text{♩} = 115$

Brass

Tuba

*The Pink Panther* series' character Inspector Jacques Clouseau perhaps is the best example of a comedic, clumsy character in film. Inspector Clouseau's theme demonstrates all the common style topic traits. The theme begins with a tuba and other brass, alternating between the low tuba pitch and the higher brass in hocket fashion (see Example 4.31.6b). This alternating polka-like bass line creates the same lop-sided feel that syncopated rhythms produce. The instrumentation includes the low bass line played by a tuba, a melody played by bassoon and strings, and accompaniment from plucked strings and a horn section. Example 4.31.6a and Example 4.31.6b shows Inspector Clouseau's theme and the low tuba/brass line separately.

### Example 4.31.6: Inspector Clouseau's Theme

#### a. Bassoon Theme

$\text{♩} = 130$

Bassoon

### b. Tuba and Brass Accompaniment

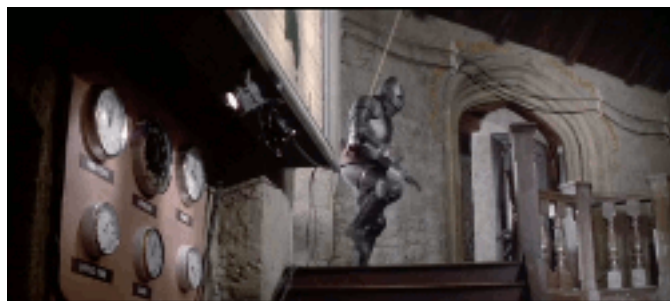
♩ = 130

Brass

Tuba

An occurrence of Clouseau's theme occurs in *The Pink Panther Strikes Again* (1976), directed by Blake Edwards with music by Henry Mancini, as he attempts to sneak around wearing a full suit of armor. This scene is shown in Example 4.31.7. Clouseau somehow is not immediately noticed. He promptly unties a rope connected to the ceiling (presumably a chandelier) and attempts to swing into action to stop the mad former chief inspector from obliterating England. He immediately swings to another door on the other side of the large room, falls down the stairs, crashes headfirst out of a stain-glass window, and plummets into a muddy pigsty.

#### Example 4.31.7: Inspector Clousseau in Knight Armor (*The Pink Panther Strikes Again*) (01:33:16)<sup>102</sup>



<sup>102</sup> Blake Edwards, dir., DVD, *The Pink Panther Strikes Again* (1976; MGM Home Entertainment LLC., 2005).

#### 4.32 *Final Fantasy IX*'s Adelbert Steiner: The Simple Knight

The clumsy character style topic appears in *Final Fantasy IX* in a similar fashion to Clousseau's antics. *Final Fantasy IX* (2000, *FF9*) features a simple-minded, devout knight named Adelbert Steiner (referred to exclusively as "Steiner"). He is the largest character from the cast of playable characters in *FF9*. This comedic knight character wears a Germanic yodel knight helm complete with a feather, is suited in chainmail and full plate armor, and wields a large knight's sword. Example 4.32.1 shows a screenshot of the first encounter of Steiner in a CG cut-scene appearing shortly after the opening credit sequence. Steiner has a blank stare, indicating his simplistic nature and mind.

##### **Example 4.32.1: Adelbert Steiner in First Appearance in *FF9*<sup>103</sup>**



When Princess Garnet goes missing, Steiner must find her before his rival, General Beatrix. Captain Adelbert Steiner decides to round his knights and begins his quest with zeal. When only two of his twelve knights appear, the player gains control of Steiner (shown in Examples 4.32.2 and 4.32.3) and lumbers around as this hulking knight. As he calls for his knights, Steiner's theme begins.

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<sup>103</sup> Hiroyuki Ito, dir., PS Video Game, *Final Fantasy IX* (Square Electronic Arts L.L.C., 2000).

**Example 4.32.2: The Player Gains Control; Steiner Calls for his Knights**



**Example 4.32.3: The Player Controls Steiner**



Example 4.32.4a and Example 4.32.4b show Steiner's theme and its low tuba accompaniment. Like Inspector Clouseau's theme, the tuba plays low walking notes with an instrument answering in a higher register on the off beats. This use of hocket mirrors the large clumsy character stemming from the "burglar" silent film music cues. The clarinet melody of the theme includes dotted rhythms. With its low tuba, hocket, and syncopated melody, Steiner's theme exhibits the clumsy, comedic character style topic.

### Example 4.32.4: Steiner's Theme

### a. Clarinet Melody

Clarinet

1 2 3 3

♩ = 90

### **b. Tuba and Brass Accompaniment**

Brass

Tuba

♩ = 90

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

While video games are different from film because of non-linearity, sound technology constraints, and ludological function, some of the terminology and tools from film music theory remain applicable. This thesis demonstrates, at least for *Final Fantasy* video games of the RPG genre, that video games borrow or emulate ideas from film, sometimes seeming to reference specific films such as *Star Wars*. The *Final Fantasy* series contains many visual and musical similarities to films: opening title forms, leitmotifs, and style topics.

Chapter 2 compared the original *Final Fantasy* for NES with *Star Wars*, finding that both the video game and the film incorporate narrative text during the opening title sequence while an ABA form opening plays. Examining *Final Fantasy VIII*'s opening sequence in comparison with Spaghetti Western films *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* and *The Wild Bunch* yielded shared “rotoscoped” visual stills along with a flute and drum beat theme song.

Not only do *Final Fantasy* games open similar to films, the series' music also sometimes consists of recurring leitmotifs akin to film music leitmotifs. Chapter 3 investigated the use of leitmotifs in select games from the series: *Final Fantasy*, *Final Fantasy VI*, *Final Fantasy VIII*, *Final Fantasy IX*, and *Final Fantasy XII*. These games emulated leitmotif use found in films *Star Wars*, *Captain Blood*, *Casablanca*, *Titanic*,

*The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring*, and *James Bond*. First, group themes for *Star Wars* and *Fellowship of the Ring* and their occurrences during action involving members of the “hero group,” were identified. *Final Fantasy XII* used a group leitmotif in the same way the aforementioned films do, for PC including Ashe. Second, individual character themes for Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* and Dr. Peter Blood in *Captain Blood* were compared to themes for *Final Fantasy XII*’s Vaan and Terra from *Final Fantasy VI*. Next, popular-song love leitmotifs were discussed from *Casablanca* and *Titanic*. *Final Fantasy VIII* kept to this love leitmotif tradition with a love theme for the main couple titled “Eyes on Me.” Finally, Chapter 3 touched on a theme that identifies a series -- a collection of works from the same universe or sharing a title. Film series *Star Wars* and *James Bond* have specially-made themes and visuals that proclaim the connection between all works within that series. *Final Fantasy* as a collective series also shares a theme and visuals that connect all games to each other.

Chapter 4 studied style topics found in films and video games: the heroic style topic, Native American style topic, and clumsy lumbering character style topic. The heroic style topics found in the films *Star Wars* and *Sea Hawk* followed the heroic (hunt) style topic closely with perfect fourth intervals, arpeggiation of tonic triad, triplet figures, and brass instrumentation. “Locke’s Theme” from *Final Fantasy VI* includes these musical heroic style topic elements. An analysis of Native American style topics from *Walt Disney’s Peter Pan* and *Shanghai Noon* supports that the Native American style topic includes a steady stream of quarter beats on drums in 4/4 meter with an accent on the first beat of each measure. The style topic also utilizes the pentatonic scale. True to the style topic from film, Native American character Red XIII from *Final Fantasy VII* is



connected to a Native American theme with steady drums and a pentatonic theme. Finally, the large clumsy character style topic in the films *Princess Bride* and *The Pink Panther Strikes Again* was inspected. Both instances of the style topic involve a hocket-fashion theme between a low brass and a higher instrument. Like these films, *Final Fantasy IX* character Steiner's theme has a hocket theme between tuba and clarinet.

This thesis, while showing similarities between the use of music in video games and film, is limited to the *Final Fantasy* RPG series. Future research could test film music theory tools and terminology with other RPG series, like *Zelda*, *Breath of Fire*, or *Suikoden*. Additionally, other genres could be examined for similarities or differences: genres like "platform" (a genre of game where the player controls a PC that usually moves from left to right primarily utilizing jumping to progress in level), "strategy" (a tactical game where the player controls multiple units in battle usually set during a narrative war), or "massive multiplayer online" (an RPG genre of game played with multiple other players simultaneously online where the players can explore the world, progress in level and powers, and interact with each other).<sup>104</sup>

While game genres may have different music due to varying narrative types or game mechanics, future research may also determine if individual video game companies -- like Capcom®, Square Enix, Namco Bandai Games, or Nintendo® -- or composers including Nobuo Uematsu, Koji Kondo, Greg Edmondson, or Yuko Takehara differ by style and by similarity to film conventions as well. The location in which the game is developed may also affect the video game's music's similarity to film, i.e., games produced in the US may differ from games developed in Japan or Europe.

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<sup>104</sup> Whalen, 21.

The video game industry is enormous; the most recent version of the *Call of Duty* series *Call of Duty: Black Ops II* “[broke] its worldwide sales record of \$1 billion in only 16 days.”<sup>105</sup> Despite the genre’s popularity, much is left to be explored in ludological music theory. This thesis has attempted to make a start by showing how one may apply some film music tools and terminology to video game music. Even with its differences from film, video game music remains tied closely to it, something acknowledged even by practitioners. Video game composer Aaron Marks in his book, *The Complete Guide to Game Audio: For Composers, Musicians, Sound Designers, and Game Developers*, advises fellow video composers to “learn from the masters” and “[film] music is the type of music you want to do for games [...] [film composers] don’t get paid a million dollars per movie for nothing.”<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Jennifer Dudley-Nicholson, “Video Games Blast Away Competition,” *Herald Sun*, November 7, 2012, Switchedon section, C Edition.

<sup>106</sup> Aaron Marks, *The Complete Guide to Game Audio: For Composers, Musicians, Sound Designers, and Game Developers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (USA: Focal Press, 2009), 238.

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## **VITA**

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