

MUSIC · Y3–Y6

Film & Media Music

Knowledge Organiser — Y3–Y6

Key vocabulary

1

Film score / soundtrack

The music composed for a film. The score supports the action, emotion, and story without drawing attention to itself.

2

Leitmotif

A recurring musical theme associated with a specific character, place, or idea. When the theme plays, the audience thinks of what it represents.

Example: Darth Vader's 'Imperial March' (John Williams); Jaws theme (John Williams)

3

Diegetic / non-diegetic sound

Diegetic = sound the characters can hear (a radio playing, a character singing). Non-diegetic = music only the audience hears.

4

Underscore

Background music that supports a scene without dominating. Often continuous, low-level orchestral music.

5

Foley

Sound effects created in a studio to replace or enhance sounds recorded on set. Named after Jack Foley.

Example: Footsteps on different surfaces, rustling clothes

Producers create emotion

Musical choices and their effects



- MAJOR KEY: bright, happy, triumphant. Minor key: sad, tense, mysterious.
- TEMPO: fast = excitement/panic; slow = sadness/calm/tension-building
- INSTRUMENTS: strings = emotion; brass = power/heroism; woodwind = whimsy/nature; drums = action/danger
- DYNAMICS: quiet (piano) = suspense; loud (forte) = shock/triumph; sudden loud = jump scare
- KEY COMPOSERS: John Williams (Star Wars, Jaws, Harry Potter, Schindler's List); Hans Zimmer (The Lion King, Inception, Interstellar); Ennio Morricone (The Good, the Bad and the Ugly)
- ACTIVITY: watch a film scene twice — once with sound, once silent. What does the music add?

