MUSIC

Music in Science-Fiction Films

I. BASIC ELEMENTS OF MUSIC THEORY
   20%
   A. Sound and Music
      1. Definitions
         a. Music Is Sound Organized in Time
         b. Music of the Western World
      2. Physics of Musical Sound
         a. Sound Waves
         b. Instruments as Sound Sources
   B. Pitch, Rhythm, and Harmony
      1. Pitch
         a. Pitch, Frequency, and Octaves
         b. Pitch on a Keyboard
         c. Pitch on a Staff
         d. Pitch on the Grand Staff
         e. Overtones and Partials
         f. Equal Temperament: Generating the Twelve Pitches by Dividing the Octave
         g. Scales: Leading Tone, Tonic, Dominant
         h. Intervals
         i. Intervals of the Major Scale
         j. Minor Scales and Blues Inflections
         k. Melody Defined; Example, Using Scale Degrees
         l. Contour
         m. Range and Tessitura
      2. Rhythm
         a. Beat
         b. Tempo
         c. Meter: Duple, Triple, and Quadruple
         d. Rhythmic Notation
         e. Time Signature
         f. Simple and Compound Subdivision
         g. Mixed and Irregular Meter
         h. Syncopation
         i. Polyrhythm
      3. Harmony
         a. Common-Practice Tonality
         b. Chords
            i. Triads
            ii. Inversions
         c. Keys
            i. Keys and Key Signatures
II. BUILDING FROM THE FAMILIAR 30%

A. The Vaudeville Foundation
B. Music as a Mask for Noisy Film Projectors
   1. Skladanowsky’s Berlin Screenings
   2. The Lumières’ Paris Screenings
C. The First Science Fiction Film
   1. *A Trip to the Moon*
   2. An Original Film Score?
D. Méliès’s Film Comes to America
E. Greater Musical Ambition
   1. Co-opting the Vaudeville Orchestra
   2. Stretching the Boundaries
   3. Fritz Lang’s Metropolis
   4. LISTENING COMPANION 1: Metropolis, “Metropolis Thema” (Metropolis Theme) and “Maschinen” (Machines) (1927) – Gottfried Huppertz

F. Synchronized “Sound”
   1. Sound-on-Disk vs. Sound-on-Film
   2. Breaking the Sound Barrier: The Jazz Singer
   3. Spending the Money: King Kong’s Original Score
   4. Temp Tracks (Temp Scores)

G. A Notorious Case of “Temp Love”
   1. 2001: A Space Odyssey
   2. A Compilation Score (Fifty Years Late)

H. E.T., the Eighties Blockbuster
   1. Spielberg’s Film
   2. Williams’ Score Helps Create a Beloved Character

I. Romantic Gestures in a Modern Genre
   1. The Major Tritone Progression
   2. The MTTP and the Romantic Era
   3. Dune: A Messy Film, A Masterful Score
   4. LISTENING COMPANION 4: Dune, “Prologue” and “Main Title” (1984) – Toto

III. EXPLORING NEW TIMBRES 20%

A. Music by a Master: Bernard Herrmann
   1. The Big-Budget Treatment: The Day the Earth Stood Still
   2. The Plot of The Day the Earth Stood Still
   3. Herrmann’s Freedom to Experiment
   4. LISTENING COMPANION 5: The Day the Earth Stood Still, “Prelude” and “Outer Space” (1951) – Bernard Herrmann

B. Bebe and Louis Barron and Forbidden Planet
   1. A Movie Full of Firsts
   2. Shakespeare on Altair IV
   3. Music From Machines
   4. LISTENING COMPANION 6: Forbidden Planet, “Main Titles (Overture)” (1956) – Bebe and Louis Barron

C. Starring the Synthesizer
   1. Vangelis, Blade Runner, and Future Noir
   2. Ridley Scott’s Film
   3. Music for Dystopia

D. TRON
1. A CGI Pioneer
2. TRON’s Plot
3. Wendy Carlos’s Score: A Blending of Colors
4. LISTENING COMPANION 8: TRON, “CREATION OF TRON” (1982) – WENDY CARLOS

IV. MUSIC PLAYS A ROLE

A. John Williams, Star Wars, and Source Music from the Cantina Band
   1. Building a Blockbuster
   2. Lucas’s Film
   3. Williams’s Case for an Original Score
   4. Dolby Sound

B. Spielberg’s Close Encounters of the Third Kind
   1. Columbia Pictures Takes a Chance
   2. Spielberg’s Film
   3. Solfège Through the Centuries

C. Music as a Means of Establishing Setting
   1. Back to the Future, Yet Again
   2. Back to the Future III
   3. Silvestri and ZZ Top’s “Doubleback”

D. WALL•E: Music Humanizes
   1. “Pixar’s Ninth Consecutive Wonder”
   2. A Robot Love Story
   3. “Borrowed” Songs from Hello, Dolly!
   4. Thomas Newman’s Score

E. Inception and Édith Piaf’s “Non, je ne regrette rien”
   1. Christopher Nolan’s Inception
   2. Mental Espionage
   3. Hans Zimmer and Music as a Plot Signpost

F. Mars Attacks! And Music Saves the Day
   1. Tim Burton and an A-List Cast for a B-Movie Tribute
   2. Burton’s Film: A Tribute to Cheesiness
   3. The Integral Role of Music in the Film
   4. LISTENING COMPANION 14: MARS ATTACKS!, “MAIN TITLES” (1996) – DANNY ELFMAN