



ALL ABOUT FILM MUSIC

Name _____

Form _____

Music is used in films to help tell the story. It can contribute to both the artistic and the financial success of the movie. At the beginning, whilst the titles and credits are being shown, the accompanying music helps to capture the audiences' attention and to create a particular mood. Thus, a film like *Star Wars*, which has a military theme, starts off with a strong rhythmic, marching tune with plenty of percussion and brass.

Music also helps to develop the action. The duel between Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker is made all the more exciting by the dramatic music. Powerful emotions can be strengthened with a suitable musical accompaniment. Thus, the death of Obi Wan Kenobi is made to seem more tragic by the use of sad music in the background. The task of composing music which will suit the action of the movie is a difficult one. It must be timed to fit exactly with split second precision.



Many films have a theme tune. If so, the entire musical score will often be a series of variations upon this theme. If a movie has a popular theme song this can help to promote it on the radio, television and through CD sales. The theme songs to *Ghostbusters* and *Fame* were both very successful in doing this.



The first movies were silent. They had no soundtracks so each cinema hired a pianist to play whilst it was running. The more talented pianists began to make up music as they went along to match the action. The first film with its own soundtrack was *The Jazz Singer*, which reached the screens in 1927.

Since then some well-known composers have produced music for the cinema. These have included Prokofiev, Vaughan Williams, Britten and Copland. Today, composers such as Carl Davis and John Williams often write the musical scores for some of the latest films. Some movies use established classical pieces for the soundtrack. Thus, the work of Richard Strauss featured in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Rock music is also used. For example, *The Graduate*, released in 1967, was powerfully developed by the songs of Simon and Garfunkel.



the
GRADUATE

1. What music was used at the beginning of *Star Wars* to help create the mood of the film?

2. Complete this sentence: **Composing music for film is difficult because.....**

3. Describe how music was used in *Star Wars* to develop the action.

4. Complete this sentence: **The *Ghostbusters* theme song helped the success of the film by.....**

5. Write a sentence describing the “early movies”.

6. List some of the composers who have produced music for the cinema.

7. Write a list of as many recent movies and films as you can think of which used rock music for the soundtrack.

8. Think of a film you have watched. Describe some of the scenes from it and the kind of music which could be used to accompany them.

9. Imagine you are a composer of film music. Describe the different types of music you would use for films with the following themes:

Space	Crime	Western	Love Story