

LEARN SHEET: Composition & Film Composition Techniques (8.3 & 8.4)

Vocabulary you need to know:

Riff	A constantly repeating melodic phrase
Ostinato	A constantly repeating rhythm
Monophonic	A single melodic line
Polyphonic	Several rhythms together
Staggered	Parts starting at different times
Canonic	A 'round' – starting at different times
Unison	A group playing the same notes
Syncopation	Off-beat, jazzy rhythms
Scotch Snap	Short note followed by a longer note
Triplets	Three notes in the time of two
Conjunct	Stepwise movement
Rubato	Expressive tempo, with some freedom
Pedal/Drone	A long held note
Diatonic	Notes which belong to the same scale
Chromatic	Extra notes (often #/bs) which do not belong to the main scale
Motif	A short fragment which represents a character or place for instance
Dissonant	Music which contains clashes of harmony
Consonant	Music which sounds pleasant throughout
Also revise: tempo, dynamics, rhythm vocabulary	
Target Grade 5- or higher?	
Imitation	The 'copying' of ideas during a piece
Articulation	The clarity of the notes (smooth/detached)
Underscore	Music playing during the scene of a film
Perfect cadence	2 chords (5-1) which, when played together, make the music sound complete
Imperfect cadence	2 chords (x-5) which, when played together, provide a link to the next section

FAMOUS COMPOSERS

- **Danny Elfman** – Born in 1953 in Los Angeles, California and has written close to 50 film scores including Batman, Spider-man, Men in Black, Beetlejuice, Edward Scissorhands and The Nightmare Before Christmas.
- **John Williams** - Born on 8 February 1932 in Long Island, Williams has composed some of the most popular film scores including Jaws, the Star Wars films, Superman, the Indiana Jones movies, E.T., Jurassic Park and three Harry Potter instalments.
- **Hans Zimmer** - is a German film score composer and music producer who has composed music for over 100 films, including Hollywood blockbusters such as the Pirates of the Caribbean series, Gladiator, The Lion King, The Da Vinci Code, Angels & Demons and Sherlock Holmes.
- **Read more at**
<http://www.classicfm.com/composers/zimmer/#6RWZTSTQI041ap6K.99>

Musical Elements and HOW they can be used in film composition

Tempo - The speed of music

'A sports car driving very fast around a race track'

The music could be played very fast to show a sense of speed.

Dynamics - The volume of music

'Walking to a haunted house at midnight and opening the creaky front door to head inside'

The music could be played at a quiet volume (*piano*) to begin with gradually increasing (*crescendo*) to loud (*forte*) to create a scary atmosphere.

Texture - How musical ideas are combined

'A young girl is walking into a field on a summers day, when a flock of birds fly above her'

The music could be played as a melody with accompanying chords, however when the birds fly above her, another melody could be added to broaden the texture.

Tonality - Major/minor/atonal music

'A group of friends are going through a photo album of their childhood. They laugh joyfully as they look back over their history'

The music could be played in a major key to show a happy and positive mood.

Creating Chords

Major Chords - Happy/positive mood

[4 then 3 semitones]

Minor Chords - Sad/unhappy

[3 then 4 semitones]

Diminished Chords - Uncertain/unstable

[3 then 3 semitones]

Cluster Chords - Scary/tense

[1 then 1 then 1 semitones]