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From Here to There: The Music's Journey: How the Music in the *Lord of the Rings* Trilogy Represents the Cultures of Tolkien's World

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FROM HERE TO THERE: THE MUSIC'S JOURNEY
HOW THE MUSIC IN *THE LORD OF THE RINGS* TRILOGY REPRESENTS THE
CULTURES OF TOLKIEN'S WORLD

A Thesis Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Designation
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How the music in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy represents the cultures of Tolkien's world

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The Lord of the Rings trilogy by J.R.R. Tolkien is one of the most beloved stories of all time; it has been distributed around the world and translated into over fifty languages. The story that Tolkien created was, essentially, how a small group of people can change the course of history through bravery, loyalty, and friendship. It is a story that has touched many hearts over the years. This series of books also has one of the more developed fictional worlds in literature. There are a variety of cultures, which include elves, men, and dwarves. Tolkien not only gave each culture unique characteristics, he also invented six different languages for his peoples to speak. In the backs of many of Tolkien's books are guides to names and pronunciations as well as maps and family trees of the most important characters. This complexity has made it an extremely daunting task for anyone to consider placing the story in a different medium.

Since the books were originally published there have been animated movie versions, but no live action films until 2001. Peter Jackson directed the entire trilogy and released them between 2001 and 2003, with one premiering each year. This was an extraordinary project as he took a risk by showing his vision of this widely known and loved story to the world. There is always the possibility that his movies would not be well received. It was also a financial risk as he made the decision to shoot all three films at the same time, gambling that the first would be popular enough to support the production of the other two. His risk paid off. *The Fellowship of the Ring* won four Oscars and was nominated for an additional nine. In total, the three films won seventeen Oscars as shown on IMDb.com.

Two of these Oscars were presented to Howard Shore for best original score. Shore rose to the challenge of creating the music for this vast and complex world that Tolkien created and

Jackson envisioned, a task which took him four years to complete. Shore intuitively used leitmotifs as the main compositional elements as he was writing the music. In the mid-1800s, Richard Wagner used musical themes in his *Ring Cycle*, in an innovative way of using music to tell a story. Later, the term 'leitmotif' was used as a name for Wagner's new type of theme. This technique was transmitted to movie scoring shortly after the advent of "talkies." For example, *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938) directed by Michael Curtiz and with the musical score by Erich Korngold contains multiple leitmotifs throughout the film. The use of leitmotifs as a musical technique is something that has been greatly studied in part due to its popular use by film composers.

A leitmotif is, essentially, a musical phrase that represents a character, a place, an emotion, or an event that is related to the story line. They can also relate to each other and evolve as the story progresses. If the score is dense enough, it is possible to understand the story just from listening to the music. These motives generally occur in the orchestra but can be used in a choir for special emphasis. As the *Star Wars* films have existed longer, more study has been done on the leitmotifs present throughout the six films. There has been some study of those present in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy as well, most notably Doug Adams' book. However, there is an important aspect of Howard Shore's compositions that is not explored as much. While the interplay and development of the leitmotifs has been studied, the instrumentation choices and other musical decisions made in the leitmotifs have not been given as much attention. The purpose of this study is to examine the leitmotifs given to Lothlórien and Gondor from *The Lord of the Rings* films and demonstrate how Howard Shore represented

the cultures of Middle Earth from Tolkien's books musically by using traditional composition techniques.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leitmotifs were not suddenly developed by Wagner. Wagner was familiar with, used, and built upon a long tradition in Western music history. By calling a melody a theme rather than a melodic idea or subject, a connection is made between the music and what the melody represents which was typically a part of a story. The early story-telling that heavily incorporated music were operas. In opera, singers use words to describe the plot and action while the music essentially supplies the drama, heightening the emotions. This was the main method of telling stories with music until the Romantic period, about two hundred years later. During this period, purely instrumental music told stories with only the title of the work and a few notes detailing what the story was about. This left the audience filling in the details of the story with help from the orchestra, changing the way orchestras were used. However, the use of themes throughout music history all relates back to Baroque opera.

Music Literature Review The origins of Leitmotifs date back to the earliest of operas in 17th century Italy. Claudio Monteverdi's opera, *L'Orfeo* (1607), has a reminiscence or recurring theme that allows the audience to connect the subject to the music throughout the opera. Many other composers, including Mozart, Weber, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Verdi, and Berlioz used a reminiscence theme to hold their works together (Kirby 20). This became

more frequent in the Romantic Period when composers were writing works that told a story of some sort (programmatic music).

One of the more famous examples is *Symphonie Fantastique* (1830) by Hector Berlioz (1803-1869). This symphony musically presents a story of an artist who falls in love and his changing passion for his beloved. Berlioz created a melody that he gave to her that he called an *idée fixe* (fixed idea). It is a recurring melody that represents the obsession the artist has for the beloved. As the image of the beloved changes throughout the symphony, so does the theme (Wright and Simms 517).

Several decades later, Richard Wagner (1813-1883) took the idea of a reminiscence theme and developed it into something completely new in concept. Wagner liked to call his themes *hauptmotifs* but later they were called *leitmotifs* by most scholars. His most notable use of *leitmotifs* is in his four-opera-work, *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1848-1874). Wagner created dozens of *leitmotifs* to represent various characters, locations, and objects. Notable examples are the motives for the sword, the ring, Valhalla, Siegfried, and the Rainbow Bridge (Wright and Simms 547).

There are essentially three different ways for themes to present themselves in a work. There are iconic themes, analogic themes, and associative themes. Iconic themes are those that have sounds that are essentially identical to what they represent. For example, church bells being represented by chimes. Analogic themes have either dynamic physical elements or sonic aspects in common with what they represent. An example would be upper register instruments moving rapidly in an ascending and descending pattern to represent wind whistling through trees. Finally, associative themes gain their meaning through association with a particular

subject. Examples of this would be all the themes from Wagner's *Ring Cycle* listed above as they have no particular sound associated with them outside the context of the opera (Kirby 36).

Associative themes are the most common of the three types as the majority of subjects given a theme would not have a clear sound already determined. There are many more examples outside of traditional art music if one looks at cinema. Almost everyone is familiar with Darth Vader's theme or the Harry Potter theme, to name a couple. *The Lord of the Rings* is no exception from the common use of associative themes. While there may be moments of iconic or analogic uses of instrumentation and writing within the complete score, the themes are associative.

In order for these themes to be understood as connected to the subjects, orchestration must be taken into account. Much of the decision-making used when orchestrating a work comes from a tradition of how instruments were used throughout the history of Western music. Again, most of the practices in traditional art music began in Baroque opera that drew from folk traditions and practical uses of instruments. An example from Grout and Williams would be that flutes were instruments used by shepherds so they gained an association with pastorale scenes. Another example is the use of trumpets and drums in directing a battle, which translated into their use in depictions of war. Horns also had their use during hunting parties that the privileged would participate in which led to their use in representing hunters, nobility, and nature.

Several works can be used to showcase these three examples. Ludwig Van Beethoven's *Pastorale Symphony* (Symphony No. 6), which was completed in 1808, has an emphasis on the upper woodwinds (flute, clarinet, and oboe) and a lack of noticeable brass and percussion for

the majority of the work. The winds depict bird-calls, another common function of upper winds (analogic use) as well as providing wind for a thunder storm that occurs in the fourth movement. The storm uses timpani rolls and accents to represent the thunder of the storm which is more analogic use (Chew and Jander). The *1812 Overture* (1880) by Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky is a good example of trumpet and percussion because throughout the piece, trumpets perform short fanfares of the French National Anthem, signaling an advance. At the end there is a mass of percussion behaving as cannons and gunfire. '*Mars, the Bringer of War*' from *The Planets* (1914-1916) by Gustav Holst is another good example of the use of trumpets and percussion because Mars represents War, which led Holst to use heavy brass throughout the movement, as well as a percussion ostinato underneath, giving the piece a forward drive. Finally, *Der Freischütz* (1821) by Carl Maria Von Weber has many aspects that draw from these traditions. The main character of the opera is a hunter and so is represented by horn and the key of Eb Major, a key associated with heroes since Beethoven's *Third Symphony*, known as the Heroic Symphony (Wright and Simms 539). In the finale of Act II, the Wolf's Glen Scene, there is a host of analogic sequences. Oboes, flutes, and clarinets depict birds, strings and flute depict wind in the trees, a pattern of triplets mimics the beat of a horse's canter, a fanfare of horns represent hunters that appear, and finally a storm appears, accompanied by rapidly moving upper voices and timpani accents (Roden, Wright, and Simms 1208). Howard Shore had all of these works plus many more to use for inspiration when creating the music and themes for *The Lord of the Rings*. The pastorate examples could have had heavy influence on the Hobbits' themes while the war-like examples would inspire aspects of Gondor and other warring cultures' themes.

Not only does the instrumentation add significance to what it represents, but sometimes the key or mode in which the piece or theme is written also plays a part. This is the more qualitative aspect of composing as some of the logic behind key choices is simply how a certain key 'feels.' This comes from the timbre of the key. Certain keys have a darker timbre which can make a piece feel dark or sad while other keys have a brighter timbre, giving a happier and lighter feeling. A part of this depends on whether the key is major or minor. Major keys tend to have a brighter timbre while minor keys have a darker timbre. Also, usually the more sharps or flats added to the key signature increases the intensity of the happy or sad (major or minor) feelings. It is the effect of the timbre that the composer takes into consideration when writing.

All of these elements are taken into consideration when composing a theme for any subject. However, there is one other factor important in orchestrating, which is the inclusion of exotic elements. This means using instruments, melodies, or tonal centers that originate from a non-Western culture. This is another tradition that extends back to the Baroque Period when operas wanted to imbue their story with a sense of *couleur locale* (local color) to give stories set in distant locations authenticity. This includes rhythmic patterns, unique scales, and traditional folk instruments and melodies from the area in question. Conversely, it could also be any of those items taken from a foreign European culture. For example, Russians thinking Spanish dances are exotic because Russia folk music does not have the same rhythmic patterns or melodic elements as traditional Spanish dances. Operas that include elements from the Middle East are *Aida* (1871) by Giuseppe Verdi and *Samson et Dalila* (1876) by Camille Saint-Saëns. Operas with Far East elements are *The Mikado* (1885) by Gilbert and Sullivan and *Madama*

Butterfly (1904) by Giacomo Puccini (Dean "Exoticism"). All of these previously mentioned elements for orchestrating have many more examples and many more variables throughout Western music history than what have been presented here. By utilizing exotic elements in the themes for *The Lord of the Rings*, Shore is able to separate the cultures geographically or historically depending on how the element is utilized.

To effectively use the compositional elements for the leitmotifs, Howard Shore had to possess a firm understanding of J.R.R. Tolkien's books. Shore, like the other key members of the production team for the movies, was constantly reading and referring to Tolkien's works ("From Book to Script" *The Fellowship of the Ring*). It was the goal of everyone involved in the movie series to be as true to Tolkien's creation as possible because they wanted to do justice to it, as well as to please those who truly love his stories. To understand some of the depth of his stories, it is necessary to understand some of what the man went through in his life. The history of the books is as important and influential as the history within the books. Without the depth of his life experiences, Tolkien's books would not have had the scope and detail which make them some of the best fiction literature in the world. It is quite possible that they would not have even existed without some of Tolkien's personal interests.

Tolkien History John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born on January 3, 1892 in South Africa. In 1904, his English parents took him on a trip to visit their home country. While there, his parents died and he was orphaned at age twelve. In 1911, Tolkien began studying English language and literature at Oxford University, continuing an interest in languages that was sparked by his

mother. Later in life, he was employed there as a professor of Anglo-Saxon (“J.R.R. Tolkien: Creator of Middle-earth”).

One of the more defining events in Tolkien’s life was his involvement in World War I. In this war, he lost most of his close friends from his time at King Edward’s School and saw all the horrors of the trenches (“J.R.R. Tolkien: The Legacy of Middle-earth”). It was during this period of his life that he started creating what would eventually become *The Silmarillion*, the book that details the extensive history of Middle Earth (“J.R.R. Tolkien: Creator of Middle-earth”).

Tolkien’s love of languages was one of the motivations that sparked his creation of Middle Earth. During his younger years, he came into possession of a Finnish grammar book which inspired him to create his own language based off of the sounds of Finnish; a language which developed into Quenya, an elvish language. Welsh was another language of inspiration which led him to create Sindarin, a secondary elvish language. In a desire to explain the differences, development, and history of these languages, he created the realm of Middle Earth and its history and peoples (“J.R.R. Tolkien: The Legacy of Middle-earth”).

A second motivation driving his creation of Middle Earth was related to his interest in Anglo-Saxons. As a person well-versed in their culture and history, Tolkien felt that the invasion of the Normans in 1066 stopped the Anglo-Saxon culture from developing to its fullest extent (“J.R.R. Tolkien: The Legacy of Middle-earth”). A part of this development was creating a lasting mythology for England. Even the legend of King Arthur, long associated with England, has Norman roots. Taking this into account, one of Tolkien’s greatest wishes was to create a mythology that was unique to England. Not only that, but create one in such a way that other people could expand upon it and use it as they saw fit. The way in which Tolkien presented this

mythology makes it possible to believe that the events detailed all occurred in the distant past of the modern world and that some lingering qualities could still be present today.

In 1937, Tolkien published his first book, *The Hobbit*. *The Lord of the Rings* was a twelve year endeavor that was not ready for publication until the 1950s (“J.R.R. Tolkien: Creator of Middle-earth”). Throughout the rest of his life, Tolkien was constantly revising and perfecting his world. He had so much information on the history and details of his world that six appendices and an extensive index were added to the end of *The Return of the King*, not including additional stories that remained unpublished until after his death in 1973.

The inclusion of so many of Tolkien’s interests helped to make the world of the story so complex that, in order to fully understand one aspect, it was necessary to know more about the subject than was presented in one book. This is particularly applicable to the cultures that he created as each is given a highly detailed history.

Middle Earth Background In order to understand the various cultures that Tolkien created, it is necessary to have a general background in the history of Middle Earth. As with most cultures in the real world, Tolkien’s cultures are shaped by events in the past which bring them to the point in which they appear in *The Lord of the Rings*. The centuries are divided into Ages much in the same way modern historians have divided Western history into Ages. For example there are the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment. Middle Earth is divided into the First Age, Second Age, Third Age, and Forth Age.

The First Age includes the creation of Middle Earth and the growth and development of elves, who mature from one large base culture to several highly developed cultures. The

Second Age is the most important age for the development of men. During this period, an empire is built and lost and then the remnants are transformed into a large kingdom which includes Gondor and Arnor. The Third Age does not contain much activity until the final years when the events of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* occur. The Fourth Age begins after Aragorn is crowned king, which begins the dominion of men. This is some of the last information Tolkien provides concerning the history of Middle Earth. It is possible that he left it open for others to finish or because he never had the time to write down what happens next.

The Third Age is the most important Age for this study as it is when *The Lord of the Rings* occurs. During the majority of this period, the political climate of Middle Earth relatively stable and is populated by five major races: elves, men, dwarves, hobbits, and orcs. Each race has one or two major cultures associated with it. While each race has certain shared traits and histories, the influence of many different factors have affected groups differently, which leads to different lifestyles and means of living. The elves are divided between those that live in Rivendell and those that live in Lothlórien. Men are divided between Rohan and Gondor. It is important to note that these are not the only cultures of these races, just the largest and most significant. Not much information is given about the lives of the orcs outside of battle. This chart is a simple guide and reference for several cultures with the specific information listed below. Note that the cultures listed for dwarves and orcs are only a couple of the cultures for those races.

Culture	Race	General Living Place	Language
Lothlórien	Elves	Woods	Quenya
Rivendell	Elves	Hidden Valley	Sindarin
Gondor	Men	Stone Cities	Common Tongue and Adûnaic (historical)
Rohan	Men	Plains	Old English
Erebor, Moria	Dwarves	Mountains	Khuzdul
The Shire	Hobbits	The Shire	Common Tongue
Isengard, Mordor	Orcs	Dark Places	Black Speech

All of the cultures have unique qualities that make them stand apart in Middle Earth (see appendix for cultures not examined within this study). The two cultures that will be examined here are Lothlórien and Gondor. The elves of Lothlórien have the oldest culture in Middle Earth. The leader of this civilization is Galadriel, an elf who was born during the First Age when the elves still dwelled with the Valar (*The Silmarillion* 288). The forest of Lothlórien seems ageless as the world passes around it and Frodo describes his experience of entering the wood as it 'felt like stepping back into the Eldar Days, a world that was no more' and that 'ancient things still lived on in the waking world' (*The Fellowship of the Ring* 340). It is also a rather isolated civilization because most of the elves are content to remain within and their borders are well guarded against intruders. The language that is most associated with these ancient elves is Quenya, essentially the Latin of Middle Earth. This was the language that was developed during the First Age while the elves were living with the Valar. It is no longer actively used in Middle Earth aside from ceremonial functions and spells (Adams 3).

The greatest culture of man is in the land of Gondor. This is the most ancient civilization of men, as its founders were the Númenorians who escaped the destruction of their homeland. Shortly after the start of the Third Age, the land lost much of its grandeur until Aragorn

ascended to the throne. No special language is used in Gondor aside from the Common Tongue, something that could be related to English in terms of its global usage.

It is details like those listed above that Shore would have used when deciding how to create the music for these cultures. This type of information would tell him what kind of people live in these cultures and what is important to them.

Conclusion of Literature Review Howard Shore utilized all of the elements and histories described above when composing his music. Composing was not the only job that Shore undertook. He also orchestrated and conducted his music ("Music for Middle-earth" *The Two Towers*). This allowed him to control the entire process, ensuring that it maintained a single vision rather than several people's interpretations. By using opera as a template and even conceiving of the three movies as an opera, Shore was able to give the music a larger scope as well as a unique emotional tone ("Music for Middle-earth" *The Fellowship of the Ring*). Most of the leitmotifs were, in fact, based on a particular emotional emphasis; Howard Shore said, "I wanted the audience to feel" (Adams 7). The tone for each culture was probably drawing from the mood and emotional atmosphere that surrounded the people of the cultures. All of this was dependent on the social and political climate of each culture.

In order for Shore to create these feelings for the themes, he had to have a deep understanding of Tolkien's literature, as well as knowledge of how Peter Jackson, the director, and his production team were presenting the story ("Music for Middle-earth" *The Two Towers*). As part of the process, Shore not only read Tolkien's books, he also researched ring mythology and folk music of Celtic, Middle-East, and African traditions. Another thing he did was search

Western music history for styles he liked and searched the world for different kinds of instruments (Adams 2). To stay up-to-date on the filming process, Shore would have weekly conferences with the producers of the film, including Jackson and the screen-writers, either in New Zealand, where the movie was being filmed, or on webcam. During these meetings, he would not only get to see what had already been shot but would also get input from Jackson on what he had written to that point. This collaboration allowed Shore to stay consistent with the vision that Jackson wanted for the entire film.

Shore's decision to use leitmotifs was easily made because he saw that a story of such complexity required clarity that the music could help provide. The way he decided to use the themes was to give the music cultural significance ("Music for Middle-earth" *The Fellowship of the Ring*). Shore wanted to draw in the audience and tell them about the cultures through music. To give the music the weight he wanted, he tried to make it as grounded in reality as possible. Shore said, "I'm writing music based on a story that predates our culture. I want it to feel old...I want it to feel like somebody discovered the score to The Lord of the Rings in a vault somewhere" (Adams 4). This process included assigning certain instruments and styles to each culture while keeping the cultures connected by common themes present in the music. For example, both Rohan's and Gondor's themes can be played by horn, which characterizes their heroism and nobility. They can also be played by instruments that are only used for their specific cultures. In Rohan's case, this would be the Hardanger fiddle and double fiddle. Gondor's unique instrument, panpipes, are never used to play its leitmotif (Adams 387) because they are reserved for Faramir's theme when it relates to his father. The solemn and almost sad sound of the panpipes mirrors the unfortunate relationship between father and son.

Vocal music was also included in *The Lord of the Rings* score. Just as the instrumentation was carefully chosen, Shore selected a particular vocal style when he utilized a choir. For both of the Elvin cultures, women's chorus was used, each with different language. The Dwarves had an all male chorus to represent their predominately male culture. The text used is either taken directly from Tolkien as one of the songs he wrote, adapted from his works, or completely original. Both Philippa Boyens and Fran Walsh wrote original texts for the films. These women were screenwriters and producers along with Peter Jackson, and they were also the ones to adapt Tolkien's text for the music. David Salo, a Tolkien linguist, provided the translation to the various languages for the text that Boyens or Walsh wrote (Adams 3).

The process of creating and connecting all this material in both composition and recording took Shore four years from beginning to end. Not only did he score the theatrical release, he also composed entirely new music for the extended cuts as the deleted/extended scenes were integrated into the film ("Music for Middle-earth" *The Return of the King*). In total, Shore's music included about seventy-five themes and ten accompaniment patterns that represent Tolkien's story. By examining a couple of these themes, the depth of the thought process will become apparent.

METHODS

The methods that I used to study the leitmotifs of these two cultures include investigating the instrumentation, analyzing the melody, and comparing the results to Tolkien's information from the books. This occurred in a series of steps. The first was to identify any instruments that were highlighted within the leitmotif. This could be any instrument in a traditional Western orchestra

or an additional instrument not typically included in the standard orchestra. After that I studied the choir used for Lothlórien's theme. This included examining the voicing, text, and the sung language of the text.

Next I analyzed the melody itself. Elements that were examined were the key of the leitmotif, intervals used, what meter and rhythms were chosen, and harmonization, if used. This required knowledge and techniques that I learned during Music Theory and Music Analysis classes.

The final step in relating the music to Tolkien's cultures was to draw correlations between each element of the music represented to what Tolkien had written. This involved comparing what is known of historical uses of the instruments and styles, the traditional implications of the choice of key and how intervals were used to their associated meanings. After that, I compared the associated meanings of the leitmotif to what Tolkien wrote when describing the culture in question.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Lothlórien Analysis The first leitmotif analyzed will be that of Lothlórien, the oldest culture remaining in Middle Earth. The first time the theme is heard is during the prologue of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. At this point, it does not seem to be attached to anything in particular. Galadriel, the most prominent figure from Lothlórien, is narrating, which is probably why the theme is used there. However, on the initial viewing of this film, that connection would not be apparent. The first time the theme is heard where it is possible to make an easy connection is when the Fellowship first enters the woods of Lothlórien in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. As Gimli

is warning Frodo (and the audience) about the rumored dangers of the forest, the leitmotif can be heard in the background.

Howard Shore's goal when composing this leitmotif was to create an ancient sound that was more mysterious than what was used for Rivendell (Adams 51). The way he achieved this was by selecting instruments to feature that are ancient in origin and requiring certain vocal practices. His choice of key, as will be explained later, also added to the effect by giving the melody a sense of age. These elements are incredibly detailed and contain many relations to the culture centered in Lothlórien.

Instruments

There are three instruments that Shore specifically uses for this leitmotif. The first is the monochord.¹ The monochord is an instrument that dates back to the Fifth Century B.C.E. and is of Greek origins. It was used for teaching, as a tuning guide, and for experimentation in other fields, such as mathematics, until the late 19th Century C.E. Originally, it consisted of one string which could be bowed or plucked, but in the late Medieval period, strings were added to provide the ability to make chords. Under these one to three strings lay multiple resonating strings, which created unique harmonics (Adkins "Monochord"). The instrument used for *The Lord of the Rings* had fifty resonating strings (Adams 387). The monochord was most likely included because of its age and interesting sound which adds a mysterious shimmer throughout the leitmotif.

Another instrument is the sarangi,² the most important bowed string instrument from northern India that has three strings that are used with many sympathetic strings below them. It is a folk instrument from India and is able to produce the characteristic vocal slurs of Indian

music. The sarangi is important because not only can it accompany a singer, it can also imitate the voice. Like the monochord, the sarangi has the unique harmonics produced by the sympathetic strings (Sorrell "Sārangī"). For the purposes of Lothlórien's leitmotif, it plays in unison with the voices, demonstrating its vocal characteristic. The Eastern quality of its sound places Lothlórien in a more distant setting from the other cultures and lends it the feeling of age.

A third instrument that does not appear until later in the scene, when the melody repeats, is the ney flute.³ This is an end-blown flute that originated from one of the Arab countries or the Near East. There is iconographic evidence and written documentation that places the instrument in Ancient Egypt in the Third Millennium B.C.E. This is the only wind instrument in Arab art music and can be used for improvisation in solo settings (Hassan "Ney") or to accompany religious glorifications, enabling it to enhance or compliment the sacred qualities of the vocal practices (Bohlman "Middle East"). As another instrument of ancient origins, it is easy to understand its inclusion in this leitmotif. Similar to the sarangi, it is able to interact with voices and is capable of great subtlety in its performance. In relation to Lothlórien's history in Middle Earth, being the most closely tied to the Valar and their power, the religious history of the ney flute matches the connection to the beliefs of the elves.

Choir

The chorus used for Lothlórien's leitmotif is a women's chorus. The main influence for the vocal sound was Gregorian chant, a genre of singing used mainly in monasteries and convents in the Middle Ages through present day. This style meant using a clear and unaffected tone that had little vibrato, consisting of long arcing phrases in natural contours that were

generally un-harmonized. This style of singing, which is not generally used in current art music, adds to the ancient sound of the music that suggests Middle Earth as it was thousands of years ago (Adams 51).

The text that the choir sings is from two different songs. The first is from one of Tolkien's songs that was adapted by Philippa Boyens entitled 'Footsteps of Doom.' This song is written in Sindarin. The other text is from the chorus of the 'Lament for Gandalf,' written by Philippa Boyens, which is in Quenya. The translation for the combined text is

Who brings to us this token of darkness
 Will now fall.
 It shall be.
 Our love for this land
 Is deeper than the deeps of the sea. (Adams 139, 187)

The first two lines of the song are from 'Footsteps of Doom,' which is written in Sindarin. These words are meant as a warning to the Fellowship as they enter the woods. The elves know that the One Ring has entered their borders and they know the danger that follows it and would prefer not getting involved. Using Sindarin for these lines makes the words more universal, in that Sindarin is the common language for the elves, the one that is most frequently used and is understood by some men as well. This is important because the message is directed to the Fellowship, where only two of the members are fluent in Sindarin and may have only a passing acquaintance with Quenya. The third line is a transition line. Here, the language moves from Sindarin to Quenya, signaling the change in texts. This line also seems to be more a commentary on the first two. It provides a sort of promise of a threat of violence or at least malevolence towards those bring the danger. The final two lines are an internal reflection of the Galadhrim themselves. This declaration states one of the main reasons that the elves are

still in Middle Earth rather than living with the Valar across the sea. Their love for Middle Earth and all it once contained holds them in place and helps them not give up on the world.

Switching languages makes the final statements more personal and relevant to the Galadhrim as they speak of themselves and their views.

Key

The composition of the music itself is the final element of Lothlórien's leitmotif. This includes the key, melody, and rhythm/meter. The key that Shore chose for this theme was a variation of the maqām hijaz, an Arabic mode that is similar to the Phrygian church mode. This alteration was the deletion of the microtones usually used in Arabic music. This mode is traditionally used to depict solemnity (Adams 54), which is applicable to Lothlórien because there is a certain order and ceremony to most of the activities that are depicted in Tolkien's books. It probably stems from the great age and wisdom that Lady Galadriel has accumulated over the centuries. The relation to Phrygian mode links the scale base to Gregorian chant, which is entirely modal in nature (not major or minor). One of the interesting features of Gregorian chant is its aloofness and lack of emotion. This feature allows Lothlórien's leitmotif to be used in a number of settings in the story and carry different emotional meanings in that it is able to be disturbing, threatening, or sad if put in the correct context in the story. These elves are also ambiguous when the audience becomes aware of them as it is uncertain if they are a threat to the Fellowship or not.

Melody

'Lothlórien'



The melody is consistent with Gregorian chant techniques as it generally moves in step-wise motion, a feature that allowed the melody to be easily accessible for novices in monasteries or convents to sing. In this melodic line, there are only two instances where there is not step-wise motion. One is between the two notes in the second measure and the other is between measures two and three. The most interesting interval is the last one, which is an augmented second. This comes as a surprise for the listener because it is not what would be expected at the end of a melody. In the majority of instances when the augmented second is used, it resolves up a half step, which relieves any tension caused by the widened interval. This particular melody leaves it unresolved. By doing this, Shore does not satisfy the expectations of the listener and so leaves the resolution of expectations to the action on the screen. The last quality of Gregorian chant present in this theme is that there is no harmonization of the melody. It is a monophonic type of music that was performed with the voices singing in unison (Wright and Simms 23). If there were any instruments, they would most likely be playing in unison with the voices or perform a drone (sustained pitch) throughout the chant.

Meter

Meter is the final element of Lothlórien's leitmotif. The first measure is written in 5/4 time (five beats in a measure where a quarter note gets one beat) while the remaining three measures are in 4/4 (four beats in a measure). The 'extra' beat in the theme makes it difficult

for the listener to feel a rhythmic structure. The melody appears to move and hold when it chooses to without worrying about time. This is appropriate for elves because, as immortals, elves do not have to worry about running out of time and so are able to conduct their lives as they see fit in their own time.

When all of these elements combine in the leitmotif in the film, the audience does not have the time to pay attention to all the details. What they hear is a melody that is aloof, slightly ominous, and sounds like it is old or from another, distant place. As the music is playing, they are seeing images of elves who live in trees surrounded by a glowing white/blue light—the same elves who have essentially taken the Fellowship hostage to meet their leader. During this scene, the music accompanies the action while supplying additional information to the audience that most would be unaware of receiving.

Gondor Analysis The other culture's music that will be examined is very different from Lothlórien. Gondor is a culture of men that has been fighting with Mordor for generations compared to the relatively peaceful and insular society of Lothlórien. The men of Gondor have been forced to be aware of the relations between the various cultures because they need to know who their enemies and allies are. Both *The Fellowship of the Ring* and *The Two Towers* have a brief moment when the leitmotif is heard, but it is not heard in a full setting until *The Return of the King* (Adams 67). In fact, this particular theme is the center of much of the music in the third film because most of the events are centered on Gondor, its related people, and their problems. Because of the interesting nature of Gondor's history and its future, the leitmotif has two different endings. The first ending, which can be heard in all three films, is

named 'Gondor in Decline.' This version highlights the history and present conditions of the land because Gondor was once a great society but is now being attacked by enemies without and experiencing poor leadership within. The other version is named 'Gondor in Ascension,' which shows the future of Gondor: its return to power and prominence in the world. 'Gondor in Ascension' is not heard until Gandalf and Pippin enter Minas Tirith, the chief city of Gondor, in *The Return of the King*.

Instruments

'Gondor in Decline' and 'Gondor in Ascension' share many qualities. The first is the instrumentation. One instrument featured is the trumpet. As discussed above, the trumpet has a long history of being used and associated with the military. Its use in the Gondor theme is appropriate because Gondor has been and still remains at war against Mordor and their forces are led by the ruling family. The other instrument featured is the horn. In this case, it is not used in relation to hunting, but to heroism and nobility. Gondor has several heroic characters, which include Aragorn, Boromir, and Faramir who are the sons of the Steward. All three exhibit bravery and have the capacity to do the right thing in moments of crisis. Nobility is also part of their background, as the heirs to the Stewardship and heir to the Kingship. This characteristic also belongs to the citizens of Gondor as they continue with their lives as best they can in a time of war. In both versions of the theme, horn and trumpet are featured as a solo instruments.

Key

The key, melody, harmony, and rhythm all share duties in linking the music to the culture. The key used in Gondor's leitmotif could be D minor or it could be D Dorian, a different

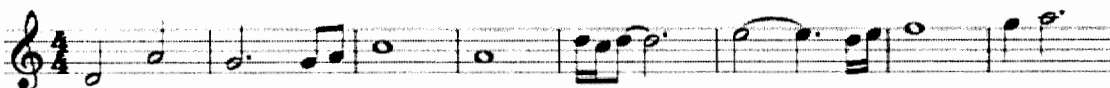
church mode. As the sixth scale degree is never used in the melody, it is difficult to definitively say which key it is. The harmony uses both B flat and B natural in different chords, so that also does not help to positively identify the scale. D Dorian would be most probable because the seventh scale degree is not raised to function as a leading tone, something that occurs in both harmonic and melodic minor scales. Assuming that D Dorian is the basis of the melody, this brings back the history associated with the old church modes that was discussed for Lothlórien's theme. Gondor is the oldest civilization of man in Middle Earth and so receives a scale base that is not used as much in modern, tonal music. A difference from the mode used for the elves is that this is a Western mode rather than an Arabic mode which makes it more familiar, including it in the world of men rather than outside it.

Melody

'Gondor in Decline'



'Gondor in Ascension'



The melody for both 'Gondor in Decline' and 'Gondor in Ascension' is exactly the same for the first four measures. After that, they go in literally opposite directions. 'Gondor in Decline' repeats the first two measures almost exactly and then continues in a downward direction. The downbeats of the seventh and eighth measures are the next lowest scale degrees. The descending scale at the end of 'Gondor in Decline' moves from the A in the fifth

measure to the E in the final measure. 'Gondor in Ascension' leaps a perfect fourth upwards and then the next three measures begin on the next highest scale degree, creating a scale that begins on D and continues through A. A feature that both share, however, is the predominately step-wise motion of the melody. There is only one instance in each that has a half-step relationship to surrounding notes. The absence of half-steps in the melody gives the melody consonance that does not have the need to resolve dissonances mentioned before. In 'Gondor in Ascension,' the half-step present is a passing tone between two scale degrees in the second half of the melody. It is emphasized in the measure to continue the building upwards motion. 'Gondor in Decline' leaves the half-step for the very end and does not resolve to the tonic. This leaves the theme with a sense of not being complete, loss, and sadness which is perfectly in line with what that version of Gondor's theme is trying to convey.

When the melody is not moving in step-wise motion, it uses intervals that are very consonant. There are two instances of moving by minor thirds from A – C – A at the end of the first half of theme. Between the first two notes is a perfect fifth, the most consonant interval other than a perfect unison or octave. Connecting the halves of 'Gondor in Decline' is a descending perfect fifth. Connecting 'Gondor in Ascension' is a rising perfect fourth. The consonance of all the intervals provides Gondor's leitmotifs a sense of stability. Stability is inherent in Gondor's name which, in Sindarin, means 'Land of Stone.' Not only have their cities lasted centuries, it is very difficult to get Gondor to back down when attacked; they do not want to lose what they have.

The harmonization of Gondor's leitmotif consists of six different chords: D minor, G major, F major, B flat major, C major, and A major. All of these chords are presented as a triad

on the downbeat of each measure for 'Gondor in Decline.' In the case of the first appearance of 'Gondor in Ascension,' they are used in a recurring rhythmic pattern which creates an ostinato under the melody. These chords also, with the exception of B flat and A major, all have no accidentals in their triads which makes D Dorian feasible as the scale source. Another way that the chords support the idea of D Dorian being the scale used is the fact that, with the exception of D minor, all the chords are major. If the melody was based on D minor, the harmonization would have included G minor and C minor or C# diminished rather than G and C major.

The inclusion of B flat major and A major blurs the distinction between strictly D Dorian and D minor. This occurs in the second half of 'Gondor in Ascension.' B flat major is the chord used for the fifth measure of the melody and A major is the chord for the eighth measure. If the last four bars of this melody were thought of in D minor, the inclusion of B flat is necessary and so is the addition of the C# in the A major triad. A major is the dominant (based on the fifth scale degree of the scale) of D minor which creates a need for the following chord to be D minor. In this instance, not ending on the tonic leaves the listener with certain lightness as it is not entirely a final destination. The effect adds to the sense of hope for the future that 'Gondor in Ascension' is trying to portray. Despite the fact that the key of D minor has a larger influence on the second half of 'Gondor in Ascension,' D Dorian still appears to be the most logical choice for the scale base of Gondor's leitmotifs because of the mutability allowed in the harmonization of the entire melody.

Rhythm

Rhythm is a very clear component of Gondor's leitmotifs. It is composed in such a way that the downbeat of each measure is the most important moment and any other notes in the

measure lead to the next downbeat. This is typical of Western music, both the metric stress (emphasis on the downbeat) and the remaining notes leading to the following measure. There are alsoagogic accents on the majority of the downbeats, meaning that the note is longer than the surrounding notes. This gives a very clear understanding of where the music is going. As opposed to Lothlórien's leitmotif when it was extremely difficult to predict where the music was going, Gondor is very explicit and conforms to the norms of Western music. Each chord and note is placed precisely so it can lead to the next, rather than circling around a particular area for an extended amount of time. When 'Gondor in Decline' is played while Gondor's signal beacons are being lit, the theme is being played by trumpets and horns while the strings move in rapid arpeggios above them. Grounding this is a progression of chords in the low brass on the downbeat of each measure. The first time that 'Gondor in Ascension' is heard, the harmony is being played in a rhythmic ostinato that is march-like in nature. The effect this gives adds to the military activities that Gondor is engaging in at the present as well as alluding to future endeavors.

Taken as a whole, Gondor's leitmotif informs the audience of Gondor's military activities, its grandeur, its nobility and courage, but can also bring a sense of foreboding when set in the right context. Conversely, it can also instill hope and strength. All of these feelings that the audience experiences while watching come from careful selection of many different elements that, because of their particular qualities and the way that Shore structured the music, are relevant to Gondor and its attributes.

After dissecting Lothlórien's and Gondor's leitmotifs, it is quite clear that composing and orchestrating a theme for a movie can be much more involved than what one would have been

expected. The amount of musical information provided here as reference and support is only a fraction of what a composer needs to know and understand to write effectively when using complex techniques such as leitmotifs. Frequently, research is needed to find a unique sound that is not used in the traditional Western orchestra. This includes both foreign elements as well as European folk traditions. Like most research, there can either be a lot of information on a subject or hardly any. In this case, the composer has the latitude to select what to include from a wide range of options. The composer's creativity is very crucial in blending these elements together. Great talent is shown when they are able to do so seamlessly, creating a whole work. The task that was laid out for *The Lord of the Rings* was immense and it is no surprise that it took four years to complete considering that there is a total of nine hours of music from all three films with approximately eight thousand recorded cues.

It is very possible that the melodic and rhythmic elements were instinctual and not given any initial thought. Many composers do not notice some of the elements in their work, only writing what came naturally and worked well within the piece they were composing. After he knew what he wanted the piece to 'generally sound like,' it is more than likely that Howard Shore just wrote what came naturally while being influenced by his knowledge of music history and its traditions.

CONCLUSION

One of the more fascinating features of using leitmotifs in composing for a film is how they are able to relate to one another with similar musical gestures. This allows for connections to be made between characters, events, and places. In *The Lord of the Rings*, this can be experienced

unconsciously if one is not closely listening to or examining the music. Having the leitmotifs for the different cultures take precedence over that of the characters or important objects allows the story to be more 'global' in Middle Earth. This is less common in scores that use leitmotifs. More frequently, only a few cultures or places get their own motive—usually when there is not a main character from that specific culture or place. *Star Wars* is an excellent example of this. While there are many alien planets and races that are visited throughout the six films, the leitmotifs are mainly given to the important characters that travel there. *The Lord of the Rings* keeps the places and cultures just as, if not more, involved in the story as *Star Wars* by granting them importance with their own music. Also, the themes of characters interact with the themes of cultures, which tie the characters to that place musically, reinforcing the plot. For example, the Fellowship's, Aragorn's, and Gandalf's themes are all connected to Gondor's theme by a small motive that each leitmotif contains. This ties all these people to this culture, this place, and brings attention to how they will affect Gondor in the past, present, and future of the story.

Significance More often than not, these relationships are the aspects of leitmotifs that are studied rather than the compositional reasoning behind the melodies. Books and papers have been written on how leitmotifs connect and develop throughout a film score or other composition and they seldom attempt to 'get inside' the composer's head to discover why he created the motives the way he did. While the evolution and connections of leitmotifs are interesting and relevant, there is another layer in the music that also adds to its meaning. When all of the connections, transformations, as well as the compositional background are studied, the significance of both what the composer is conveying and its significance to the story

becomes clear. This knowledge enhances the viewing experience by unveiling more of the effort put into creating the final product.

This study of two of Howard Shore's leitmotifs from *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy is only the beginning of completely understanding Shore's creative process and how the music relates to the story. There are still at least five other cultures with leitmotifs of their own that have not been analyzed in this manner. If one were to make a study of at least these other five leitmotifs, then more of the scope Shore's work would be recognized. The information within the music would confirm or expand upon that which is introduced by the characters on screen, enriching the art of the film itself. It is possible to gain this extra information only because Howard Shore worked during those four years to create a well-crafted and complex score, which included putting as much significance as possible into the music he wrote. This ensured that the story the film was presenting would be enhanced by the music that corresponded to each moment. The significance to the story is only made possible by a full and complete understanding by the composer of traditional instrumentation practices, methods of utilizing a choir, Western music history, and the fundamentals of composing a melody. The two Oscars that Howard Shore won for Best Original Score recognize that his music is special when compared to the other nominees.

The most defining feature of Shore's music for *The Lord of the Rings* is his use of leitmotifs. The care that was put into crafting the melodies, both in terms of cultural information and relationships between the themes was phenomenal. Not only does this make *The Lord of the Rings* music stand apart from most movie scores, it also separates it from other scores that use leitmotifs. While John Williams is renowned for the leitmotifs in *Star*

Wars, the way he uses them is different from Shore's method. Howard Shore creates his leitmotifs in a way that lends the sense of reality to the fictional cultures and characters of J.R.R. Tolkien's world. This is one of the reasons that Howard Shore will be remembered for his work on *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

Notes

1. Images of a monochord:



2. Image of a sarangi:



3. Image of a ney flute:



Appendix

Rivendell, or Imladris, is a small elvin community in a hidden valley. Lord Elrond founded Rivendell and is well-known as a Lore Master, so he keeps Rivendell open to all those who seek council and has gathered many people of wisdom and power from all of the races to Rivendell (*The Silmarillion* 297). Imladris preserves the memory of all that had been fair and has been as refuge for the line of the Kings of Men (*The Silmarillion* 298). The language most used in Imladris is Sindarin, a more common elvin language that developed on the mainland simultaneously with Quenya.

Rohan is the other main culture of man. This particular culture got much of its inspiration from the Anglo-Saxons that Tolkien loved (“J.R.R. Tolkien: Origins of Middle-earth”). The language that they use is, essentially, Old English. Rohirrim, the name given to the people of Rohan by the Gondorians, means ‘Horse-Lords’ (*The Return of the King* 1038). Horses were their main source of living in terms of traveling, farming, and war. Their homes are made of timber and thatched roofs. Rohan, in terms of its land, is mostly plains with grass that ‘swelled like a sea of green’ (*The Two Towers* 413), an ideal space for horses to roam. The people themselves are described as horsemen that are ‘proud and willful, but true-hearted, generous in thought and deed, bold but not cruel, wise, but unlearned, wrote no books, but sing many songs’ (*The Two Towers* 420).

Dwarves, by their nature, are very secretive about themselves. They don’t tell outsiders their private names and don’t even put it on their tomb. It is for this reason that not much information is provided about their personal history. They do have a love for the treasures of the earth and tend to live in mountains to better mine their treasures and then craft them into

splendid works for themselves or others, on occasion. All but two of the mountain ranges of Middle Earth are inhabited by dwarves: the White Mountains that run from west to east in the south by Rohan and Gondor and the mountains surrounding Mordor. The language of the dwarves is called Khuzdul. It is mostly preserved as a memory of the dwarves' history and not really used very much at all in their regular life as they prefer to speak the language that is used most near their dwelling place (*The Return of the King* 1106).

Hobbits are a different type of race from the others. They have never been known to be warlike, but will fight only if necessary, unlike all the other cultures discussed (*The Fellowship of the Ring* 5). They wear bright colors, are fond of simple jests and parties, and are very hospitable. They also are inclined to be fat and don't unnecessarily hurry, though they can be nimble and deft in their movement when the need arises (*The Fellowship of the Ring* 1). Essentially, Hobbits are 'an unobtrusive, but very ancient people' who 'love peace and quiet and good tilled earth' with a 'well-ordered and well-farmed countryside' as their favorite haunt. This particular landscape makes up most of their land, which they call the Shire. Hobbits also have a fondness for knowledge and spend much thought on their family trees. They speak the languages of men, but in their own, simple way.

Orcs are the last of the main races in Middle Earth. They are an unnatural race that was created by Morgoth in the First Age to serve as his army. They were once elves, but were tortured and mutilated into their present form. As a result, even though they obey him, they hate their master as much as they hate themselves. Orcs despise the light, so they tend to live in dark places and only travel at night or under heavy cloud cover. Saruman overcame this issue when creating his Uruk-hai. Their known dwelling places are in the Misty Mountains, Isengard,

and Mordor. Originally, the orcs had no language of their own. They took words from other languages and perverted them to their own use. In the Second Age, Sauron created Black Speech for his servants to use, but it was forgotten by most after he fell at the end of the Age. When he regained power, it was the language of Barad-dûr (Sauron's stronghold) and the captains of Mordor. Even so, the orcs still only use some of the words in their daily speech (*The Return of the King* 1105).

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