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Orchestral Emotions

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The great thing about it, the film world, is that you can trick them into giving you the best orchestras, the best singers in the world, and you get to work with them, to make music with them. The only cost of it is that you have try to make it fit their film.¹

– John Powell, 2014

Introduction

Movie soundtracks have always been a fundamental support for the plot. Not just because they help involve all the human senses, but because they tell us what the image cannot. The music helps express the characters' feelings, hidden plots, anticipate situations or confuse the viewers, all depending on what the director wants. It also helps us generate empathy with the characters.

This study analyses the relationship between the image and its musical interpretation. Specifically, it shows how the music represents what cannot be seen; that is, the characters' emotions.

Therefore, the proposal is to analyze the soundtrack of the movie *How to Train your Dragon*, composed by John Powell and orchestrated by John Ashton Thomas, Dave Metzger, Stefan Maria Schneider, Germaine Franco, Gavin Greenaway, Jessica Wells, James K. Lee, Angus O'Sullivan, Daniel Baker and Dominic Lewis.

¹ FMMFilmMusicMedia, John Powell Interviewed By Jon Burlingame, October 28, 2014, , accessed June 27, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FeJg3z1KMFY>.

I probably scored it in the movie as I felt it in my life, I tried to make it feel as difficult for him, I tried [...] music is a very difficult thing to talk about, the reason we have music is because we cant find the words.²

– John Powell, 2014

Motive

When composers sit to compose the music for a cue, the fear of over scoring, to give more information than what the director wants the spectator to see, is always there. The thin line between an effective soundtrack compared to an over scored one is most of the times unclear.

In children’s movies, music plays a fundamental role at the moment of transmitting emotion. This is where the music must be at its most effective. That is the reason why this study focuses on a soundtrack, which combines great beauty and richness in its music, with a high level of detail that works to bring great effectiveness when transmitting the characters’ emotions.

Objectives

The aim of this study is to find compositional resources, like the use of melodies, harmonies and orchestration, as aptly used by this composer, for the purpose of reverse engineering his music in order to create new works based on the conclusions of this study, whereby they can transmit the emotion of the character in a subtle and effective way.

² FMMFilmMusicMedia, John Powell Interviewed By Jon Burlingame, October 28, 2014, , accessed June 27, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FeJg3z1KMFY>.

Hypothesis

Although at a conscious level, the average listener cannot recognize compositional processes and instrumental timbres used in a soundtrack, the manipulation of these resources helps filmmakers to manipulate the viewers' emotions in a subconscious way.

This paper will analyze the cue *Test Drive* from the movie *How to Train your Dragon* and it will demonstrate which elements the composer uses to represent the characters' feelings. The study will examine which specific melodies and instruments are associated with each feeling.

The proposal is to find the compositional technique that the composer employs to associate each emotion with a specific melody or instrument, and therefore be able to reproduce these techniques in future compositions.

The Movie and its Music

A long time ago, on the northern island of Berk, a young Viking called Hiccup tries to join his people in the fight against dragons, creatures that regularly attack his town. Nevertheless, his father and leader of the village, Stoic the Vast, prohibits his son from doing so.

Regardless of his father's orders, Hiccup gets involved in the fight and harms the mighty Night Fury dragon, but does not manage to kill him. Instead, Hiccup and the dragon, who he names Toothless, become close friends. Their friendship will open each other's eyes about their respective worlds, and help them realize how gravely they misunderstood one another. Now, together they

will have to fight against the ignorance of the frightened townspeople to make them understand that they are both victims of a major threat that they can only overcome by being united.

Dean DeBois and Chris Sanders brought this beautiful story to the big screen in 2010. This animated movie was produced by DreamWorks and is based in the book written by Cresida Corwell.

In the year 2011 it was nominated for several awards on multiple occasions. Among these were two nominations for the Oscars: Best Animated Movie and Best Original Soundtrack. The film was also nominated for a Golden Globe Award for Best Animated Movie, and to the British Academy of Film and Television Awards (BAFTA) for Best Original Soundtrack and Best Animated Movie.

The movie won Best 3D Animated Movie at the 3D Creative Arts Awards, the Best Female Animation at the Alliance of Women Film Journalists, Best Original Soundtrack at the Annie Awards and Best Animated Movie at the Indiana Film Journalists Association Awards. For his music, John Powell was awarded the International Film Music Critics Award and the Ivon Novello Award. Composing this soundtrack earned John Powell his first nomination for the Oscars, which positioned him among the most prominent composers in Hollywood.

Celtic Influences

Although the story is situated in a fictitious world based loosely on Scandinavia, the soundtrack is heavily influenced by traditional Celtic music. In an interview, John Powell reveals that they were looking for Nordic sonorities but because of his own Scottish roots, Celtic music is constantly present in his style.

I'm part Scottish and grew up with a lot of Scottish folk music, so that came into it a lot. And Celtic music was something that Jeffrey Katzenberg felt had this very attractive quality to it, and a sweetness, that he thought would be wonderful for the film.³

– Powell, 2011.

The composer also adds that the influence of Scandinavian music in his compositional style, and especially for this movie, is due to his fascination with the Finish composer Sibelius.

My family comes from the north of Scotland, so my grandmother spoke Gaelic. When I was young, she would sing something called “Mouth Music”, which are these sort of working songs.⁴

– Powell, 2015

³ Pond, Steve. "John Powell Goes Epic to Score 'Dragon'." TheWrap. February 10, 2011. Accessed June 27, 2017. <http://www.thewrap.com/john-powell-goes-epic-score-dragon-24619/>.

⁴ "John Powell – How to Train Your Dragon 2," CineSnob RSS, January 2, 2015, , accessed June 27, 2017, <http://www.cinesnob.net/john-powell-how-to-train-your-dragon-2/>.

Because of his familial heritage, we find constant references to Celtic music in both the soundtrack's melodies and instrumentation such as the use of bagpipes or soprano whistles.

The Composer

John Powel is a British composer and conductor, born in England in 1963. He studied composition at Trinity College of Music in London. After finishing his studies, he worked as a jingle composer, and continued as an assistant for the composer Patrick Doyle. In the 1990s he moved to Los Angeles where he got his first featured film, *Face/Off*.

In 1997, along with Harry Gregson-Williams, he scored the movie *Antz*- his first animated feature film for DreamWorks. At that time, the company was looking to distinguish itself by employing a style of animation that was vastly different from the conventional style used by Disney. Therefore, the music for this production had to be darker in order to match this more mature esthetic.

That was one of the mantras that they gave us, don't sound like animated music.⁵

- Powell, 2011.

⁵ Goldderby, "How to Train Your Dragon 2" composer John Powell, November 18, 2014, , accessed June 27, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9JCSMG0SAk>.

Later on, they collaborated again in the score for *Chicken Run*, and a year after this, for the first release of *Shrek*. In the year 2006, he worked on the soundtrack for *Ice Age: The Meltdown*; in 2008 he worked with Hans Zimmer for *Kung Fu Panda*, and in 2009 he scored *Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs*. Finally in 2010, he scored his 6th film with DreamWorks, *How to Train Your Dragon*. Aside from animation, John Powell has worked on a number of major action films. Among them are the *Bourne Saga*, *X-Men: The Last Stand* and *Mr. And Mrs. Smith*. Nevertheless, Mr. Powell insists that he prefers working with animation, rather than action movies, because it allows him to explore the process of composition and generating emotions more deeply.

I'm not interested to use the time I got here to write the music for endless fights [...] wouldn't it be better if I can write music that can enlighten people, gave them a feeling of joy. The whole point in fighting is having all this tension that you can get released, but, we can create that in animation.⁶

– Powell, 2015

In 2010 he was nominated for an Oscar for Best Original Soundtrack for his work on *How to Train Your Dragon*. He lost to Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross, and their soundtrack for *The Social Network*. After 2010, he kept working on animation, including composing for *How To Train your Dragon II*, *Kung Fu Panda*

⁶ Mmuk64, IFMCA - The Winners Speak - How To Train Your Dragon 2, June 27, 2015, , accessed June 27, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKydepCGb-o>.

II, Happy Feet II and *Ice Age: Continental Drift*, among others. He is currently working on the soundtrack for the third release of *How to Train your Dragon*.

The Cue

Movie: "*How to Train Your Dragon*"

Cue: Test Drive (3m20 1j Dragon)

Composer: John Powell

Orchestrator: John Ashton Thomas

Movie location: 00:43:29

The cue is framed by the relationship of a boy and his dragon. Hiccup, the boy, tries to save the injured dragon, named Toothless, by creating a prosthetic tail for him, and takes the risk of trying to fly on the dragon's back.

During this cue, the character, Hiccup, goes through several emotional states. These emotions are calmness, confidence, fear, uncertainty, excitement, bravery, determination and heroism.

The flight begins smoothly, and Hiccup feels calm and confident. Afterwards, he decides to accelerate and fly through a narrow space between two rocky cliffs. Upon achieving this dangerous feat, Hiccup gets excited and decides to fly even higher. This makes him lose his important diagram of prosthetic tail positions and he fall off of his dragon's back, which frightens both Hiccup and Toothless. Both start falling fast while they do their best to reach one another whilst falling through the air. For this, Hiccup needs to be brave and to

have determination. Once reunited, the boy has a moment of uncertainty, but he quickly regains control of the situation with determination, and the cue ends victoriously.

The Melodies

Theme 1 - *Calmness*

This theme is the first to appear in the movie, and is used on many occasions.

Theme 1

The image shows the musical notation for Theme 1. It is written for Soprano Whistle and cellos. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The Soprano Whistle part is shown on a treble clef staff with 8 measures, each numbered in a box below it. The notes are: M1: G4, A4; M2: B4, G4; M3: A4, B4; M4: C5, B4; M5: B4, A4; M6: G4, F#4; M7: G4, A4; M8: B4, G4. The cellos part is shown on a bass clef staff starting at measure 8, with notes: G2, A2, B2, C3.

It is comprised of two sections of four bars: Part A and Part B. Both parts contain sub sections of two bars. The second of each of these sub sections is a variation of the first based on repetition.

Measures 1-2 are a self-contained, closed structure. Not only does they start and end on the same note, but they are also constructed as a mirror. The axis is the E, having F# - G - E - G - F#. This structure makes the theme stable and coherent. On the other hand, the rhythm of this melody accelerates towards the end, generating a stronger resolution into F#. Measures 3-4 are repeated with slight variations. The first note is now a quarter note and starts one beat later. The F# in m4 is anticipated by an added eighth note. These changes help to avoid strict monotonous repetition.

The second part of Theme 1 (mm 5-8) is stronger. It is no longer a closed form, but one that moves forward. It is constructed with repeated notes, ascending motion and ends with a descending leap to the F#. This part of the theme brings hope and generates expectation.

Theme 2 – *The Thinking*

This theme appears for first time in the cue, Test Drive

Theme 2

The image shows three staves of musical notation for Theme 2 in 4/4 time. Staff (a) is labeled 'Bagpipe theme' and 'Bagpipes', showing a melody with a repeated eighth note 'A' and a descending eighth-note scale. Staff (b) is labeled 'Theme with out the A pedal' and shows the same melody but without the repeated 'A' note. Staff (c) is labeled 'Theme with out the ornamentation' and shows the melody with a different rhythmic pattern: a half note, a quarter note, and eighth notes. The notes are D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. Small boxes with numbers 1, 2, and 3 are placed below the first, second, and third measures of staff (c) respectively.

This theme is characterized by a broken melody over a constant eighth note rhythm, which adds dynamism and constant movement. That is to say, it is formed by two components in terms of pitch, a repeated A and a lyric melody.

In letter b, the melody is shown without the repeated A. It starts with an ascending jump, and continues with a descending D major scale towards the tonic. The structural melody (letter c) starts with a rhythmic value of half notes, then quarters, finishing in eights. This increase in rhythmic values generates a feeling of forward motion. Although the theme is rhythmically and structurally dynamic, the stable D major tonality makes it clam and pleasant.

Given that the melodic intervals in m1 of Theme 1 (Calmness) are the same as those in m 1 of Theme 2 (Thinking), it is possible to see that Theme 1

serves as the basis for Theme 2. They both begin with an ascending second followed by a descending third.

Abstract from Theme 1



Abstract from Theme 2



Theme 3 - *The Hero*

This is the heroic theme, used throughout the movie. It is present in the film since the first cue.

This theme is divided into two parts: Part A (mm 1-4) and Part B (mm 5-8). Part A is formed by two very similar parts. The first one starts with a repeated D in half notes, ascending through E to F#, anticipating this last note with an eighth note. This motive is strongly related to the second part of Theme 1, where we see similar melodic and rhythmic structure. Measures 3-4 of Part A replaces the repeated D with an arpeggio in quarter notes. This adds variation, movement and energy to the phrase. Even though the repeated note is omitted in measure 3, the melody leaps up through the range of an octave, maintaining the heroic color of the melody.

Part B of this theme is formed by two sections. It first ascends towards F#, then goes back down to B. Next behaves in an *arabesque* way, surrounding the B, and finally finishing the phrase. This circular movement around the B gives us this feeling of instability.

Step by Step

If I'm scoring the music to follow the character, by being the character, it hopefully resonates correctly for the audience.⁷

– Powell, 2014

Key – D Major

The scene begins with a close frame of Hiccup riding Toothless over the clouds. (Measure 5) After a small introduction, the first part of the cue begins with one of the main themes of the movie, Theme 2 (Thinking).



At this part, the movie shows us a wide view of the sky where Hiccup and Toothless fly between the two rocky cliffs while Hiccup makes sure that he has his diagrams of flight positions for the prosthetic tail in order. This theme, constantly in sixteenth notes and with a clear melodic structure, shows moments where Hiccup is focused on his work with uncertainty and fear.

⁷ Goldderby, "How to Train Your Dragon 2" composer John Powell, November 18, 2014, accessed June 27, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9JCSMG0SAk>.

(Measures 5 – 12) The main melody is repeated 4 times in the strings and the woodwinds double them an octave higher. The melody is always doubled by a bagpipe, which brings the Celtic color to the piece. The main difference is that the bagpipe plays eighth notes instead of sixteenth notes.

The use of the flutes doubling the melody one octave higher brings brightness into the orchestration, lightening the mood and bringing a sense of calm. It is not intended for the woodwinds to be heard, but to highlight the strings and enhance their clarity.

It is important to notice, that during this entire passage the harmony remains constantly in D major sustained by the bass instruments of the orchestra: cellos, basses, tuba, trombones, contrabassoon, and bass clarinet. They sustain the notes D – A – D throughout the entire passage.

In the third repetition of the melody, the composer adds the glockenspiel doubling the violin melody, who now play an octave higher. At this moment in the scene, Hiccup makes his first movement with his feet, and begins the test the prosthetic tail device. This moment doesn't go unnoticed by the composer, and he brings in the horns with a variation of this melody, where the descending eighth notes double the violin line.



This is the first time that horns are used. On a structural level, this line represents the simplest structural form of the violin melody. Its role is to show

the boy's determination and bravery. This section demonstrates, how all the elements appear right from the beginning – with the melody in the strings and sustained notes in the bass instruments. Adding more instruments creates brightness, expands the register, and blends the tone color of the melody. This underscores Hiccup's initial fear and uncertainty, which then turns to determination and bravery as he decides to test the dragon's prosthetic tail in flight.

(Measure 13 – 20) Once Hiccup has everything ready, the camera zooms out and shows Toothless turning smoothly, gliding over the clouds. This intimate moment is orchestrated, using only the soprano whistle and the strings at the beginning. The music here transmits the boy's calmness and confidence at this moment. This is where Theme 1 (Calmness) appears, bringing a sense of confidence with its stable melody played by the soprano whistle. The simplicity of the constant D Major harmony in the strings creates calmness.

Theme 1

The image shows a musical score for 'Theme 1'. It consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled '11 Sop Whistle' and contains a melody in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notes are: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6, D6, E6, F#6, G6, A6, B6, C7, D7, E7, F#7, G7, A7, B7, C8, D8, E8, F#8, G8, A8, B8, C9, D9, E9, F#9, G9, A9, B9, C10, D10, E10, F#10, G10, A10, B10, C11, D11, E11, F#11, G11, A11, B11, C12, D12, E12, F#12, G12, A12, B12, C13, D13, E13, F#13, G13, A13, B13, C14, D14, E14, F#14, G14, A14, B14, C15, D15, E15, F#15, G15, A15, B15, C16, D16, E16, F#16, G16, A16, B16, C17, D17, E17, F#17, G17, A17, B17, C18, D18, E18, F#18, G18, A18, B18, C19, D19, E19, F#19, G19, A19, B19, C20, D20, E20, F#20, G20, A20, B20, C21, D21, E21, F#21, G21, A21, B21, C22, D22, E22, F#22, G22, A22, B22, C23, D23, E23, F#23, G23, A23, B23, C24, D24, E24, F#24, G24, A24, B24, C25, D25, E25, F#25, G25, A25, B25, C26, D26, E26, F#26, G26, A26, B26, C27, D27, E27, F#27, G27, A27, B27, C28, D28, E28, F#28, G28, A28, B28, C29, D29, E29, F#29, G29, A29, B29, C30, D30, E30, F#30, G30, A30, B30, C31, D31, E31, F#31, G31, A31, B31, C32, D32, E32, F#32, G32, A32, B32, C33, D33, E33, F#33, G33, A33, B33, C34, D34, E34, F#34, G34, A34, B34, C35, D35, E35, F#35, G35, A35, B35, C36, D36, E36, F#36, G36, A36, B36, C37, D37, E37, F#37, G37, A37, B37, C38, D38, E38, F#38, G38, A38, B38, C39, D39, E39, F#39, G39, A39, B39, C40, D40, E40, F#40, G40, A40, B40, C41, D41, E41, F#41, G41, A41, B41, C42, D42, E42, F#42, G42, A42, B42, C43, D43, E43, F#43, G43, A43, B43, C44, D44, E44, F#44, G44, A44, B44, C45, D45, E45, F#45, G45, A45, B45, C46, D46, E46, F#46, G46, A46, B46, C47, D47, E47, F#47, G47, A47, B47, C48, D48, E48, F#48, G48, A48, B48, C49, D49, E49, F#49, G49, A49, B49, C50, D50, E50, F#50, G50, A50, B50, C51, D51, E51, F#51, G51, A51, B51, C52, D52, E52, F#52, G52, A52, B52, C53, D53, E53, F#53, G53, A53, B53, C54, D54, E54, F#54, G54, A54, B54, C55, D55, E55, F#55, G55, A55, B55, C56, D56, E56, F#56, G56, A56, B56, C57, D57, E57, F#57, G57, A57, B57, C58, D58, E58, F#58, G58, A58, B58, C59, D59, E59, F#59, G59, A59, B59, C60, D60, E60, F#60, G60, A60, B60, C61, D61, E61, F#61, G61, A61, B61, C62, D62, E62, F#62, G62, A62, B62, C63, D63, E63, F#63, G63, A63, B63, C64, D64, E64, F#64, G64, A64, B64, C65, D65, E65, F#65, G65, A65, B65, C66, D66, E66, F#66, G66, A66, B66, C67, D67, E67, F#67, G67, A67, B67, C68, D68, E68, F#68, G68, A68, B68, C69, D69, E69, F#69, G69, A69, B69, C70, D70, E70, F#70, G70, A70, B70, C71, D71, E71, F#71, G71, A71, B71, C72, D72, E72, F#72, G72, A72, B72, C73, D73, E73, F#73, G73, A73, B73, C74, D74, E74, F#74, G74, A74, B74, C75, D75, E75, F#75, G75, A75, B75, C76, D76, E76, F#76, G76, A76, B76, C77, D77, E77, F#77, G77, A77, B77, C78, D78, E78, F#78, G78, A78, B78, C79, D79, E79, F#79, G79, A79, B79, C80, D80, E80, F#80, G80, A80, B80, C81, D81, E81, F#81, G81, A81, B81, C82, D82, E82, F#82, G82, A82, B82, C83, D83, E83, F#83, G83, A83, B83, C84, D84, E84, F#84, G84, A84, B84, C85, D85, E85, F#85, G85, A85, B85, C86, D86, E86, F#86, G86, A86, B86, C87, D87, E87, F#87, G87, A87, B87, C88, D88, E88, F#88, G88, A88, B88, C89, D89, E89, F#89, G89, A89, B89, C90, D90, E90, F#90, G90, A90, B90, C91, D91, E91, F#91, G91, A91, B91, C92, D92, E92, F#92, G92, A92, B92, C93, D93, E93, F#93, G93, A93, B93, C94, D94, E94, F#94, G94, A94, B94, C95, D95, E95, F#95, G95, A95, B95, C96, D96, E96, F#96, G96, A96, B96, C97, D97, E97, F#97, G97, A97, B97, C98, D98, E98, F#98, G98, A98, B98, C99, D99, E99, F#99, G99, A99, B99, C100, D100, E100, F#100, G100, A100, B100, C101, D101, E101, F#101, G101, A101, B101, C102, D102, E102, F#102, G102, A102, B102, C103, D103, E103, F#103, G103, A103, B103, C104, D104, E104, F#104, G104, A104, B104, C105, D105, E105, F#105, G105, A105, B105, C106, D106, E106, F#106, G106, A106, B106, C107, D107, E107, F#107, G107, A107, B107, C108, D108, E108, F#108, G108, A108, B108, C109, D109, E109, F#109, G109, A109, B109, C110, D110, E110, F#110, G110, A110, B110, C111, D111, E111, F#111, G111, A111, B111, C112, D112, E112, F#112, G112, A112, B112, C113, D113, E113, F#113, 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B136, C137, D137, E137, F#137, G137, A137, B137, C138, D138, E138, F#138, G138, A138, B138, C139, D139, E139, F#139, G139, A139, B139, C140, D140, E140, F#140, G140, A140, B140, C141, D141, E141, F#141, G141, A141, B141, C142, D142, E142, F#142, G142, A142, B142, C143, D143, E143, F#143, G143, A143, B143, C144, D144, E144, F#144, G144, A144, B144, C145, D145, E145, F#145, G145, A145, B145, C146, D146, E146, F#146, G146, A146, B146, C147, D147, E147, F#147, G147, A147, B147, C148, D148, E148, F#148, G148, A148, B148, C149, D149, E149, F#149, G149, A149, B149, C150, D150, E150, F#150, G150, A150, B150, C151, D151, E151, F#151, G151, A151, B151, C152, D152, E152, F#152, G152, A152, B152, C153, D153, E153, F#153, G153, A153, B153, C154, D154, E154, F#154, G154, A154, B154, C155, D155, E155, F#155, G155, A155, B155, C156, D156, E156, F#156, G156, A156, B156, C157, D157, E157, F#157, G157, A157, B157, C158, D158, E158, F#158, G158, A158, B158, C159, D159, E159, F#159, G159, A159, B159, C160, 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Even though the melody begins with stationary half notes, the upper woodwinds and harp provide movement in sixteenth note arpeggios. It is worth to note that this movement is not constant. This brings a certain amount of uncertainty and instability to the section and is a reminder that the boy is still full of doubt and unsure of the outcome of the test.

(Measure 25 – 26) After this first moment of excitement it is possible to see a hint of fear on the characters' faces. Now the melody is no longer in the horns but returns to the violins. It is no longer a slow paced, strong melody, but an eighth-note based melody that moves across the registers in an *arabesque* style.

During these two measures the woodwinds disappear. The second violins and the violas double the melody an octave lower to accompany the depth of the panoramic image shown on screen.

(Measure 27 – 28) Once Hiccup and Toothless cross the stone arch, the woodwinds and the harp make an ascending gesture, accompanied by the entrance of the heroic horns. Hiccup's excitement is back and it is possible to feel his happiness of having overcome the first step.

(Measure 30 -31) The two hits that Hiccup and Toothless suffer against the stone columns are not scored in a Mickey Mouse style, but just by a change of texture, showing that this is not something terribly traumatic for the characters. The music shows a contrast between Hiccup's shout of victory and the sloppiness of losing control for a moment. However, his excitement never goes away. Here, the melody is in the violas, now doubled by the cellos and bassoons.

Towards the third beat of the second measure, the trumpets enter with a fanfare, followed by the entrance of the trombones and timpani, leading to a crescendo.

During these two measures, both violins and flutes perform D major arpeggios in a sixteenth note figuration. These arpeggios last for the duration of a quarter note, and they emphasize that Hiccup is still a little excited child who is playing; a child that is not aware of the potential danger of his current situation.

(Measure 32 – 39) This is where the second heroic moment of the cue appears. After admitting that he made an honest mistake, and receiving a punishment from his friend, Hiccup decides to try a new position with the prosthetic tail and start flying ever higher.

For this moment, John Powell brings back the second melody, which was introduced by the whistle at the beginning of the scene. The first time this melody was heard, it was possible to feel the boy's calmness and confidence, as he played freely. The orchestration at that moment was just the strings and the whistle.

After more time spent flying, Hiccup gains more confidence in what he is doing and continues to try more things with the prosthetic tail. However, his mindset is still that of a child at play; he does not consider that he is putting himself and Toothless in danger. This is why he remains calm and confident, thinking that he can manage what ever he proposes.

The melody is now in the violins and flutes, doubled by the twelve horns and cellos an octave lower. Its possible to hear once again the heroic touch of the horns, while the violins and flutes add the playful component. In the meantime,

the violas add movement in sixteenth notes, sustaining the harmony that changes twice per measure.

(Measure 34 – 39) When they start the ascent, the music intensifies as they rise into the sky. His excitement and confidence grows with each passing bar.

At this point, the entire string section is playing the main melody, doubled by the trumpets. It is important to note that the trumpets haven't played until now, except for their fanfare gesture in measure 31. This creates a brighter sound and highlights Hiccup's excitement and determination. Trumpets have been associated with hunting, war, and open spaces since medieval times. Since Hiccup and Toothless are flying higher into the open sky, Powell uses the color of the trumpets to create an aural painting of the vast, clear beauty of the sky.

At last, the horns join with a countermelody that accompanies the trumpets and violins on the last F# of measure 37 and again in measure 39, producing a heroic sound. During measures 36-39, the woodwinds recall the arpeggios of measures 30 – 31, showing the playful spirit of a child once more.

(Measure 40 – 44) In the second half of measure 39, there is a run in the violins, violas and flutes that leads into the most chaotic part of the cue. For the first time in the cue the character has the feeling of actual fear and uncertainty, leaving behind all notion of confidence. While they are rising, a gust of wind causes the prosthetic tail diagram to fly away. Hiccup tries desperately to grab hold of it, but by doing so he loses his grasp on the dragon and starts falling.

At the moment the fall starts, the entire orchestra plays in an aleatoric manner. The strings do a slow glissando with a tremolo over five measures. Along with this, there is a percussion tremolo, and ascending clusters in the horns and trombones, which emphasize the strings motion. The woodwinds also play clusters, but they change at a slower pace.

This is the only moment of the cue where the music becomes actually dark and chaotic. This doesn't mean that the danger is over – it actually goes on for another ten measures. However, this is a movie geared towards a young audience, so the music immediately after this gives us, from the harmony and orchestration, the calmness of knowing that the hero is not going to die.

(Measure 45 – 54) As Hiccup starts plummeting, he becomes full of fear and uncertainty. Powell draws our attention with a small antiphonal melody between horns and trumpets that leads the music into a big orchestral tutti, which settles the audience and gives reassurance that they are going to survive.

First of all, we have the harmony. He stabilizes the music on a dominant B major chord that leads to the new tonality of E major. This shows us that there is a change coming, but everything is going to be fine. There are arpeggios in the cellos and violas that each last for 2 beats, while the oboes and clarinets play arpeggios in the opposite direction.

Hiccup now realizes his naivety in ignoring the dangerous nature of their situation and tells Toothless to calm down. His demeanor suddenly becomes brave and confident. He is still afraid, but he leaves his uncertainty behind. The woodwinds start accelerating, doing sextuplets towards a trill. The horns reenter here with a fanfare gesture, bringing back Hiccup's sense of heroism and

determination to save himself and his friend. The last measure of the section is in G major, which precedes the new section in E major. The resolution by thirds into measure 55 is extremely effective and supports the moment when Hiccup and Toothless stop falling and resume flying.

(Measure 55 – 58) Despite their newfound stability, Hiccup and Toothless remain fearful and uncertain. This is one of the more subtle yet effective parts of the cue. Now that the characters feel slightly safer, Powell brings back the first melody played by the violins and celesta. The trombones and the tuba play tied whole notes with the cellos and basses to sustain the harmony and the trumpets play a rhythmic fanfare. At the beginning of the cue, this melody was heard when Hiccup was uncertain and preparing for the task ahead. However, now he is immersed in his excitement and looking at his prosthetic tail diagrams, hoping to find a solution to his current situation. This particular melody returns because he is still recovering from his uncertainty and fear caused by the fall.

(Measure 59 – 68) Finally Hiccup begins to act the hero; he discards his diagram, takes the reins, adjusts the prosthetic tail into position, and he and Toothless begin flying with determination amidst the mountains. Here Hiccup feels completely confident and brave, and has finally overcome his feelings of uncertainty and fear. Now violas, cellos, basses, trombones, tubas and woodwinds play obstinately in half notes, scoring Hiccup's newfound heroic attitude. The horns have the main melody, playing the same melody that sounded when he decided to descend towards the water for the first time.

Following this heroic character, the violins are doing sixteenth note arpeggios for the duration of half notes. Hiccup is no longer playing childishly;

he is flying decisively and consciously. Therefore, the arpeggios are no longer short and playful, but long and strong.

(Measure 63 – 66) Now the woodwinds, clarinets and harp begin to mimic the string arpeggios. The violins double the horn melodies an octave higher, adding volume and amplitude to this heroic moment, while the protagonists approach the open sea.

(Measure 66 – 68) The end of this great adventure is scored with an orchestral echo. The melody appears in the horns and second violins, and then the first violins, followed by the trumpets, echo the last measure of the melody. At the same time the orchestra does a diminuendo towards *piano*, then a crescendo towards a fortissimo at measure 69.

(Measure 69 – 71) Powell decides to finish with the *Thinking* melody from the beginning of the cue, played once more by the strings and woodwinds. In this way, he ends the cue as it began and completes its cyclical form.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the usage of different orchestral instruments, as well as harmony and melody, are useful not only to add variety and structural support to the music that accompanies the image, but also to transmit the characters' feelings and emotions.

With only one note, a particular timbre can generate a specific sentiment such as anxiety or heroism. At the same time, we can confirm that associating a melody to a character's different mental states make the viewer's subconscious automatically understand how the character is feeling and generate the necessary empathy towards the scene and the character.

It's a cheap trick, is a total show hand, you can get them to an emotional place [...] what else are we doing in films but completely manipulating people.⁸

– Powell, 2014

⁸ FMMFilmMusicMedia, John Powell Interviewed By Jon Burlingame, October 28, 2014, , accessed June 27, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FeJg3z1KMFY>.

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