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Film Score: The Romantic Ideal

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Research & Scholarship SYMPOSIUM

Film Score: The Romantic Ideal

Though film scores bear the marks of modern music in many ways, they are, in themselves, a Romantic endeavor. In this paper, I will discuss the history and development of film score as a musical style. I will then discuss the modern elements of film score. Finally I will categorize film score as a Romantic endeavor and make some predictions based on the implications of this idea. This style developed during the 20th century, so it does indeed bear some marks of modern composition. The biggest influence from the modern era is simply the vast diversity in compositional approaches and musical styles presented in film scores. Some of these approaches and styles can be identified with any of the music eras, including the modern era. However, what makes film score Romantic is the ideal. Romantic composers were obsessed with portraying emotion and feeling. The ultimate Romantic composition was always programmatic, meaning it was a response to an extra-musical subject matter. Film score's primary aim is to elicit an emotional response from its audience, which is, as I mentioned, a Romantic endeavor. Also, the music in films is incredibly programmatic since it is entirely dictated by the film. In fact, it would not be an appreciated classical art form if it were taken away from the film, because it often lacks aesthetic depth. Therefore, film music is, in itself, a Romantic endeavor.