

This unit explores the music used in film to accompany action and create atmosphere.

Examples of scenes and types of music



TENSE music

- Long notes followed by short notes or pauses.
- Melody switching between two notes (e.g. the theme from 'Jaws').
- Useful for making the viewer think something bad is going to happen.



PURPOSEFUL music

- Military drum sounds.
- A major key (happy sounding music).
- A medium tempo.
- Useful for characters getting a job done, or planning to defeat an enemy, etc.



ROMANTIC music

- Slow, long notes.
- Sweeping melodies (getting higher and lower very smoothly and quickly).
- High, twinkly notes.
- Useful for showing which characters are the love interest.



DANGER music

- Getting higher and faster.
- Using lots of instruments to create a chaotic sound.
- Useful for building a sense of impending doom.

Vocabulary

chromatics

Notes played from the chromatic scale which can make the music sound 'creepy'.

composition

A creative work, such as a piece of music.

evoke

To suggest a particular feeling or thought.

graphic score

A way of writing down music on the page without using traditional stave notation, instead using images to represent the music.

imagery

Visually descriptive music.

improvise

Making up music as it is played or performed.

major key

A tonality where the music sounds happy or bright.

minor key

A tonality where the music sounds sad or tense.

modulate

Changing from one key to another (e.g. major to minor).

notate

To write symbols to represent music.

pitch

How high or low a note sounds.

sound effects

Effects made that imitate real sounds.

soundtrack

The background music, together with the main songs, create the soundtrack to a film.

tremolo

A trembling effect, achieved by creating a loud and then quiet sound with a single note.

unison

Playing or singing notes at the same pitch, at the same time.