MUSIC AS BRAND, WITH REFERENCE TO THE FILM MUSIC OF JOHN TOWNER WILLIAMS (with particular emphasis on Williams's 'MAIN TITLE' for *STAR WARS*).

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Abstract

In contemporary consumer culture, branding is the term given to the creation of an image or text (visual, aural, textural or multi-sensory) intended to represent a commodity or product sold by a producer or service provider. This product's commercial viability depends largely on the way it is presented (via branding) to its target market.

The aim of this research report is to show that music used consciously as a branding medium, with special reference to film music (in its commodified form), has become a brand in itself, as opposed to merely a component of a multi-modal commercial product. Through analyses of a central film music theme from *Star Wars: Episode IV*, composed by John Williams, I aim to identify what I will term `audio-branding techniques' within the music, thereby showing how music has come to be regarded as a brand. The audio branding techniques will relate directly to the four levels of analysis that I propose to conduct. The nature of branding implies the presence of three entities in the cultural and commercial `transaction' that takes place: namely, the service provider (creator), the product (commodity) and the target market (consumer). I intend to argue that, as a result of powerful creative collaborations between John Williams and his various directors (not to mention his own unique talent), this composer's film music has increasingly become an audio brand which is almost commensurate with the brand status of the film itself. Williams's ability to create a symbiotic relationship between a music brand and that of a film has set him apart from most other contemporary art and commercial composers. As a result, it is not simply the actors, directors and producers associated with a movie that induce one to buy tickets to see it, but Williams's independent audio branding style as well. I thus aim to prove that his film music is an audio brand independent of, and yet also allied with, other brands.

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Keywords

Branding – Film Music – John Towner Williams – *Star Wars* – Semiotics – Meaning and Music – Audio Branding Techniques – Multi-modal Music Analyses – Music as Commodity – Music as Cultural Identity Anchor.

Declaration

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters of Music (Composition) by Coursework and Research Report in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

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Introduction

The word 'brand' is derived from the Old Norse 'brandr', which in turn means 'to burn', referring to burning a symbol of ownership into the flesh of livestock (Keller 2003). In ancient civilizations, an actual branded mark on the flesh of animals or slaves was a common practice used to identify ownership. The symbol used as a branding sign differentiated one owner's produce or property from another. Since 2002 B.C., the Egyptians used branding marks on their livestock to signify ownership, pride and wealth. Besides animals, humans were also branded to signify ownership or to be identified as belonging to a lower class in society. The actual branding symbols would be derived from numbers or letters of the alphabet, or even original eccentric symbols. These symbols were attached or imprinted onto the subject either with paint, pine tar or, in more recent times, grafted onto the subject's skin with hot iron brands. A visible sign on the subject served as both an index of the subject's ownership, as well as a signifier that the subject's identity was shadowed by that of the owner. The nature of branding implies the presence of three entities in the cultural and commercial `transaction'; namely: "the service provider (creator), the product (commodity) and the target market (consumer)" (Ries and Ries 2000).

According to the American Marketing Association, branding is "a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of the competition" (Keller 2003). Branding can be seen as a contemporary semiosis of an ancient human practice — that of signifying and signification through sensory stimuli. The idea of music as a brand is perhaps an unusual one, yet in the analyses I undertake, I aim to highlight the commercial importance of this idea, and how it has already been in practice for many years. Music as a brand can be seen as comprising audio signifiers carrying various meanings for different target groups, depending on a number of variables. A music brand (audio signifier) could be as simple as a mother's voice or as striking and intense as Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. In essence, audio signifiers are both as identifiable and as meaningful as signifiers in any other sensory medium.

There has been a vast amount of research done regarding the visual aspect of branding and its relation to the broader cultural issue of commodification. Much less has been written on music's anchorage (Barthes 1972) of visual and other sensory messages within the advertising and multimedia environments, and it is within this space that I would like to work. Music's privileged status as a social and cultural marker (particularly of youth culture) has been well established in studies of popular music over the last fifty years. It is therefore not surprising that music has become an increasingly crucial ingredient in branding formulae. A study of music's role in branding would thus need, first of all, to look at music's ability to speak to (and for) specific communities within pan-Western culture.

My interest in branding and music stems from my passion for creating identities for the different music-based multi-media projects that I work with. It

is therefore fascinating to me to understand the theoretical basis for the creative work that I and so many other contemporary composers derive a livelihood from. My desire to compose music for commercial projects came to the fore while I was a young music student and watched the commercially and artistically successful animated Disney films, *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lion King*. This was the first time that the integrated skill and commercial allure of instrumental music composition, theatrical orchestration and leitmotif song awoke the desire in me to become a leader in the commercial music industry. Both John Williams and Hans Zimmer are continually used as film composers in big brand Hollywood films, and either of them would have made an effective case study for this research report. I chose John Williams, as his long-spanning career has already reached its creative-commercial peak.

John Towner Williams is possibly the composer *par excellence* for understanding how music operates as a brand. He is a master of film music and a composer who has created a recognizable music brand in his various film scores, a brand that not only underlines and gives identity to a particular cinematic narrative, but one that promotes the identity of the music itself beyond this immediate context. Williams's scores are sources of great inspiration for the contemporary composer, and also texts to be analysed as outstanding examples of music brands (www.johnwilliams.org).

 Born in New York City in 1932, he moved with his family to Los Angeles in 1948 where he attended UCLA and also enrolled privately for composition studies under Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco. He then did his Air Force service, after which he returned to New York. Once there, he furthered his piano performance studies with Madame Rosina Lhevinne, also performing in jazz clubs and doing session work with recording studios. He then returned to Los Angeles, entering the film industry and working with esteemed composers such as Bernard Herrman (*Psycho*, *Vertigo*, *North by Northwest* and other movies), Alfred Newman and Franz Waxman. In the 1960s he wrote music for a number of network TV shows and also won two Emmy Awards. It was about this time that John Williams was first noticed by film directors. In the early 1970s, a new young film director – Steven Spielberg – was making a name for himself because of his innovative approach to the cinematic genre. John Williams was suggested to him as a composer of music scores for his films. Williams and Spielberg were perfectly matched in their shared sense of the aesthetic, their flair for the dramatic and the theatrical: thus their creative collaborative genius was born. Since the release of *Jaws*, the Spielberg-Williams partnership has been a winning box-office combination. Williams went on to win numerous Oscars, Grammys, Golden Globes, as well as BAFTA Awards for his scores, mainly for Spielberg films. Projects (including the music) that made a remarkable impression on the global market are *Jaws*, *E.T. – the Extra-Terrestrial*, the *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones* series, and also *Schindler's List*. The social, professional and financial success that John Williams still enjoys indicate that his film scoring and compositional styles have become a brand with which a number of target audiences in the world identify. Millions listen to the music of John Williams, not only in the cinema and on television, but also on CD, in the car, on mobile phones, via DVD players and iPods.

Although music is not obviously associated with the notion of branding, it has in the last few decades become a crucial branding device within multi-modal advertising. Usually we associate the term 'branding' with advertising a product to a specific group of people in order to create an irresistible desire to buy the product or service.

Music plays various roles in pan-Western culture: these vary from educational, entertainment, personal or collective enjoyment to branding. One may ask: 'How is music being used to function as a brand?' Music is perhaps one of the most powerful sensory stimulants that can be utilized to conjure up emotions, memories, and past experiences. The association of sound with a specific product makes the potential consumer more favourably disposed towards the seller. As in film, the music for advertisements or any other branded product acts as mediator between the director and actors, as well as the actual silver screen and the audience. Claudia Gorbman states that music adds a dimension of believability to an otherwise two-dimensional experience, thus making the audience, or in this case the potential consumers, more readily receptive to a narrative or myth (Gorbman 1987). The music chosen for advertisements aiming at specific target audiences is usually carefully selected, bearing in mind that pop music draws in a broader-spectrum, cross-income audience. Western classical music, on the other hand, is deemed to appeal more to a high-income niche market. Furthermore, the music style chosen for each advertisement is already imbued with specific cultural codes. Rock music is generally easily affiliated with youth, rebellion and adventure. This can easily be identified, for example, in Service Utility Vehicle branding, the marketing of outdoor products, as well as in sensually underlined commodities; for example, 'juicy flame-grilled Steers burgers'. Classical music readily appeals to a more mature and affluent market that knows what it wants, and is willing to pay more for a higher quality product or experience; this would, for example, pertain in the case of an advertisement for Allan Gray Asset Management Company or Mercedes Benz (Ries 1994).

It is important to observe that branding is also about promising the target market an experience based on enhancing a consumer's physical desirability: L'Oréal, for instance, offers its consumers a stronger sense of self-worth if they use the company's products (as seen in their slogan 'Cause you're worth it'). The Oprah Winfrey show holds out the promise to the (female) viewer of a more empowered selfhood, and fosters an acute awareness of how to create and maintain self-confidence. Mercedes Benz offers the allure of a safe, classy and status-filled driving experience. In each of these advertising campaigns, music is used to create a crucial selling point. Music is generally considered to tap intensely into the subconscious self, creating the perceived meaning of the music (Cubit 2000). Nowadays, music is perhaps the most underestimated branding device that the commercial world can use to create and promote myths, promises and desired experiences in order for companies to gain financially.

Essentially, what sets the purely aesthetic experience of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony apart from music used and created for multimedia productions is

that the former can be seen as an authentic artistic expression of art for art's sake by the composer. Music created and used in multi-media productions can be defined either as art for money's sake – as is the case with most music brands used for television; for example, the Coca-Cola tune — or as art for art's sake with an eye on financial gain, as is the case with a typical John Williams score. Jingles such as 'Everything keeps going right – Toyota' for the motorcar advertisement, 'Who are you?' used for the *CSI: Las Vegas* television series produced by Jerry Bruckheimer, and 'Mum remembered Melrose' for the cheese spread advertisement are all examples of how music fills a crucial role in making a product or television experience memorable. In the branding industry, the familiarity of a product with consumers gives it the upper hand. This is exactly what the role of commodified music is, to make a product memorable for the target audience, in order to enhance its visibility in the market place (Ries and Ries 2000).

The chapters of this research report will deal with selected areas of interest in analysing and establishing film music (represented by John Williams's 'Main Title' for *Star Wars*) as a brand.

Chapter one explores the philosophical and theoretical background that forms the basis for contemporary branding. The notion of signification and mythification will be touched on, with reference to linguistics, advertising, multi-media and film music. A theoretical framework drawing on Barthes, Frith, Middleton, Cook and Gorbman will provide the foundation for the discussions and topics to follow.

The *Star Wars* 'Main Title' will be discussed from four different analytical perspectives, each of which will encompass an individual chapter.

Chapter two will focus on the contextual analysis where the score and soundtrack will be analysed in conjunction with the visuals. The visual narrative techniques will be studied in relation to the musical narrative for the selected scene. In this process, I hope to identify and/or confirm specific techniques in which the chosen case study's music serves as anchor to the visual and other narratives.

Chapter three will provide an exposition of the musicological (music-as-text) analysis, where the score and soundtrack will be examined in terms of traditional techniques of musicological analysis; that is, pitch, duration, dynamics, timbre and structure. Horizontal (for example, harmonic progressions, structure, climax creating and resolution techniques) and vertical (for instance, orchestration, instrument range, pitch registers) readings will be employed in order fully to understand how the music functions and signifies on its own in the chosen case study.

Chapter four is concerned with the semiological analysis, where the score and soundtrack are examined in terms of secondary signification and identity-creation, showing how both score and soundtrack contain meaning in such a way that they may be viewed as a myth or brand type. The focus then turns back to the case study with the question: can film music function on a

secondary level of signification? If so, can it be seen as a brand? I aim to answer both these questions in the affirmative.

Chapter five concentrates on the commercial analysis: the aim in this chapter is to identify the potential branding parameters pertaining to a proposed audio brand, thereby consolidating the various preceding chapters into a final argument for music and film music to be seen specifically as a brand.

In Chapter six, the evidence of the four different readings will be evaluated, referenced and used as an argument for film music functioning as an independent brand.

In closing, the idea of music as a brand is closely tied to the idea of financial gain through the creation of a brand identity. Take, for example, Western classical music. When this music serves the interests of an identified product or market, it becomes a brand: it exists at that moment in time to connect the specific service or product (whatever it may be) to the market that identifies with the meaning attached to its specific audio codes. This then is where commodity art also plays an important role.

Chapter one

Sound as brand

In common marketing parlance nowadays, the branding of a subject or object refers to the way in which that subject or object is made desirable to a target audience (Ries and Ries 2000). The branding concept has become a multi-modal practice that is now implemented even in churches, where the uniqueness of one church is played off against the difference of another. Where commercial gain and economic influence are of prime importance, branding has become especially important in order to achieve success (Atkin 2004). Branding is used as an identity marker in everything from baby nappies to funeral parlours: even certain religions are having great success with branding campaigns for their particular god. The entertainment industry, too, is reliant on branding and branding devices in order to survive: thus, one can say that branding has become a survival tool. The public is used to cars being branded by a logo or a shape, yet when an artist is branded, it strikes a more personal, deeply emotional and intellectually memorable chord. Perhaps that is why the film industry in Hollywood is one of the largest industries in the world: people relate to beautiful, branded people. Furthermore, having an artist, film or director branded makes it easier for the public to distinguish one from the other. Even in this case, branding can be seen as both identity and index marker: index marker in the sense of distinguishing one subject or object from another, and identity marker in that the public adopts part of the subject or object's identity and assimilates it as a component of their own.

The aim of this research report is to show that music, and particularly film music in its commodified form, has become a brand in itself, as opposed to merely a component of a multimodal commercial brand. Through an analysis of the main music theme of *Star Wars: Episode IV*, namely the 'Main Title' composed by John Williams, I aim to identify what I will term `audio-branding techniques' within the music, thereby showing how the music can be regarded as a brand.

My argument is that, with each screening of *Star Wars: Episode IV*, Williams's music becomes increasingly identified as the distinctive sound of the movie as brand. This might be due to the fact that the 'Main Title' is heard on television advertisements, is given airplay on radio stations for purposes of pure enjoyment and/or marketing, and is obviously also owned by many *Star Wars* and John Williams music consumers. This therefore extends the commercial viability of the music that was simply composed in the late 1970s as the score for the *Star Wars* movie. With the commodification of soundtracks, film composers are increasingly seen as creators in their own right, even as important as filmmakers. As Gorbman puts it: "Serious fans have held an unusually prominent place in discussions of film music, often contributing insightful criticism, original research, and analysis" (Gorbman 1999:42). This demonstrates the viability of film music as commodity and also as brand.

1. Literature review

Literature that I have consulted in order to establish the theoretical background for this research report varies from Adorno to Barthes. As one of the first and most theoretically informed articulators of the commodification of music in Western culture, it is important to include Theodore Adorno's views on the subject. He focuses specifically on the culture industry and how the artwork has become a commodity at the expense of its inherent value (Witkin 1998). Adorno's writings on jazz make it clear that he viewed the commodification of music or any `high art' as degenerate and worthy of the most destructive criticism that he could muster. However, branding does not divest music of its artistic qualities and neither does it require the music commodity to be demystified. Instead as Atkin, in his book *The Culting of Brands* (2004) states, contemporary branding has the potential to create a cult-following built around the commodity. Atkin opens up the hidden world of highly successful branding strategies. These strategies have been likened to the creation of religious cult followings, with the difference that, in the case of advertising, these cults have become informed, untraditional and commercially based, such as Apple Macintosh and its CEO, Steve Jobs, or *O Magazine* and its creator and icon, Oprah Winfrey. Research focusing on the creation of cults and their followers has brought to light the fact that the establishment of cult brands occurs for the most part within an educated, financially sound and intellectually stimulating demographic, resulting in a change from the previous pejorative notion of a cult as the ideal of culturally bound ideologies (Atkin 2004). With the notion of brand cults – and in this case music and its creators are seen as brand material – the followers of a particular style of music and a specific music creator or performer, can be understood as another way of 'culting' a brand.

1.1 Adorno

Adorno's theories on mass consumption and the degradation of the authentic artwork as explained by Max Paddison (1993) and Witkin (1998) create one leg of the theoretical network of ideas that I aim to include in discussing film music's commodified nature. My views on music as commodity are essentially positive, whereas Adorno's, as we know, are quite the reverse. Gorbman comments on Adorno's view on commercial film music: "Film music … is essentially Muzak, background music; rather than directing attention to its formal logic, it is fragmented, and therefore degraded, commodified" (Gorbman 1988:109).

1.2 Gorbman

In order to understand how music carries codes, and as a result can be seen as a brand, it is important to define the various parameters within which music works — how they signify and how they relate to a target audience. The function and history of associative sound is caught up by both cultural and cinematic codes, as Claudia Gorbman argues persuasively in *Unheard Melodies* (1988). Thus, the parameters of the music that we identify with during the screening of a film lock into a predisposed code that makes the

music seem completely in place. In this manner, film music can be seen as signifying emotion and, in fact, "'anchoring' the image in meaning" (Gorbman 1988:84).

Gorbman's views on film music, its codes and functions are particularly useful. At the outset, she identifies three types of codes in which film music participates: namely, its own inherent musical codes, cultural codes and finally cinematic codes (1988). A variety of possible functions of film music are also discussed, with the general function being to "render the individual an untroublesome viewing subject: less critical, less 'awake'" (Gorbman 1988:5). It is the way music parameters are used that allows them to signify, not the parameters themselves which are the materials of a language or system. Gorbman also states that "the connotative values which music carries, via cultural codes and also through textual repetition and variation, in conjunction with the film's … visuals, … determine atmosphere" (Gorbman 1988:30). Thus, these connotative values that have acquired conventional status within narrative cinema have largely been codified by the early film composers of the 20th century (Gorbman 1988). For example, the movie theme tune, typical of John Williams's scores, can be traced back to the Wagnerian structure of *leitmotiven* in his musical dramas, or even to the thematic transformation employed in Liszt's symphonic poems (Gorbman 1988:28).

The literature on film music has grown enormously over the last decade, and this will obviously be an important point of departure for my interrogation of Williams's scores for *Star Wars*. Claudia Gorbman's various texts provide a detailed analysis of how music functions within a multi-sensory medium, and how it signifies to an intended audience (see *Unheard Melodies* 1988). Gorbman bases her findings and theories on sound musicological and philosophical insight, that will help me construct an appropriate theoretical framework, as well as suggesting the analytical techniques necessary for a proper decoding of Williams's audio branding techniques. In *Film Studies* (1999) Gorbman addresses the realities of music as part of present-day cinematic culture and music's crucial role in providing the psychological 'pay-off' that the target audience experiences while watching the film. This is, of course, allied to an implied financial 'pay-off' that the filmmaker and composer enjoy.

1.3 Popular music studies

Most contemporary film music is written in an accessible, if not necessarily 'popular' idiom that will please a mass audience. Studies in popular music abound; in fact, the so-called New Musicology focuses especially popular music studies, and I have chosen to refer to some of the most prominent writers in this field. Simon Frith's *Music for Pleasure* (1988) is a compact, historically charged yet illuminating account of the history and business of popular music. The writer focuses briefly on film scoring, yet with a clear focus. His view on John Williams's scores is a purely functional one; what he does not quite seem to grasp is that it is the actual 'bonding' (Gorbman 1988:63) of brands such as a John Williams sound to a Lucas film visual, that is what makes these two brands so successful. Middleton's *Studying Popular*

Music (1990) provides an extensive analytical tool in unravelling the various culturally coded layers of popular music. He does not give specific attention to film music as such, yet his methodological approach and some of techniques for analysis can be usefully applied to my intended studies of selected film score extracts – techniques such as structural phonology, Schenkerian analysis and paradigmatic analysis.

1.3.1 Middleton and Barthes

Gorbman brings a thorough understanding of music in conjunction with film; however, I still need to explain how film music signifies on its own, so as to determine the values of an audio brand. I turn to Richard Middleton again as he presents a number of options when it comes to reading popular music, of which I intend to employ the following: paradigmatic analysis and Schenkerian analysis (Middleton 1990). I propose that the music signifies firstly in terms of its parameters: harmony/melody, rhythmic patterns, timbre and form. Signification then occurs when the music means something else outside itself. As Barthes explains in *Myth Today*, signification happens when a deeper meaning is associated with for example music, beyond its denoted meaning (Barthes 1972).

1.4 Commodification of music

Music branding relates in a general sense to the commodification of music; this in turn relates to a specific identity market. Music as a brand is a much more tangible and `marketable' phenomenon than it was in the days of great movie composers such as Max Steiner and Dave Raksin. This is not only because we participate in a much vaster and more sophisticated consumer culture, but also because movie composers such as John Williams enjoy cult status on a par with the screen stars. As Gorbman puts it: "Since movie music is now routinely marketed as a commodity apart from the films for which it is composed or compiled, it has its own thriving ancillary audience" (Gorbman 1999:42). *Star Wars'* soundtracks have become huge collectors' items, which obviously creates a very special status for John Williams. While on one hand one might, like Adorno, feel part of a superficial consumerist society that does not value art for itself and does not 'buy into' its quasi-religious context of place and time, on the other hand the commodified music product is given a different kind of power via its accessibility, in that it can be played (consumed) whenever, wherever and for whatever reason the consumer might choose. Branding does not need to have a negative connotation to it, especially when it comes to music.

1.5 Branding

Important in a study of branding are Al Ries's two books on marketing guidelines for effective branding. *The 22 Immutable Laws of Marketing* (Ries and Trout 1994) constitutes a solid guide to knowing yourself as the creator of the commodity, knowing your commodity and positioning your commodity in such a way that your potential consumer will choose it over those of your competitors. *The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding* (Ries and Ries 2000) are

more relevant to my particular argument, in that the prime focus in this guide is on identity creation and its development and maintenance in the commercial sector. The issue of identity is obviously crucial to a study of *Star Wars* as a multi-modal creative project, and also to an analysis of the music.

2. Type of research report

The proposed research takes the form of a theoretically grounded study: the analysis of a case study implies data being gathered and interpreted in order to derive at a definitive model for audio branding. The data that I will analyse will be gathered from the music of *Star Wars*, as score and as recording. *Star Wars: Episode IV* (Lucas 1977) will be used in relation to the selection of the soundtrack's scene ('Main Title' at the opening scene). A comparative analysis will be undertaken in order to determine the film music's functions, as well as its internal and external meanings.

Music as a means of describing an appropriate identity is nothing new, yet the notion of music as a branding device and even as a brand in itself has not as yet been theorised (Middleton 1990). This research document attempts to do just that, by delving into the various layers of what helped create the functions and results of what I call audio branding.

3. Auteurship

An essential argument for understanding Williams's music for epic movies as a brand centres upon the notion of the *auteur*. In an article for *Film Review – Critical Approaches*, Claudia Gorbman states that a composer of film music can also be seen as an 'auteur' in his/her own right. The *auteur* theory is one that was, until recently, generally reserved for film directors, the creative minds behind bringing a 'pretext' to life in the audio-visual medium of film (Wollen 1999). There are numerous ways of qualifying for *auteurship*, yet, according to Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, the *auteur* theory is generally defined as follows:

> One essential corollary of the theory as it has been developed is the discovery that the defining characteristics of an author's [in this context author is more closely related to a creator] work are not necessarily those that are more readily apparent. The purpose of criticism thus becomes to uncover behind the superficial contrasts of subject and treatment a hard core of basic and often recondite motifs. The pattern formed by these motifs … is what gives an author's work its particular structure, both defining it internally and distinguishing one body of work from another (Wollen 1999:521).

This can mean that the overriding creative and core principles that form a coherent yet structural whole throughout a collective body of work originated by one creator (director/composer, etc.) are seen as qualifying factors for *auteurship*. In essence, this also refers to a deeper sense of a coherent over-riding structure rather than simply referring to a creator's personal creative style. Usually, the *auteur* of a film would be the director: it is he or she who

structures the layers of creative pretexts, narratives and plots in ways that are more or less obvious. After watching a few films directed by, for example, Steven Spielberg, his *auteurship* is seen not only in his ability to thrill and excite the audience with unusual plotlines, but also in his creation of characters that are non-human, yet exude more human-like qualities than human characters themselves.

In this regard, one can think of how a whole family is united in protecting an alien in *E.T.*, yet how the little alien is helpless and traumatized by humans. Another example is from *A.I.*, where a robotic child longs to be part of a loving family unit, to become human – like Pinocchio — yet the humans seem to continually abandon him with each life cycle he spends with them. Spielberg's *auteurship* is also expressed in the theme of the survival of man against nature. The *Jurassic Park* trilogy continues this theme into a whole new dimension – that of ancient animals cloned via modern technology in our current world. The theme of survival is in the foreground, yet this time the dilemma is something that we created ourselves – cloning — and the failure of modern technology. In other words, that which should have advanced the human race failed us when we needed it most.

The music that accompanies these films is also connected with a common thread of melodic and harmonic structure: all of the aforementioned films (*Star Wars*, *Jurassic Park*, *E.T.* and *A.I.*) are based on central musical themes, along with substantial sub-themes. These central and sub-themes consist of melodies built on variations of nineteenth-century harmonic progressions, and performed mostly by acoustic orchestral media. Even in these shared origins, it is evident that there is a structural coherence that can be interpreted as evidence of Williams's specific *auteurship*. His ability to create a symbiotic relationship between a music and film brand has set him apart from most other contemporary art and commercial composers. The John Williams sound is a part of popular cinematic culture that many filmgoers are aware of and have bought into. Take, for example, the huge following that Williams has, especially in the United States, a following that increased a few years ago with the national and international television broadcasts of a number of seasons of the Boston Pops Orchestra which he conducted himself. Many of his film scores, such as music from *Hook*, *Jurassic Park* and *Harry Potter,* were performed on these occasions to wild applause from the audience. These events were recorded and subsequently released to a large market. I thus see John Williams's film music as a brand independent of, and yet allied with other brands, because it is increasingly recognised by the public as music in its own right associated with a specific composer or *auteur*. The public also evidently buys into the John Williams brand, which in essence is a creative brand merged and expressed as an audio brand.

4. Signification and meaning

4.1 Narrative material in film

Storytelling, in this context the narrative element in film, has as one of its aims the connection of the audience to the world, others or oneself (the audience).

It is part of what makes us human that we have the ability to be aware of the world and of others, as well as evincing an awareness of the patterns and structures that help us to make sense and attach meaning (Hawkes 1997:13). Storytelling is also another name for myth-creation, and the ancient civilizations had sufficient practice when it came to explaining the galaxy, or the moon's relation to the sea, or how we all came to be on earth. Myth-creation was a survival tool by which meaning and structure could be merged seamlessly (Hawkes 1997:14). In order to understand how meaning is co-existent with sounds or images, I propose to draw briefly on the study of signs – semiotics.

4.1.1 Saussure

Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist, inaugurated a study of language not merely as a means to an end, that is, a communication device, but more as an objective and living entity that can be dissected and seen as governed by certain laws. He defined language as consisting of a synchronic (a singular word, in the moment) energy as well as a diachronic energy (words in relation to other words in which a conceivable, meaningful context is created). He also advocated that language should be studied as a congruent unit, a 'Gestalteinheit' (Hawkes 1997:20). This means that one should think of any language or system of communication not only in terms of the current sounds that certain words contain and their relationship to the vernacular, but also in relation to the cultural context in which these sounds have come to contain meaning. There are clear similarities between linguistics and music, seeing that both structures deal with sounds that attain meaning within a cultural framework of reference and inter-reference.[1] Saussure also states "what is natural to mankind is not oral speech, but the faculty of constructing a language, i.e. a system of distinct signs corresponding to distinct ideas" (Hawkes 1997:21).

4.2 Sign and sound

This brings us to the next level of sign and sound relationships — semiotics — a study of signs as understood and used in a particular culture. According to Roland Barthes, literature exists today because of the codes that we use in our culture to think about and to create our world (1972). The same can be said for music, given the notion that music is seen and used as a structural language. Storytelling is seen, then, as more than just another way to communicate: it is viewed as a human way to create a myth that is culturally relevant, using codes that are decoded by the audience and interpreted as

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[1] For example, Saussure identified two basic fundamentals: 'langue' and 'parole' (Hawkes 1997). 'Langue' in linguistics relates to the governing principles that make the linguistic structure effective as a culturally based communication platform. 'Parole' relates to the actual everyday manner in which the 'langue' is applied by the users and contributors of the specific language system, i.e. the spoken vernacular. In music the references are quite similar: 'langue' can be seen as the principles and conventions of compositional techniques, i.e. the rise of the leading tone to the tonic, the Dominant triad that usually resolves to the Tonic triad, the particular use and function of cadences, etc. 'Parole' on the other hand can be seen as the actual manner in which these conventions and principles are applied to create meaningful (in the context of a culture) musical compositions.

such in a way that conveys meaningful and emotional messages to the audience. Let us briefly discuss the use of codes or signs in the name of conveying a particular message.

4.3 Semiotics

4.3.1 Sign

According to Hawkes (1997), semiotics is the science of signs that carries a specific meaning within a specific cultural setting: the main purpose of these signs or codes is communication. Saussure also created a model to explain and differentiate between the myth and the 'langue': sign = signifier + signified (Chandler 2005). We can refer to sounds in a cultural setting: when the two-note pattern F to F sharp is played consecutively in a low register with a brief silence between each repetition, the meaning most Westerners attach to these auditory patterns is one of foreboding or unease. In semiotics, the idea of an object or concept and a referred idea or concept is crucial to viewing and understanding myths.

4.3.2 Second-order signification: Barthes

Roland Barthes's *Image – Music – Text* (1977) is theoretically critical to the reading of film music as a text whereby film music operates as a mythic narrative structure. Barthes points out that "the more technology develops the diffusion of information (and notably images), the more it provides the means of masking the constructed meaning under the appearance of the given meaning" (Barthes 1977:46). Here Barthes initiates the idea of cultural symbols, including music, being a text that can be deconstructed. Barthes also states that the language of myth differs from spoken language in that it implies a relationship of 'equivalence' (Barthes 1972:112). In essence, this means that myths are created and read in a manner that is different from the basic units of linguistics. This notion, of which Barthes is the author, forms the basis for deconstructing myths in pan-Western consumer culture. It takes Saussure's concept of 'the sign' to the next level, where the sign itself becomes a signifier, resulting in an altogether new meaning. Barthes takes 'the sign' even further as he makes further distinction between what he calls the 'obvious, and the 'obtuse'. Barthes distinguishes the 'obvious' from the 'obtuse' in that the 'obvious'

> 'is distinct from the purely informative content of the image. If the obvious meaning lies within the field of the symbolic and can be identified according to more or less fixed and conventional relations of signifier and signified, the obtuse sense comes as an excess, is like a signifier without a signified…' (Ffrench 2006:23).

For the purpose of the selected analyses we will focus on the 'obvious' sense seeing that the literal and associated meanings of the music as text will be crucial to forge the theory for an audio brand. Barthes's view of the 'obvious' is linked to the literal (denotative) and the associated (connotative). All of the analyses that will be conducted in this research report are to some degree

semiological; there are also instances where denotative meaning (Chapter three) and connotative meaning (Chapter four) are focused on respectively, in much the same way as analysing the grammatical elements of a sentence, and then analysing the meaning of the sentence. In Chapter three the actual score is analysed in terms of its musical structure and coherency, whereas in Chapter four the meaning of the music, outside of the musical sense of aesthetics, is focused on.

Besides being a highly esteemed post-structuralist, Barthes is well known for his analyses of popular culture, advertising and the way in which we communicate myths in contemporary Western culture. Barthes's famous essay *Myth Today* in particular interrogates the various constitutional and deconstructive aspects of mythical signification. He starts off by explaining what constitutes myth and how it comes about to be such a prolific communicational device in cultures across the globe. Firstly, myth is a form of communication which does not subscribe to a specific object, concept or idea. It is a way of relating to the world and to others. Myth is not defined by an object or the way in which it is represented; it is rather a way of attaching significance to something, to anything actually (seeing that anything can be seen or regarded as more than it actually is). This brings us again to the semiotic analogy that is prevalent in the work of Saussure and Pierce: the concept of the sign and the meaning that a culture attaches to a symbol (targeted at any sense) extends beyond the actual 'face value' of that symbol. The signifier-signified-sign concept is the primary semiological system from which Barthes identifies the second-order semiological system (Barthes 1972: 114). This is the mythic language (*metalanguage*) that refers to the actual objects and sounds that we use in our specific cultures, yet the attached meaning is deeper, containing more variants and possibilities.

As an example of a second-order semiological system (*metalanguage*), I refer to Barthes's 'The New Citroën'. *Mythologies* (1972) is a collection of essays on popular culture myth-creation and consists of analyses that play an important role in understanding the role of myth in branding. In 'The New Citroën', Barthes discusses the idea of cars having replaced the near-divine wonders of Gothic cathedrals as the new man-made marvels (Barthes 1972:88). The way in which cars are marketed is more about the craftsmanship, the experience and the status than about an object to transport one from one point to another. However, Barthes focuses only on the car itself in his essay and not so much on the branding that was done at the time. He compares the glass windows of the Citroën to those of cathedrals, stating that the metal that constitutes the car is actually just there to support these windows. He mentions the Citroën brand logo – two elongated upside-down V's (it was previously two arrow points), one directly above the other – to Barthes this logo's myth can be deconstructed as saying to the public that the Citroën brand is about a higher sense of winged spirituality, that with a Citroën you and your family can fly up, closer to heaven (Barthes 1972:89).

Barthes also calls the mythic signification a *metalanguage* in which the reader reads the 'primary' and then the 'second-order' or *metalanguage* so as to understand the deeper meaning. Barthes goes on to say that we 'now know

that myth is a type of speech defined by its intention … much more than by its literal sense …; and that in spite of this, its intention is somehow frozen, purified, eternalized, *made absent* by this literal sense …'(Barthes 1972:124). In terms of analysing the main theme from *Star Wars*, reading the music as a text with primary and secondary signification will be essential in relating the music to its myth status. Chapter three deals with the primary signification, whereas Chapter four deals with the secondary signification or *metalanguage*.

4.4 Narrative material (myth) in music

A romantic notion of programmatic music is continued in current film music today. Music's narrative function has been utilised extensively since the early days of word-painting in the Renaissance. Being able to conjure an experience, image or memory through the use of sounds has been the backbone of the operatic and especially the symphonic genres from the 1800s. Programmatic music always has a narrative agenda: it tells a story and functions as a descriptive agent. Film music also functions as a descriptive agent in motion pictures, with the addition of the visual and dialogic narrative. In order for the general audience to understand this descriptive music-agency, certain music conventions need to be adhered to. Think of the music John Williams composed for Spielberg's *Jaws*: the two low notes – an ascending semi-tone phrase, played by the low strings, becomes faster and louder, and is played more aggressively as the shark is about to attack another victim. The audience starts to associate the shark with this musical riff after seeing the shark, its subsequent attack and hearing the same type of music accompanying this pattern repeatedly. Thereafter, the riff only needs to be played (without the shark's visual presence on the screen) and the audience expects a shark attack. Refer to the scene in *Star Wars IV* where Luke [the hero] sees a recorded version of Leia [the heroine] (later to be revealed as his sister) for the first time via a projected image as she is pleading for help. Luke is suddenly infatuated with her. The music John Williams composed for this scene is a stirring, epic-romantic music piece. Imagine using the *Jaws* music with this scene or the epic-romantic music for the *Jaws* scene: the overall meaning of each of these scenes would be utterly confusing. This proves to show how much the general film-going audience has bought into consistently used cultural codes as cinematic codes. We actually expect certain music codes with certain generic scenes (for example, love-making scenes, romantic scenes, preludes to thriller movies, and so on) because we have been exposed to similar audio-visual patterns over and over again in our current popular culture.

Conclusion

Simply stated, a brand is an identity marker, an image associated with a product. In Williams's case, his brand image is sometimes his own physical image, yet with regard to his audio brand image, it is undeniably the imprint of his creative energy conveyed through his personal creative music style that translates into an audio image. It is this audio image that has become a myth in itself, yet at the same time it creates mythical experiences for the audience. Williams does this through using and manipulating cinematic and

compositional codes that translate into more than just the sound of the music on screen: such codes also evoke memories, experiences, desires, all of which create a deeper meaning and hence become a myth. It is the intention of this research report to unpack the levels of construction and meaning that are implicated in Williams's powerful sonic images by referring to the 'Main Title' from *Star Wars.*

Chapter two

Contextual analysis

The main function of film music is to create a space in which the viewer can relax and become an 'untroublesome social subject' (Gorbman 1988:5). The social function of music relates to the 'listener' being in a semi-aware state for which the music is responsible, in order for the 'listener' to partake effectively and more actively in a social activity. The function of the music depends on the particular context and social perception that accompany the appropriation of music.

Film music is by its very nature less foregrounded than, say, music in a live symphonic concert performance, simply because the medium requires visuals which function on the primary signifying level. This does not mean, though, that the visuals are always the primary signifier throughout each film; music and images can have the effect of dialogue when signifiers merge, which is what happens in film, with both being on differing levels of signifying importance. On this background level, film music can have as much, if not more, signifying power and potential as the images do (a factor which Chapter Four investigates in more depth), even if its functions are prescribed by its context.

Although in each film a variety of functions can be identified, the main ones are invariably to relax the viewer in order to raise the visuals and the presented narrative from the two-dimensional screen to a mythic level (Gorbman 1988). Secondly, film music aims to create the same deeply personal experience as most pop ballads do; that is, the listeners feel and experience the song as though it is sung by the artist just to them. In other words, both film and pop music focus on signifying in such a way that the listeners are able to interpret the music easily and effectively and, even more importantly, to identify with the music on a deeply personal level (see Middleton 1990; Gorbman 1988). Thirdly, music functions as an identity marker, especially with the coming of age of teen movies in the late 1960s and 1970s. During this period, rock music was used to hone in on a specific target audience that related strongly to the sound, rhythmic patterns, lyric sets, timbre and cultural gestures associated with rock music. Nowadays, there are many more target audiences than there were in the 1970s, with new audiences being created and evolving all the time. This means that a prime function of music is to communicate instantly to a specific section of the socio-economic demographic. As a result of the fourth function, the fifth function of film music is to create an overall sonic identity: besides making the filmgoer feel that he is the only voyeur in the cinema, the music should also make him feel exclusive, as it is appropriated by him on a deeply personal level. Thus, film music also functions on a higher level to create an audio identity or an audio brand for a specific film. In this respect the film composer emerges as an *auteur* (refer to Chapter one).

The context of the specific film determines the type of audio branding that will be incorporated and how layered the brand will be. Types of audio branding

include acoustic branding, electronic branding, electro-acoustic branding, epic branding, lyrical branding, protest branding, rhythmic branding and others (Björnberg 2000). The layers in each audio brand relate to the number and importance of the various identity tunes/sonic signifiers that are assigned to the movie by the film composer.

In *Jaws*, the prime sonic signifier is the ascending two-note riff heard repeatedly in the low range. In *Star Wars*, John Williams created a strongly independent, multi-layered audio brand based on neo-Romantic music codes in perfect synchronisation with the visual and narrative myths that George Lucas created and oversaw. So, in essence the *Star Wars* brand is more a merging of various strongly independent, yet synchronous brand identities (Williams and Lucas being brand identities in themselves) that create an overall *Star Wars* brand to which the box office responds well. In *Gladiator*, Hans Zimmer merged his creative audio branding techniques with Lisa Gerrard from *Dead Can Dance*, and the overall *Gladiator* audio brand at times functions on a higher signification level than the visuals and the actual narrative.[2]

1. Film music and context

Focusing more closely on the context in which film music is presented to the 'listener', as well as on the identification that the 'listener' experiences with film music, I want to draw attention for a moment to the way in which cultural signification via audio branding is used in movies. An effective generic example is the Western movie genre with conflicts between Cowboys and Indians. In 'Scoring the Indian: Music in the Liberal Western', Gorbman discusses the ways in which film music functions as an identity marker (2000). This is interesting and relevant in that music is nowadays used in commercial and artistic ventures to create sonic identity markers between one identity group and another identity group, i.e. an 'other'. Gorbman's research in this field indicates that before 1950, Hollywood films in general denoted the Native American Indian in music in one of two ways, much in the same superficial fashion in which women were denoted: either as a noble hero/heroine, or as a slut or uncultured, bewildered hunter (2000). The musical codes usually included to serve as identity markers for Native American Indians in film, were fashioned in terms of traditional music parameters. Rhythmic patterns that formed part of this code included for example, an accentuated short note value immediately followed by a non-accentuated longer note value. Melodic gestures that formed part of this code would be for example modal pitch lines often ending a phrase with a descending third interval. In turn the harmonic progressions also were used in a way that made reference to the Native American Indians with its modal harmonies employed to indicate non-Western civilisations; the normal triadic intervals in turn were also substituted with chords consisting out of fourths and fifths. Timbral features that form part of this code would include flute or strings functioning as a more transparent signifying agent (Gorbman 2000). As a result, the music scored for the Native

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[2] In Chapter five the commercial side of music is discussed, and how audio brand creators have become niche creators in the commercial music industry, with avid followers.

American Indian scenes was, for the most part, exaggerated in its attempt to demarcate the 'other', as opposed to the multi-harmonic, fully orchestral, functional and sonically recognisably 'us', the Cowboys (Gorbman 2000). Records of transcripts exist even from the 1880s containing indigenous Native American Indian songs, and Dvorak is well-known for his conscious inclusion of the Native American Indian musical aspects in his 'art' music (Gorbman 2000). It was only after mid-1900 that the Native American Indian was becoming integrated into Hollywood as an equal and not just a two-dimensional savage/'other'; yet, the scored music could still only create as wide an identity marker as the film narrative would allow (Gorbman 2000). The difference after 1950 laid in the inclusion of more diegetic Native American Indian music in films, such as authentic Indian ceremonial music. According to Gorbman (2000:244): "The classical [neoromantic musical] model was driven by the desire to cement musically the meanings onscreen, and thus became highly codified, calling on a musical style that antedated the musical modes of the day."

As a matter of commercial viability and clearly defined audio identity creation, each film's target audience in every viewing scenario has to identify with the core emotional strands, shades and poles of characters, as well as with narrative lines. Gorbman (2000) points out that the highly coded musical style of Hollywood up to that point felt the need to linger slightly behind the new representational/authentic formula in order to serve as gelling agent between the previous binary poles of the 'other'. It must, however, be said that with the audience identifying more with the 'other' than with the usual protagonist, the music has more freedom to set new identity markers. With Disney's *Pocahontas*, released in the mid-nineties, the audience was focused on the injustices done to the 'other' in which they saw themselves, as opposed to fifty years before when the American audience could not see themselves in the 'other' (Gorbman 2000). This discussion was key to point out some ways in which music functions as an identity marker in the context of narrative cinema in which another culture's identity is, via sonic branding, being perceived as different.

The next aspect of film music and its contextual framework concerns a short synopsis by Simon Frith on film music. According to Frith, John Williams' music for Hollywood movies such as *Star Wars* is too functional to retain its aesthetic interest outside the cinema (1988). This is a point that can be debated, since many of Williams's scores have, since the early 1990s, become concert pieces, initiated especially through Williams's own accurate response to his target audience. He simply fulfilled a growing need on the part of his audience to relive the experience of the respective movies via the formatted film music concert pieces so that they could once again appreciate his *auteurship*. This is another affirmation of Williams as audio brand creator, with his music focused on an ever-growing target/listening audience. The famous Boston Pops was the multi-media vehicle that brought Williams's scores from the cinema to the concert halls and, via television, to the rest of the USA and the world.

Frith does make a few valid points about a few other film composers. The grade of film score functionality basically depends on how accurately the film composer translates the emotion onscreen into sets of codes that are relevant to the listening target audience. Bernard Hermann is known for his extensive scoring in numerous Hitchcock films: a signature (brand) feature of his film scoring is the use of musemes (small rhythmic-melodic patterns) that are layered in such a way as to create a rhythmic rather than a (traditionally) harmonic-based climax (Frith 1988). Frith sees Hermann, along with Ennio Morricone, as the epitome of a creative film-scoring genius. Frith also focuses on the unusual timbres that Hermann consistently used which, in retrospect, provided part of his *auteurship*. Williams's target audience would probably not be as appreciative of a Hermannesque score, just as a Hermann audience would not necessarily validate a Williamesque score. Target audiences and the relevant *auteurs* (director and composer) determine the commercial, and therefore aesthetic, success of the specific creative venture. For Frith, though, Ennio Morricone (composer for films such as *Once Upon a Time in the West* [1969] and *The Mission* [1986]) is an extraordinary film composer. Morricone is seen as having the innate ability to respond to the film narrative, not only instinctually, but also intellectually (Frith 1988). In chase scenes, he would not create the typical fast tempo 'mickey-mousing', but rather attain a sense of intensity through a static yet layered texture which, to Frith, has much more appeal than, for example, the 'Imperial March/Darth Vader's Theme' from *Star Wars* (Frith 1988). Once again, this is a poignant example of just how effective (unconscious) branding has become, especially in music. It also shows that, in adhering to one brand genre, other brand genres are usually demonised, making audio branding also a matter of commercial and pan-cultural survival (Atkin 2004).

2. Music and image

In order to analyse the selected film score extract, we need to create a model in which an accurate audio-visual (narrative) analysis can be made. For any narrative to be successfully appropriated by its target audience, there has to be a point of identification, which is something in which branding specialises (see Atkin 2004; Cubitt 2000). According to Björnberg (2000:372), the three narrative functions as set out by Middleton – narrative, epic and lyrical – are, in the music video, basically reduced to the relationship between the images and the music which in turn features as one of four potential 'Music: Images' spheres.

		Music	
		Narrative	Epic
Images	Narrative	'Film music' relationship, i.e. narrative processes in the music and visuals, interacting, but on terms set by the music rather than the visuals	Assignment of 'mood music' function to music, i.e. the music providing backcloth to the visual narrative

	Epic	'Circularization' of music, i.e. focusing of attention on non-narrative aspects of the music, concealing its narrative potentials	'Musicalization' of the visuals, i.e. the visuals primarily reinforcing musical experience by synaesthetic 'translation' and emulation of musical experiential qualities

Table 1.1 (Based on the 'Music: Images' model by Björnberg, 2000:372)

The four potential relationship spheres contained in Table 1.1, between music and images are useful in analysing music video. However, in film, the quality of the relationship is different, in that the images nearly always have a narrating quality that the music supports and expands upon in one way or another. The narrative ability of the music is generally greatly enhanced, in that the kinds of narratives are normally much more varied (depending, though, on the variety of narrative contexts that the film allows for) than those of the music video. In music video the solo music star (as opposed to ensemble acts) is the one and only visible brand that acts as carrier for the audio brand. In film, the acting stars are further mystified and branded through a deeper voyeurism, in that the audience is able nearly to touch them, as they watch their every breath over an extended period of time, their every move, every thought translated into action, yet the stars always remain absent from the experience (Ellis 1999). The score continuously enhances these multi-layered variations of audio branding, a process that is not really suited or possible with a three-minute music video. For the purpose of this contextual analysis of the main theme of *Star Wars*, I will draw on aspects of Björnberg's analysis model for music video that I will adapt to film.

3. Contextual analysis:

Star Wars: 'Main Title' (Opening theme)

(It is pointed out that the contextual analysis is another method for a semiological analysis, although the full semiological analysis will be applied in Chapter four.)

3.1 Context:

The blackness of the screen is lit up by both the startling entrance chord of the *Star Wars* 'Main Title', as well as the first lines of a long column of angled text ascending into the dark, spatial universe. The purpose of the angled text is to serve as contextual anchor, and to demarcate the protagonists' and antagonists' camps clearly while relaying the contextual framework of this particular episode. For the most part, the visual ambit of this introductory passage in the film is a static black screen with angled golden-yellow text ascending away from the audience, while the music functions to support the textual moments by dramatising the text. The music here also establishes the *Star Wars* audio brand by repeating the 'Main Title' theme a few times, as well

as creating an audio anchor that holds the audience's attention. The main theme from *Star Wars* is heard in the film for the first time during a non-eventful visual setting lasting about two minutes. There therefore needs to be another way of looking at the interaction between the visual context and the score: although the written text flows up into the galaxy, thereby informing the viewers about the basic plot, protagonists and antagonists, it is, in fact, the music that creates and sustains the emotional and dramatic foundation of the film at this point. The director (Lucas) and the composer (Williams) decided to highlight the music to such an extent that it is definitely not merely a background accompaniment; neither is it simply an enhancement of the visual experience, seeing that no actors or scenery (besides the galaxy) are present at this point. Actually, the music myth or brand is created here in advance of all the other narrative myths or brands, giving pre-eminence to the defining and narrative role the music plays in the *Star Wars* films from here onwards.

For the contextual analysis, as indicated in the score, please refer to Appendix A. Bars 1 to 97 of the 'Main Title' are included with this contextual analysis to give a holistic overview of the various themes and sub-themes that function together with the visual narration. The score analyses for the remaining chapters will be based solely on the first 19 bars of the 'Main Title' and only as these relate directly to the 'Main Title' theme.

3.2 Music score analysis

[Introduction]: With the entrance chord, the full orchestra is heard, except for celesta and harp. A very short antiphonal, brass fanfare-like passage occurs that runs smoothly into the 'Main Title'. Bars 1 to 3 form the Introduction to the 'Main Title': at this point the huge, golden-yellow STAR WARS logo appears on the screen and slowly ascends at an angle.

The 'Main Title' [A1] (b.4) is heard in the trumpets, together with the accompaniment of the entire orchestra – either tremolandi woodwinds, glockenspiel, piano and high strings, or syncopated harmonic-rhythmic thumps by the lower strings, mainly timpani, cymbal, lower brass and woodwinds.

The 'Main Title' [A1] is repeated immediately (b.11), again played by the trumpets, yet this time the accompaniment changes from tremolandi and syncopated thumps to harmonic-based progression in the strings, lower brass and woodwinds, with high woodwinds embellishing in fast repeated musemes (super-tonic to tonic semiquavers). The golden-yellow text that accompanies this musical narration (bars 4 – 18) is: 'It is a period of civil war. Rebel spaceships, striking from a hidden base, have won their first victory against the evil Galactic Empire' (Lucas 1977).

The complementary section of the 'Main Title' melody, [A2] (b.19), is heard. [A2] is based on the sub-dominant, and played by all the strings except the double basses, with the rest of the orchestra accompanying in triplet quaver notes against crotchets and tied minims. This juxtaposition of rhythmic patterns is effective in creating inner tension in this music text.

The ascending, written narrative that accompanies the musical narration described above is: 'During the battle, rebel spies managed to steal secret plans to the Empire's ultimate weapon, the DEATH STAR, an armored space station with enough power to destroy an entire planet' (Lucas 1977).

The 'Main Title' [A1] (b.38 – 52) is heard again twice after the [A2] section with the melody in the glockenspiel, the higher strings, the french horns and one of the three trumpets: the texture is thickened for variation and intensification of the brand timbre. At this point, the written narrative states the following: 'Pursued by the Empire's sinister agents, Princess Leia races home aboard her starship, custodian of the stolen plans that can save her people and restore freedom to the galaxy….' (Lucas 1977). A series of short interlinking passages [IP1 to IP6] follow, with varied yet connected melodic, harmonic and rhythmic material. With [IP1] to [IP3], the written text slowly fades away as it scrolls upwards.

[IP1] (b.53): the brass rhythmic motif is now based on the triplet museme from the [A1] section, and modulates in a fanfare fashion.

[IP2] (b.59) is introduced with fast-paced triplet patterns in the woodwinds and strings, forming minute sequences ascending to E natural.

[IP3] (b.62) is a combination of fast-moving (triplet-bound) strings and harp below sustained woodwinds and french horns, slowly decreasing in volume and tempo.

[IP4] (b.68) consists of sustained woodwinds and vibraphone, under which the first violins and piano (RH only) create a triplet texture, while the piccolo plays a short, soaring passage resembling a bird call. At this point, the camera slowly turns downwards, revealing the vast galaxy.

[IP5] (b.74): Suddenly the strings pick up the tempo and ascend pitch-wise, still in triplet movements, while the lower brass is increasing in dynamics and texture (french horns join in). Here, the downward-moving camera brings two planets – one further away from the camera than the other – into view.

[IP6] (b.78): this IP leads to the [B] section (march-like) and starts off with a loud sustained note by most of the instruments, which then quickly grows in volume and texture to sound a war-like acclamation in a homophonic rhythmic texture that greatly increases in dynamics (volume), yet slightly decreases in tempo to prepare for the march-like [B] section. The visual narrative at this point reveals the huge planet's surface just below the camera's lens. Two battleships – one smaller (belonging to the rebels) and one much bigger (the Empire's) – are brought into view as the Empire's battleship chases the rebel ship across the screen.

[B] (b.89 – 97): this section is a forerunner to the 'Imperial March/ Darth Vader's Theme' that is still to appear later on. The higher brass and woodwinds are playing a short, war-like melodic motif, once again connected

to [A1] via the inversion of the triplet melodic pattern. The other instruments create the march-like, percussive sound and rhythmic patterns that escalate into the [IP7] section. The visual scene here focuses on the Empire's huge battleship engulfing the smaller rebel ship. This is an apt merging between image and sound, as the 'Darth Vader' (ruling agent of the Empire) theme is referenced at this point.

From now onwards the music becomes very difficult to hear, as the sound effects of the spaceships and their laser beams override the music. The music that is audible does not coincide with the printed score that is used in the Appendix. So, for the purpose of this analysis, it is sufficient to conclude the discussion here.

Conclusion

Because of the static background and ascending script, the music is the only other text that can be read, so this particular scene does not seem to offer all the elements for a true audio-visual contextual analysis. The music does, however, support the narrating text, in that it changes moods frequently, especially via interlinking passages that reflect the content, the written narrative on-screen. The references to the 'Darth Vader' [B] and 'Princess Leia' [C] themes also contain an overall unifying, yet internally diversifying, element.

The number of interlinking passages, as well as the inclusion of both sub-melodic themes [B] and [C], affirm the notion that the music at this point serves a greater purpose than simply translating the ascending text into a sonic equivalent. The use of cultural codes in the music here also suggests the narrative in its epic, dramatic and lyrical sonic imagery. The music sets the emotional tone for the narrative in a way that transcends the written word, by siting the audio-visual space 'centre stage' in a way that speaks to the audience with undeniable force, clarity and mythical stature. This music-as-text analysis will be used again in other chapters, but here it is supplied specifically to demarcate the various moods, instrumental colours and settings that maintain the audience's attention so as to entrench the 'Main Title' / *Star Wars* audio brand with the audience and dramatize certain aspects of the scrolling text during the introduction section of this instalment of *Star Wars*.

Finally, measured against Björnberg's analytical model (Table 1.1) both the music and the visuals function in the 'Narrative' sphere. The reason for this conclusion is that the music is both focused on supporting the scrolling text narrative, as well as functioning independently by creating a memorable sonic nexus for the story dimension to be absorbed by the audience. This is done in a way that informs the 'reading' audience of the context of the primary narrative and also sets the emotional and dramatic tone of the film via the 'Main Title' audio brand. As a matter of fact, the film itself is recognizable by its sound, tone, timbre and the emotional connotations that the audience from this point onwards associates with *Star Wars*.

Chapter three

Music-as-text analysis

Music-as-text analysis aims to decode the main structural parameters of music via traditional methods of music analysis. Various options are available nowadays, yet before I embark on the music-as-text analysis of the 'Main Title' of *Star Wars*, I want to discuss the idea of the notated music score and the role it still plays in the 21st century, as this is still an important and commercially viable way of encoding. Part of what makes John Williams's audio brand with *Star Wars* so powerful is the purely internal relationships and individual gestures that make up the distinctive features of his writing. These internal relationships are what this chapter intends to decipher to some degree, in order to understand how the *Star Wars* 'Main Title' audio brand is put together. The traditional analysis is also seen as a semiotic-type analysis, and in that light the denotative meaning of the actual music will be analysed in this chapter.

According to Frith, film music functions within temporal rules: the harmonic rhythm that is employed throughout a scene is usually constructed in such a way as to follow the narrative plot. Once the narrative plot resolves in the scene, then the music follows suit and achieves its cadences in a consonant manner. Frith further relates characters in a movie to the main melodic themes that become more dissonant as conflict arises, and more consonant when the conflict is resolved (Frith 1988). Besides being functional in creating sympathetic harmonic and melodic patterns to which the audience can easily relate in terms of on-screen conflict and resolution, Bernard Hermann, for example, gives more attention to how his rhythmic musemes, rather than the traditional melodic and harmonic parameters could be used in order to create and resolve conflict (Frith 1988). Comparing a Mahler symphony, with its stylistic chromatic harmonic progressions, to Stravinsky's extraordinarily rhythmic-bound *Rite of Spring,* might perhaps describe this difference in sonic-conflict creation and resolution.[3]

1. Score as text

The score for a track from the *Star Wars* soundtrack such as 'Main Title' can also be regarded as a text in itself. This is based on the idea that the score as text or signifier is a unified entity that means sufficiently on its own without the intervention of the 'sonification'/performance of this text (Cook 1990). In this light the actual performance is not really needed for the written/scored music/text to be validated as a meaningful musical entity. Thus, the purely notated format of the music (the score) can be regarded as a text worthy of analysis without having to hear it or without having it performed.

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[3] Comparing the use of music parameters between a late-Romantic symphonic work by Mahler, for example, to an early-Modern symphonic work by Stravinsky, there is a marked difference in the use of harmonic and rhythmic parameters. The former bases its conflict and resolution points to a large degree on the predominance of harmonic movement and rhythm, whereas the latter focuses on the predominance of the erratic rhythmic patterns and constant meter changes.

Cook affirms Arnold Schoenberg's notion that in order to understand music that is culture-bound, the music itself first needs to be viewed as having been created purely for that specific culture's audience and appropriators. Secondly, the music belonging to a specific cultural demographic needs to be understood as having been notated in a way that will ensure accurate interpretation by its performers specific to that particular culture. However, this notation, by its very nature, needs to convey only selected performance elements (as all ciphered music normally does). In this way, the implied musical elements are then brought to life by the performers themselves, as these elements relate to their specific cultural demographic codes and gestures (Cook 1990). Cook believes that this is then the point where formal musical analysis comes in to fulfil a cardinal function: he states that a "formal analysis is a kind of mechanism whose input is the score, and whose output is a determination of coherence or an aesthetic judgement", which means that the musical analysis aims "to establish or explain what is significant in music while circumventing the human experience through which such significance is constituted…' (Cook 1990:241). This establishes the fact that music-as-text analysis is therefore a viable, yet culture-specific, way of finding out how music relates to the *Star Wars* demographic. In turn this also highlights which harmonic progressions, melodic themes and rhythmic patterns work well together in order to create a *Star Wars* sound or audio brand. By analysing the music score as a text, the musical basis of the audio brand can be deciphered. This then gives us an idea of how the various parameters function in isolation, and in connection with each other. If one is interested in creating audio brands, then a good way of finding out how audio brands are put together and why they work as well as they do, would be to use music-as-text analyses as a fundamental starting point.

2. Music performance as text

In contrast to this view on notated music as the authentic expression of the artist, one should be aware of the focal purpose of the artwork: is its purpose simply to be written down only as a notated text, or for it to be appreciated only by the composer, or to be understood only by those who can interpret it? From the Modern music era, the latter view has driven commercial and art music appreciators away from each other. If music is only to be appropriated either via sight or through an understanding of a highly complex compositional language, then only a select view will appreciate the aesthetic value of such a piece of music. In this regard, Cubitt states that the general audience cannot respond meaningfully on an emotional level to music if they are not exposed to the audio version of that piece of music. Each music piece is then also responded to on various levels of emotional receptivity based on whether the 'grain' of the voice contains emotional triggering signifiers specific to the demographic (Cubitt 2000). With *Star Wars*, Cubitt's argument is important, in that the largest demographic associated with *Star Wars* will never read music or obtain a copy of the *Star Wars* symphonic score-as-text, but they will be able to respond emotionally to the audio version of the audio brand, as that is what is used in the film as well as on the audio recordings. Thus, as the 'Main Title' starts in bar 4 with full orchestration, brass playing the theme loudly and

other instruments accompanying with various rhythmic variations, the message is clear: this is a march, an undeniably adventurous introduction to a 'sci-fi' journey that might result in death, love or life.

3.1 Music's reception

Music is received in many ways, and our reception of it is largely determined by our upbringing (Middleton 1990). Yet, what does remain the same to some degree is the experience of our perception of the music we appropriate. In our western cultures we can choose to be aware of longer and shorter note values (temporal) and higher and lower pitches (register), and whether the music is bright or dark or happy or sad (mood). The two basic parameters captured within a single traditional music symbol are pitch (register) and duration (temporal). Both pitches and durations are involved when it comes to melodic phrases and rhythmic patterns that are actually heard simultaneously, which makes it difficult for the unpractised ear to differentiate between focusing on pitch or duration alone. Put in a simplified manner, both the pitch and durational parameters occur for the most part in recurring patterns that create 'hooks' which the audience in turn perceives and understands in a culturally relevant context as memorable, and therefore significant. The notion of discretionary repetition is crucial in order to create a sense of unity and memorability.

Besides emphasising the fact that music is culture-specific, Cook also mentions the transmission of sonic information from the text through the performers to the audience (1990). For the most part, performers, and composers in particular, encode and decode music in terms of intervals, keys, modalities and notational nuances. The audience, for the most part, does not recognise the interval of a descending major third as the crucial distance between the first two notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Movement No. 1; and even singers and string players do not really keep with the micro-tuning of a minor third in order for their version to sound identical to that of the accompanying piano or harp (Cook 1990). To the audience, these results of parametric patterns, inconsistencies and combinations are perceived as authentic performance impressions that carry meaning or energy frequencies: these, in turn, evoke emotion, a sense of meaning and perhaps even imagery (Cook 1990). In film music, the audience is, for the most part, unaware when the string section comes in and when it is overlapped by the brass, or when there are micro-tuning inconsistencies between the first and second violins when playing middle C, in a polyphonic texture. On the other hand, the film audience is generally extremely sensitive to the emotional contribution/mood that the combined audio image of strings and brass create. This emotional experience of *Star Wars'* 'Main Title' is carried largely by the brass at a loud volume in a medium-fast pace, supported by the other orchestral instruments that function on less noticeable levels to create an multi-facetted emotional marker that is strengthened each time the 'Main Title' is heard.

3.2 Listener's literacy

Cook then touches on the audience's process of making sense of the impressions a piece of music creates: only after they have heard it completely do they understand (to varying degrees) the music as text. For the composer, the process works the other way around: the music is made 'a text' by being translated into music notation/text (Cook 1990). In order for the audience to grasp the musical 'hook' that forms an integral part of each composition, this 'hook' needs to be repeated at structural points whereby it can by highlighted and the audience can assimilate it easily. Schoenberg states that if the audience does not know what to listen for, they will not grasp the message of the text. He also makes clear that in order for the general public to understand his music, he needs to play it very slowly and repeat the important section often so as to break the aesthetic purpose and intellectual integrity of his creative intention (Cook 1990). Nevertheless, he feels that in this way, the audience will be able to spot the points of repetition in order to make sense of the music (Cook 1990). In film music, the codes that composers normally use are adapted in ways that make the film music easily assimilated by the chosen demographic. Adventure movies, for instance, create an expectation in the audience that the film music for this film genre will render a certain sense of excitement through vivid orchestrations, certain harmonic progressions and a rhythmic vitality. On the other hand, other film genres might be more inclined to push timbre and harmonic boundaries (for example, the epic genre: *Lord of the Rings*, Howard Shore) or rhythmic boundaries (such as the thriller genre: *Psycho*, Bernard Hermann). When it comes to music that is created for a general demographic and perception, the musical codes need to be simply identifiable, perceivable and easily assimilated by the target audience. As Cook states, the imagery and sonic impressions that make sense once the music piece has been heard need to be worthy of appreciation by the target audience in terms of the codes and gestures that constitute acceptable music standards for that specific cultural context. In certain film genres it seems acceptable to push boundaries, as composers want to express their own sound (*auteurship*) through the film's audio brand. Yet, at the same time, the foundation of film music language that has been laid consistently since the early 1900s makes it easier for composers to include more unique elements within their sonic *auteurship*, seeing that there is a far greater proliferation of new demographic target audiences nowadays than there was in the early 1900s.

3.2.1 Modality in music

Richard Middleton points out that in order to make a synchronic analysis of music within a multi-cultural environment, one has to be aware of the different influences that constitute the various merged contexts. Regarding modality, there is a clear absorption of modal techniques used by John Williams.[4] Modal music is typical of the general public's folk music in the West, whereas

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[4] Modality relates to the basic structure of a pitch scale that forms the building elements of a piece, whether it has a major (happier), minor (sadder) or more shaded (modal) sound. Altogether 14 traditional modes exist, yet since the 1600s two basic modes were chosen for composition purposes: major (Ionian mode) and minor (Aeolian mode).

the sophisticated tonal (major-minor tonality bound) music is representative of the elite of recent societies (Middleton 1990). Nowadays, this 'elite music' (that which includes major-minor tonalities) has become inclusive of folk and also actual (World) music elements such as pitch bending, modal harmonic progressions, as well as the adoptive use of non-Western timbres in, for example, *Gladiator* (Scott 2000), *The Four Feathers* (Kapur 2002), *Troy* (Scott 2004) and, more recently, *300* (Snyder 2007). With film music acting as both identity marker and emotional signifier, music from different cultures and sub-cultures has been introduced in film in ways that signify distinctiveness, as well as eliciting emotional responses.

3.2.2 Popular music's influence in film music

Interestingly enough, the influence that popular music has had on contemporary classical (film score) music is also worthy of investigation. Film music composed for a large target audience needs, by its very nature, to relate to this audience in the form of musical codes that will be readily assimilated by that specific target audience. Hence the industrious use and inclusion of pop music in teenage movies, highly colourful orchestral music in animation movies and sub-culture music, for example, Heavy Rock/Metal featured in cult underground movies. Modal chords and harmonic progressions in folk and popular music seem to flow more easily with the untrained voice, and this makes such music more suitable for use in folk and popular musical expressions. In Bar 6 of Appendix B, the harmonic chord is a modal version of the dominant chord: instead of the traditional (tonal) version of Bb: V (F, A, C) Williams uses Bb: V7, (9), 11 (F, Ab, C, Eb, (G), Bb). The inclusion of chromatic chords in thematic material has become part of Williams's *auteurship*. Referring to his *Superman* and *Harry Potter* themes, Williams also includes chromatic chords in the midst of tonal chord progressions. This unpredictable harmonic language is part of what makes Williams's *auteurship* so aesthetically pleasing and commercially viable.

Besides modality, the melody of each piece of music is the most crucial audio branding feature that remains, for the most part, the memorable seed that is appropriated by the audience later to be sung in the shower, or even hummed in the car. Middleton refers to Stefani's research where "melody is 'music at hand'; it is that dimension which the common musical competence extracts (often with little respect for the integrity of the source), appropriates and uses for a variety of purposes: singing, whistling, dancing, and so on" (Middleton 1990:96).

4. Analysis

Until quite recently, the analysis of a film score as representative of a music text was an unusual task. Nowadays, the view of popular music as being truly representative of a cultural expression is seen as valid in its own right, notated and analysed for its inherent aesthetic and communicative features and parameters, and contributing to a growing branch of musicology. I choose to understand the chosen main leitmotif for *Star Wars Episode IV* in terms of a

variety of layers, in order to understand the multi-modal relevance of the leitmotif's significant strata.

Before I analyse the leitmotif according to traditional musicological analytical methods, I would like to discuss some relevant points raised by other popular music analysts and critics so as to ensure that the analysis that follows will be undertaken in an objective, yet culturally relevant manner.

4.1 Paradigmatic analysis

Paradigmatic analysis focuses on the pitch centre of the melodic line. This analytical method originated with Nicolas Ruwet, and is based on the premise that "the most striking characteristic of musical syntax was the central role of repetition – and…transformation" (Middleton 1990:183). Another analytical method is that of Heinrich Schenker. Schenker's method revolves around the harmonic movement involving the primary chords, especially the tonic chord and the dominant chord, which underlay the basic structure of a piece of music. Whereas Ruwet's method is more melodic-rhythmic based, Schenker's method centres more on the harmonic-melodic mode. In conjunction with traditional orchestration and rhythmic analyses, I believe that the actual *Star Wars* score can be analysed effectively.

According to Björnberg, the main narrative role in a piece is theoretically carried by the melody and the harmonic progressions. He bases his theoretical conclusion on Ruwet's designation of constant and non-constant elements in music that he calls *parametric* and *non-parametric* elements. However, in order to ensure a unified musicological analytical terminology I choose to call these designators constant and non-constant. Basically, these opposing designators are concerned with which aspect of the music in question is constant (for instance, tempo, modality and timbre) and non-constant (pitch, harmonic progression, rhythmic patterns) (Björnberg 2000). Björnberg goes on to mention that the reason behind the narrative typically being carried by the melodic and harmonic functions is that "melodic processes of aperture and closure combine with harmonic processes of tension and release, forming potentially long-ranging, forward-directed musical structures" (Björnberg, 354).

4.2 Methodological paradigm

Philip Tagg designed a methodological paradigm for the analysis of affect in popular music which incorporates a large selection of musical texts, of which the notated musical text (score) is one aspect of a larger whole designed to establish how the general listening audience makes sense of music (Tagg 2000). The paradigm is divided into two main analytical sections, of which the first is the Hermeneutic-Semiological section and the second is the ideological section. The ideological section and some aspects of the semiological section relate more to Chapters four and five of his study respectively, yet there are some features included in his Hermeneutic-Semiological analysis model that I believe are applicable to a traditional music analysis as this applies to a film score. The main text for analysis in this chapter is not the audio-visual

context, the associative semiological meaning, or commercial viability in relation to the target audience, but is rather the actual score that, in Schoenberg's view, is the ultimate expression of the composer's artistic intention.

4.2.1 Hermeneutic-Semiological analysis

The features from Tagg's Hermeneutic-Semiological analysis paradigm that I would like to use in this analysis are what he calls the "checklist of parameters of musical expression" (Tagg 2000:82). This checklist consists of seven headings, to which I add one more, that of Harmonic Progression. The checklist will be constituted from the following headings:

1] Temporal Aspects: tempo, metre, rhythmic musemes (core rhythmic patterns that create unity), rhythmic texture.
2] Melodic Aspects: melodic musemes (core melodic patterns that create unity), range, phrase contour.
3] Timbral Aspects: timbre, register, number of instruments.
4] Textural Aspects: layers of foreground, middle ground and background voices and the relationship between these voices.
5] Dynamic Aspects: volume gradations and accentuations.
6] Acoustical Aspects: the listener's perception of the acoustic texture (placement of instruments and recording devices), reverb.
7] Electromusical and Articulation Aspects: digital enhancement via delay, flanger, distortion, etc. as well as articulation produced by the performer, e.g. flutter-tonguing, pizzicato, prepared piano, etc.
8] Harmonic Progression: homekeys, modulations, the use and progression of primary triads and their substitutes. Here the traditional Schenkerian analytical model will also be uncovered, as the primary triads will certainly play a role in creating a sense of progression towards a harmonic resolution.

Tagg's Hermeneutic-Semiological analysis does not include the Harmonic Progression heading, perhaps because the popular songs that he intends to analyse with this methodological tool do not fluctuate too dramatically between keys, primary and secondary triads and their dominant-energies. Yet, with this leitmotif from *Star Wars*, I believe that the inclusion of this eighth level of harmonic progression will contain important musicological information about how the general 'subconsciously decoding' audience find they can relate to Williams's audio brand, perhaps because this brand sounds similar to other audio brands created by classical composers whose works can be analysed in a similar fashion as the one which I utilise in my study. As Gorbman (1988) points out, the epic film scores typical of Hollywood are strongly based on the Wagnerian principle of expressive (mainly diatonic, tonic-key-bound music with the inclusion of grades of chromatic intensity) orchestral music. This makes the film score as text very much a candidate for analysis in terms of traditional harmonic techniques.

4.2.2 Schenkerian analysis

Basically, Schenker believes that the core harmonic movement of each piece usually revolves between three harmonic entities: the tonic-chord (home-key's triadic harmony) moving to the dominant-chord (traditionally the most opposed chord of the tonic, creating a strong sense of tension), which in turn moves back to the tonic-chord (home key's triadic harmony). Schenker's way of understanding the basic harmonic thrust of a piece is related to the *auteurship* principle discussed in my introduction. The main harmonic nuclear character is uniquely 'branded' in the movement from tonic-chord, to dominant-chord and back to tonic-chord (which makes up the background graph), with the unique elements being caught up in the fore- and middle-ground graphs. The foreground graph is the most detailed, as it contains the primary and secondary diatonic chords, as well as the relevant related pitch points, usually in the shape of an arch. No rhythmic patterns are used, yet note heads that are coloured in are usually of a transient/embellishing nature with note heads that are not coloured in being of higher harmonic importance.

4.3 Traditional music analysis (based on Tagg's Hermeneutic-Semiological analysis and Schenkerian analysis techniques)

Here follows the traditional music analysis (in this case, a combination between Tagg's Hermeneutic-Semiological analysis and Schenker's harmonic analysis with the inclusion of structural graphs in terms of foreground, middle ground and background) of the *Star Wars'* 'Main Title' (bars 4 to 13):

<u>4.3.1] Temporal aspects: tempo, metre, rhythmic musemes (core rhythmic patterns that create unity), rhythmic texture.</u>

Figure 1.1 represents the *Star Wars'* 'Main Title' core museme in terms of the temporal aspects. This rhythmic museme is the building block for the rhythmic pattern of the 'Main Title', and its visual correlation is confirmation of this.

Each of the four temporal layers (Figure 1.2) function in various intensities of foreground to middle ground to background. Figure 1.2a is the rhythmic pattern that forms part of the foreground: that is, the melody. See Appendix B, bars 4 to 18 in the trumpets (Tpt.). Figure 1.2b is the rhythmic pattern that forms part of the middle ground; that is, complementary melodic / accompanying material. See Appendix B, bars 4 to 18 in the bassoons (Bn.), french horns (Hn.), trombones (Tbn.), bass trombone (Bs. Tbn.), tuba, timpani (Timp.), percussion (Side Drum), violi (Va.), celli (Vc.) and double bass (Cb.). Figures 1.2c and 1.2d are the rhythmic patterns that form the background, the connective 'mist' created by the woodwinds, violins, harp and piano. See Appendix B, bars 5 to 9 in the flutes (Fl.), piccolo (Picc.), clarinets (Cl.), glockenspiel (Perc. 1), harp (Hp.), piano (Pno.) and all the violins (Vn. I and II). The tempo indication is MM = 108/ crochet beat, and the character indication is 'Maestoso', which means majestically. The metre starts off in 4/4 and as soon as the 'Main Title' enters through the trumpets, the metre changes to 2/2; that is, simple quadruple changes to simple duple. Rhythmic

texture relates directly to the foreground, middleground and background depicted in Figure 1.2.

<u>4.3.2] Melodic aspects: melodic musemes (core melodic patterns that create unity), range, phrase contour.</u>

Figure 2.1 represents the *Star Wars'* 'Main Title' core museme in terms of the melodic aspects. This core melodic museme effectively illustrates the basic pitch centres effectively: tonic and dominant, in that order. Though the tonic and dominant pitch centres are heard again in the melody, the tonic does not really contain the same amount of pitch centre energy as it does in the beginning.

Figure 2.2 is a compact version of the melody from the *Star Wars* 'Main Title'.

Figure 2.3 represents a melodic musematic analysis of the *Star Wars* 'Main Title' in terms of inherent pitch centres and movement.

Take note that the basic pitch centres are focused around the lower Bb, the F above it and the higher Bb and returning to F at the end. This confirms the strong tonic-dominant-tonic-dominant harmonic movement, typical of a military fanfare. The contour created by the pitch centre line is a typical arch. The range of the melody spans one-and-a-half octaves, which is also in a typical range for the human voice. This is important in that, according to my experience in the audio branding industry so far, if a client can sing or hum the product's tune (which implies that the audio brand tune needs to be singable), the chances of memorability of your product increases above that of your competition who does not have a singable audio brand tune.

<u>4.3.3] Timbral aspects: timbre, register, number of Instruments.</u>

The leitmotif is initially sounded through the trumpets, and then the violins join in for added resonance and volume. The accompaniment is sounded through the remaining instruments, i.e. the woodwinds, strings, percussion and rest of the brass.

Figure 3.1 depicts the entire range of the highest actual pitch to the lowest actual pitch that the various instruments play during the 'Main Title', as seen from bars 1 to 19 in Appendix B. The middle C in Figure 3.1 simply serves as visual anchor between these two register poles.

The various sections of the orchestra work together to create a varied yet unified texture of timbre. All the instruments performing in the 'Main Title' are acoustic and orchestral. Woodwinds for the most part create ornamentation. Brass provides the leitmotif via the trumpets, whereas the remaining brass functions on a more percussive level. Strings are also divided between the leitmotif (violins) and either an ornamental or a more percussive feature. Percussion consists of the non-pitched instruments (cymbal, triangle, side drum, bass drum, etc.) and the pitched instruments (glockenspiel, celesta, and piano). These instruments are mostly ornamental as well, or typically

more rhythmically percussive. The harp (strings) and the piano (pitched percussion) share the same ornamental function. Piano, violins and harp often seem to function together, as do lower strings, brass and percussion (non-pitched).

4.3.4] Textural aspects: layers of foreground (most noticeable) and middleground (less noticeable) and background (least noticeable) voices and the relationship between these voices, in terms of their audible definition.

Refer to Appendix B, bars 5 to 9.

4.1 indicated on the score shows the foreground voices as performed by the trumpets.

4.2 indicated on the score shows the middle ground voices as performed by the bassoons, french horns, trombones, tuba, timpani, side drum, violins, celli and double basses.

4.3 indicated on the score shows the background voices as performed by the flutes, piccolo, oboe, clarinets, harp, piano, glockenspiel and violins.

The distinction between the various grounds is determined by the auditory perception of the listener. The melody stands out above the other layers. The percussive, complementary layer (middle ground) is addressed next, though it is more accompanimental in its function. The final layer might or might not be noticed by the listener; therefore it is defined as background.

4.3.5] Dynamic aspects: volume gradations and accentuations (refer to Appendix B).

The 'Main Title' starts off with 'Sfz' (with dynamic accentuation) in the first bar, whereas the remaining volume indication for the rest of the Introduction is 'FF' (very loud). In Bars 5 to 18 the trumpets remain on the 'FF' dynamic level, whereas the rest of the orchestra, except the strings, is on the 'F' (loud) dynamic level. There is a moment of 'Sfz' (bass clarinet and bassoons) and 'Sffz' (tuba) at the phrase ending. See Appendix B, bar 10.

4.3.6] Acoustical aspects: the listener's perception of the acoustic texture (placement of instruments and recording devices), reverb. (For this section of the analysis I am referring to the audio recording of the 'Main Title': *The Star Wars Trilogy*, John Williams conducts John Williams, CBS Records, SK 45947, 1990.)

The electronic intervention via the use of microphones adds to the elevated levels of the normally less perceptible harp and glockenspiel. The other orchestral instruments are recorded and panned (spatial placement), as one would hear them in a live performance. The piano is barely audible on the recording *The Star Wars Trilogy* mentioned above, yet that might have been an intentional dynamic level choice when it comes to the mixing of all instruments in the final process of a recording.

<u>4.3.7] Electromusical and articulation aspects: digital enhancement via delay, flanger, distortion, as well as articulation produced by the performer, e.g. flutter-tonguing, pizzicato, prepared piano, etc.</u>

Standard recording techniques were employed with this recording, as is evident in the degrees of reverb, panning, volume control and mixing of the diverse timbral strands. The background level consists of strings, glockenspiel, piano, woodwinds, (and the middle ground's timpani) that all use the tremolandi technique, indicated by two or three angled lines between pairs of notes. This technique requires the performer to play the two pairs of notes very fast in order to create what one can call a 'sonic mist'. The harp also uses a number of glissandi, which means the notes between two 'poles' on the harp is played in a very swift fashion, gliding between the two 'poles'. The side drum also uses flares to accentuate certain moments. Refer to Appendix B, bar 12 (Percussion [Perc. 2]).

<u>4.3.8] Harmonic progression: home keys, the use and progression of primary triads and their substitutes.</u> (Here the traditional Schenkerian analytical model will also be utilized, as the primary triads will certainly play a role in creating a sense of progression towards a harmonic resolution.)

Figure 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 indicate the respective stages of the Schenkerian analysis: from melodic and harmonic detail to its bare nucleus.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I aimed to unlock some of John Williams's audio brand characteristics by analysing the first few bars of the 'Main Theme' *from Star Wars*. We looked at the various melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, modal, timbral, dynamic and textural elements, amongst others, in order to tap into how the audio brand score-as-text looks. It became clear that there are certain parametric collaborations that are a feature of Williams's *oeuvre,* such as the strong rhythmic-melodic partnership, the modal harmonies, paced harmonic rhythmic pattern, and the instrumental combinations such as the piano and strings tremolandi effects, the percussion, low strings and brass symbiosis and the use of the harp as a textural device. These score-as-text devices create an *auteurship* for Williams that translates into a meaningful film experience for the film audience, as well as ensuring commercial viability in the voice that he created for himself and the film. These distinctive features of Williams's compositional features are more than mere characteristic compositional techniques in that they translate to images and cultural references that immediately are extra-musical and also to some extent personal. Thus, Williams's *auteurship* becomes myth or a *metalanguage*, a means to a deeper meaning than that of the musical text.

Lévi-Strauss states that a myth exists "on an especially high level where meaning succeeds practically in 'taking off' from the linguistic ground on which it keeps rolling" (Wollen 1999:530). The connection between myth and brand

is a very close one, and one which I will discuss more fully later on. For our purpose here and now, the *auteur* can also be seen as a myth creator: overriding principles of various 'truths' are expressed (creatively, in the film industry), and the audience becomes the followers of these 'truths'. The *auteur* theory also seems to have a lot in common with structural analysis. According to Wollen, this theory is not about a message per se, but about the underlining structure that gives a film and/or a score its coherent energy. The same kind of structural investigation in music is undertaken when Tagg's Hermeneutic-Semiological analysis and Schenker's analysis techniques are applied to a piece of music. Schenkerian analysis is based on the premise that each well-composed piece of music pivots between two energy centres: the first is the tonic (the three notes/triad that form the basis of the piece) and the second is the dominant (the three notes that together divert the most tension away from the initial three notes). Between these two pivotal music centres are various interpolations of melodic and harmonic variants that make the piece unique in its own right, and even moreso, Tagg's Hermeneutic-Semiological analysis point out the idiosyncratic features in the music. These analytical tools can be seen as merely highlighting the uniquely 'branded' nature of the music by its *auteur*. In other words, the distinctive voice is that of the *auteur*, and this voice can be unpacked to reveal certain syntactic procedures. This, then, is the point of a formal, internal analysis.