The Sound and the Story: Exploring the Derivative Nature of Film Music

The three notes played by a solo trumpet at the opening from Richard Strauss’ tone poem *Also Sprach Zarathustra* make up one of the most recognizable musical motifs in the repertoire, due in no small part to its use in Stanley Kubrick’s award-winning sci-fi film, *2001: A Space Odyssey*. For many, the motif and the movie are inseparable. In a sense, Kubrick has appropriated, for lack of a better term, the opening of *Also Sprach Zarathustra* and has given it meaning as a sci-fi fanfare that amplifies the legacy of Strauss’ work. Interestingly, while the film has been lauded for its innovative use of music in place of dialogue to drive the narrative, the music itself was nothing new. In fact, the soundtrack of *2001: A Space Odyssey* consisted entirely of classical works from pre-existing recordings. They were initially intended for use only as temporary placeholders (referred to as “temp tracks”) as film composer Alex North completed his score for the movie. But, at the last minute, and much to North’s frustration, Kubrick ended up favoring the temp track over the completed score. Today, the temp track continues to be a source of conflict between directors and composers. The rigid hierarchy of the film industry is sometimes the subject of scorn by composers, who would prefer to have more flexible creative license on the music. And yet, because of the need to balance innovation, mass-appeal, and profitability, a degree of conformity is necessary. Unsurprisingly, Throughout the history of film
scoring, derivative practices are widespread and, in many cases, embedded into the creative process.

I. Existing discussions surrounding derivation in film music

Film composers may fear marginalization in the complex movie-making system that requires the appeasement of multiple parties. Despite this, there is an undoubted consensus among cinema experts that music plays a crucial role in the way an film is experienced by an audience. British film composer Daniel Pemberton, during a roundtable discussion with several other film composers, put it best, “Really good film music, … you always re-enter that world of the film as soon as you hear the music” (Cassidy). This seems to be a sentiment that is shared by many music experts, even those looking into the film music industry from an academic perspective. Music historian Berthold Hoeckner writes, “[C]inematic memories called up by film music are not merely retrieved but can be relived. The main title music of a film can take us back to the movie theater just as, within the film, a song triggers the flashback of a character” (Hoeckner 231). A key result of these strong memories is an expected sound associated with certain genres of film. Matt Schrader’s documentary Score provides several examples, from Ennio Morricone’s soundtrack for The Good, The Bad and the Ugly defining the sound for spaghetti westerns, to Bernard Hermann’s score for Psycho defining the sound for horror (Schrader). On a more detailed level, both musicologist Danijela Kulezic-Wilson and humanities professor Timothy Scheurer describe the effect that film music has on an audience’s experience of a film. Kulezic-Wilson primarily focuses on newer film scoring techniques that incorporate sound design that can enhance audience engagement, arguing that the combination of sound
design and music in an “integrated soundtrack” can amplify the sensory experience of both (Kulezic-Wilson). From another lens, Scheurer details how the classical works used in *2001: A Space Odyssey* contribute to the narrative. He writes that Kubrick’s juxtaposition of familiar classical works such as Strauss’s Blue Danube Waltz and unfamiliar works like Ligeti’s Requiem communicates an effective paradoxical message of hope and fear (Scheurer).

With the significant role that soundtracks have on in building a comprehensive film experience, it is clear that scoring practices have a tremendous impact on the success of the movie industry, and understanding the causes and effects of such practices is as important as ever. Meanwhile, we are indebted above all to composer and music journalist Stephan Eicke for our understanding of the how musical borrowing has become an established tradition in industrial motion picture production. Eicke makes the observation that “Hollywood has always been at least twenty years too late when it comes to music” (Eicke 6). Stylistic changes and innovative composition techniques that take hold in the broader musical world only find their way into films decades after their conception. The use of electronic music, for example, was well established by 20th century European composers before it became standard for movie productions. Even the “integrated soundtrack” that Kulezic-Wilson describes follows the general movement of art-music with contemporary composers such as John Cage blurring the lines between music and sound (Kulezic-Wilson). Eicke additionally analyzes the underlying causes of this delay, and much of it is a result of the complex process and network of communication that occurs during film scoring. The studio system, from producer to director to composer and everything in-between, requires an extent of agreement from all parties, and often that means
conforming to proven, time-tested standards of film scoring that do not involve the uncertainty of more unique styles of composition.

Of all the aspects of the studio system, it is the temp track that often ends up as the center of attention, both positively and negatively, in discussions regarding the derivative qualities of film music. As academy award winning composer Alexandre Desplat replied when asked what his least favorite part of film composing, “The least? I think we all agree about the temp music” (Cassidy). And yet, according to Ronald Sadoff, a professor of music at New York University, “The temp track, in its accessibility to musician and non-musician alike, serves as the touchstone from which a concerted sculpting of musical design, concept, and associations emanate” (Sadoff 180). While Sadoff certainly acknowledges the complaints that film composers have when presented with temporary scores, he argues, in a way that agrees with Eicke, that temp tracks are an important part of the communicative process between the director and the composer. The choice of music in the temp track plays a pivotal role in setting the initial tone of the film and clearly conveys the director’s intention for the sound of the movie, a common starting point where both the director and composer can build the final soundtrack. Going even further, Scheurer’s analysis suggests that Kubrick’s temp track consisting of an amalgamation of classical pieces might even be more effective than North’s score written specifically for the film. Scheurer, like Like many of the commentators considered above, acknowledges North’s frustration at having his score discarded at the last minute, but at the same time contends that Kubrick’s artistic decision to stick with the temp track was indeed justified for its effectiveness at propelling the film’s narrative. So, while the outcome of the soundtrack for 2001: A Space Odyssey, with the temp track favored over the tailored score, was something that many film
composers fought to avoid, it may have been “something more than pure directorial ego” (Scheurer). Contemporary classical composer and film scorer Philip Glass, with experience in both worlds, provides a rather practical answer about the reality of the composer-director dynamic: “Look, if it's an opera, I get to say. If it's a film, the director gets to say. It depends whose house you're in. And it's important for us [the composers] to understand that the workplace is different in different places” (Cassidy).

The practical reasons for the use of temp tracks and the widespread practices of derivation in the film music industry are well established. The tremendous financial risks associated with big-budget motion pictures and the need to satisfy multiple stakeholders necessitates a degree of derivation from existing works as a stable foundation for the production process. My hope, however, is to obtain a better understanding of the more psychological and sociological causes of derivation in film music that are less well-defined. I will explore in greater depth the music-memory connection outlined by Hoeckner and the development of genre-specific sounds through an analysis of “Mars, the Bringer of War,” a classical piece from English composer Gustav Holst’s orchestral suite, The Planets. I argue that, while the complex studio system as described by Eicke and Sadoff provides a clear explanation for the derivative nature of the film music industry, it is only a surface-level manifestation of deeper cognitive and societal phenomena that influence the way we use and experience music.

II. The Sound of War

The examination of derivation in film music begins even before the development of sound cinema, with Gustav Holst. Holst was a quiet, intellectual, and eccentric man who found
inspiration in unique places. Early in his career, he became interested in Hinduism, taught himself Sanskrit, and wrote sets of hymns and an opera based on the Indian literature. Then, his interest turned to astrology, with Holst admitting that he frequently casted horoscopes for his friends in his spare time. The result of this interest was the composition of his single most famous work, an orchestral suite titled *The Planets*, completed in 1916 and premiered several years later under the baton of Sir Adrian Boult (Steinberg).

Listen to the first piece in the suite, “Mars, the Bringer of War”, and it becomes immediately clear why *The Planets* remains relevant today (Holst). The powerful brass chords, atmospheric strings, and war-like driving percussive rhythms are extraordinarily moving, even for the casual listener. As the title of the piece would suggest, Holst achieves a dark, ominous, and almost terrifying sound with the use of forceful ostinatos and dissonant harmonies. It certainly evokes vivid imagery, a sound that fits very well with what one would expect to hear in a movie theater. Upon listening to “Mars,” it is difficult not to imagine a vast army marching its way into battle.

Yet, when Gustav Holst wrote *The Planets*, he most definitely did not aim for his work to become an epitome of the cinematic sound. The development of sound cinema was still decades away. And yet, over a century after its initial premiere, derivatives of Holst’s work can still be heard throughout Hollywood, emulated by renowned film composers such as John Williams and Hans Zimmer. The similarities are often striking. For example, the section at the end of “Mars, the Bringer of War” is particularly similar to a section of the “Main Title/Rebel Blockade Runner” from Williams’ score for *Star Wars IV* (Williams). Both contain a flurry of rising strings followed by a set of dissonant, forceful brass chords. Moreover, the rhythm, harmony, and key of the brass chords are nearly identical, and the two works could easily be substituted for each other
without much difference. Of course, as a whole, Williams’ score for Star Wars and Holst’s “Mars, the Bringer of War” are quite different. One is an hours long film soundtrack and the other is a seven minute orchestral piece. But, despite the structural and contextual differences between the two works, certain sections of the Star Wars soundtrack are indeed derivative of Holst, and there is no denying that there is a great deal of similarity.

In a way, the imitation makes a great deal of sense. After all, Holst’s orchestral suite is called The Planets (which, like stars, are in outer space), and title of the piece includes the phrase “Bringer of War.” Thus, it is somewhat less of a surprise that a film franchise by the name of Star Wars draws inspiration from Holst’s music. Interestingly, the same can be said for other film scores that are derivative of “Mars, the Bringer of War.” Hans Zimmer’s award-winning score for Gladiator, contains motifs (most notably in “The Gladiator Waltz”) that seem to be lifted verbatim from “Mars” (Zimmer). In fact, the Holst Foundation filed a lawsuit for copyright infringement against Zimmer in 2006 over the supposed imitation (Schweitzer). It is likely not a coincidence that Gladiator deals with themes of war and violence in the Roman Empire, and Mars happens to be the Roman God of War. Star Trek VI is yet another film which shares thematic similarities with Star Wars (and thus also with “Mars”), is. also quite reminiscent of Holst in the soundtrack for its opening credits (Meyer).

Beyond simply being derivative of an existing work, the above examples are indicative of a broader phenomenon, in which a certain kind of sound becomes representative of a genre. Recall Schrader’s documentary Score, which describes how Morricone defined the sound for spaghetti westerns and Hermann defined the sound for horror. Derivation is not only driven by the studio system, but also by the historicization of sounds associated with thematic material (in this case, the sound of war). The famed “Battle on Ice” from Alexander Nevsky scored by
Russian-Soviet composer Sergei Prokofiev shares musical similarities with Holst’s “Mars, the Bringer of War,” not unlike the similarities observed in *Star Wars*, *Gladiator*, and *Star Trek*. The instrumentation of “The Battle on Ice,” much like “Mars,” contains powerful, ominous brass and percussion with driving rhythms and dissonant chords (Prokofiev). And yet, given that Prokofiev scored *Alexander Nevsky* under the heavy censorship of the Soviet regime in a time long before the development of the modern studio system, it is far more likely that Prokofiev created his “sound of war” independently of Holst than it is that Prokofiev derived his sound from “Mars.”

What then, could explain how two composers came to develop a similar sound to represent a thematic idea? Perhaps it is because there is a general consensus around what actual war sounds like, from the rhythmic marching of armies to the cacophony of battle. As such, efforts to translate the real-world sounds of war into an orchestral/film score would naturally yield comparable results. And, given enough time (and the success/popularity of one work à la Holst), a standard sound for a certain genre is defined. In this way, Prokofiev’s “The Battle on Ice” and Holst’s “Mars” are related not because one is explicitly derived from the other, but rather because they are both derived from the same objective: to evoke the imagery of war. Both, in the end, contribute to the historicization of the sound of war that continues to influence film music today. In other words, once a genre-defining sound is established, parties within the studio system would be understandably incentivized to rely on the time-tested, historicized sound to efficiently communicate a desired message.

**III. Music and Memory**

The cause of this historicization of sound is deeply rooted in psychology. In his book *Film, Music, Memory*, Hoeckner defines the term “double projection” as the “simultaneous
perception of two different images: one projected onto an external screen, the other onto an internal screen” (Hoeckner 67). The external screen, of course, is what is physically seen by the viewer. The internal screen, however, consists of memories evoked by the multimedia experience. What audiences see on the stage or the movie screen can be quite different from what they see in their heads, and the music plays a tremendous role in shaping the the “internal screen.” As an example, Hoeckner details the experience of a friend who, while watching a performance of Richard Wagner’s opera *Die Walküre*, had “a hard time getting those helicopters out of [his] head,” referring to the notorious helicopter scene from *Apocalypse Now* which the friend so strongly associated with the music (Hoeckner 67). The way an audience experiences music is defined by the previous contexts in which the audience has experienced the same (or similar) music before.

Furthermore, Hoeckner adds, internal screens are not static. Every time an individual experiences music with a corresponding image, the internal screen is updated to include the new information, and the updated internal screen would then become a part of the experience (along with influencing experiences in the future). As Hoeckner writes, “Image projects onto sound; sound reprojects onto the image” (Hoeckner 68). This psychological process, the continued updating and reinforcing of internal screens to generate meaning, provides a compelling explanation for the historicization of sound. Every effort to translate a real-world situation into a musical setting updates the internal screens of those who experience it. Some efforts may become more successful than others, and so those works of music would proliferate to more people and create stronger connections to the internal screen for that specific idea. With the increased globalization of the 20th century, people across the globe in different countries and cultures could then experience a wider range of music and film. This would, given the time,
homogenize the internal screens of a significant number of people (since they would all have access to the same film/music experiences), thus establishing genre-defining sounds that are subconsciously associated with certain images.

The association is both a blessing and a curse. Hoeckner, referring back to the beginnings of film music, recognizes the creative dangers of a dissonance between the external and internal screens. He writes, “[T]he use of preexisting music for film accompaniment during the silent era distracted viewers, who complained that excerpts from well-known operas called up specific scenes on their mental screen” (Hoeckner 3). At the same time, Hoeckner argues, the internal associations that audiences have with familiar music can enhance the cinematic experience when used effectively in coordination with the image on the external screen (as Kubrick did with 2001: A Space Odyssey).

This, then, would be a key motivation for derivation in film music. In order to create music that efficiently connects with an audience while avoiding dissonance, composers would be encouraged to resort to familiar sounds that produce matching internal and external screens. Rather than venturing into the uncertainty of that inherently comes with the unfamiliar, deriving a score from existing music that contains deeply historicized sounds almost guarantees that the audience will experience the score in a certain, predictable way. A soundtrack and the music it was derived from might not be exactly alike, but given enough shared characteristics, they would still evoke a similar internal screen. With that in mind, having knowledge of existing works that already posses established connections with the internal screens of many people is a convenient and powerful tool for creating evocative film scores.

Hoeckner’s “double projection” theory of external and internal screens also provides a psychological justification for the widespread use of temp tracks in the modern studio system.
Much like how a film needs to effectively communicate intricate thematic ideas to an audience, those same thematic ideas need to be communicated among the many parties contributing to the production of the film itself. To avoid a lack of cohesiveness between music and image, directors require composers to have a comprehensive understanding of what message is to be conveyed to the audience, what mood is to be expressed. The efficacy of the temp track for this task is explained by Sadoff, who describes the temp track as “a multi-level blueprint as well as barometer, revealing an essential vision of intent, the employment of cultural/affective codes, and audio-visual conventions” (Sadoff 180). In this facet, the temp track has no equal. There is simply no other method that can, in equal efficiency, communicate the intended thematic meanings of a scene without losing some aspect of the meaning to compression. The vast amount of information can be transmitted through music far exceeds what can be transmitted verbally or pictorially, since the music significantly influences the way both words and images are interpreted via the internal screen. Temp tracks that use existing music with stable, established audiovisual connections are thus key to ensuring that all parties in the studio system are on the same page. It is this need to “synchronize” the internal screens of producers, directors, composers, and editors (and eventually, audiences) that drives derivation within the film music industry.

V. Conclusions

The studio system is undoubtedly set up in a manner that incentivizes derivative practices, but it is not itself the cause of derivation. Rather, the way in which the system is structured in the first place, to facilitate a complex network of communication (recalling Eicke’s analysis), is rooted in the psychology behind the way music is interpreted and the subsequent
historicization of certain sounds to represent specific ideas. The similarities between Holst’s “Mars, the Bringer of War” and the soundtracks it has inspired are no coincidence. The shared thematic material, in a way, necessitates derivation. Unrelated or unfamiliar sounds, according to Hoeckner’s double projection theory, might result in a dissonance between the internal and external screens that detracts from the message being conveyed. Derivation keeps the internal screens of all involved stable and predictable, which are important advantages in the production process. In the same vein, Kubrick’s decision to abandon Alex North’s score in favor of a soundtrack consisting entirely of existing classical works is certainly no accident either. After all, much like Holst’s “Mars” and its derivatives, the famed opening to Strauss’ Also Sprach Zarathustra also shares a thematic relationship with 2001: A Space Odyssey, both touching upon the dark eternal struggles of humanity. In this case, Kubrick used the internal screen to its full effect, deliberately reusing known pieces of music to enhance the cinematic experience and guide the narrative (as Scheurer would concur). The choice to utilize familiar and recognizable sounds might not be, as it turns out, much of a choice at all. Considering the extensive amount of existing historicized and genre-defining sounds, much of society already may already have a subconscious expectation for what a given thematic concept should sound like, an instinctive association between a specific sound and and the corresponding image on the internal screen. And so, on the most fundamental level, we derive not because we like particular sounds or because we enjoy the efficiency that derivation brings, but because we are beholden to the social and psychological expectations for sound and story that have been established throughout the history of music.
Bibliography


This is a transcript of a roundtable discussion between six prominent film composers (Michael Giacchino, Carter Burwell, Alexandre Desplat, Philip Glass, Daniel Pemberton, and Tamar-kali) discussing the intricacies and challenges of their industry. The world-renowned composers reveal details about their approach to film scoring, such as the struggle of communicating with the director, the role of a soundtrack in the moviegoing experience, and their shared disdain for temp tracks. Additionally, Glass is well known for his minimalist classical art music compositions along with his film scores, and so he brings experience from both worlds to the table. The topics explored in this discussion are directly applicable to the issue of temp track usage and its impact on the film scoring process. The conclusions drawn from this transcript can be used to provide first-hand perspectives from film composers themselves on the subject.


In this book chapter, Eicke describes the changes that the film music industry experienced throughout the past century, from the romantic scores of the so-called “Golden Age” in the 1930’s and 1940’s to the rhythmic, synth-filled soundtracks of today. Eicke, a composer and former editor-in-chief of a music magazine, provides an informed perspective on the impact of politics and technology on film scoring practices, including melodic style, instrumentation, and the use of temp tracks. Eicke argues that, especially in a globalized world, the film music industry will continue to undergo change, questioning the longevity of the current studio system that is responsible for creating most film scores. This chapter is a broad overview of the history of film scoring, and would be useful for a foundational understanding of the industry as a whole, along with background information relevant to temp tracks and imitative practices.


Hoeckner’s book explains the importance of soundtracks as critical part of the memorability of a film, playing a major role in an audience’s experience of a movie. In great detail, Hoeckner describes the process by which films and their music engrain themselves into memory. Hoeckner is a musicologist and professor of music at the University of Chicago, and so while this book may lack the direct
insight that comes with industry experience, it certainly does contain an educated and rigorous examination of the psychological and social elements that influence film scoring practices. Hoeckner definitely intends to reach a highly knowledgable, specialized audience given his rigorous technical language/references, and the information Hoeckner provides can be used to analyze soundtracks from the perspective of the audience and to understand the psychological reason behind imitation/similarities between different scores. These are concepts that many composers themselves might not even be aware of, but the impact of which can be seen embedded in the composition process. More specifically, Hoeckner describes an “internal screen” that is projected within an audience’s mind by music, and his explanation on this phenomenon will provide strong support for my argument that the derivative nature of film music is driven by deep psychological and sociological reasons.


This is a recording of The Planets, an orchestral suite by English composer Gustav Holst is the central exhibit for my argument. Holst wrote this piece for a classical audience, to be performed in concert halls by orchestras. Holst, an eccentric man, composed this work because he wished to further explore his interests in astrology. My analysis will focus primarily on the first piece in the suite, entitled “Mars, the Bringer of War.” This piece, with its dark brass chords and driving percussive ostinatos, is meant to convey a message of terror and chaos, as the title would suggest. I will multiple components of this exhibit to support my argument on the core reasons behind derivation in the film industry. “Mars, the Bringer of War” is one of the most widely imitated works of music in film, which is not surprising given its cinematic sound. More specifically, I will use the musical characteristics of “Mars” to explain the concept of the “sound of war,” and compare the work to its derivatives from movies such as Star Wars and Gladiator to explain the historicization of a sound.


This book focuses on a specific stylistic shift within the film music industry, namely, the blending of soundtrack scoring and sound design into a single entity. Kulezic-Wilson, a musicologist and lecturer at University College Cork, explains the term “integrated soundtrack” as an approach to scoring that involves components in addition to pure music, such as dialogue and sound effects. She also analyzes the effect that technological advances have had on the ability of composers to access novel sounds and scoring techniques, as well as the place that the integrated soundtrack holds in the broader trends of film music. Kulezic-Wilson’s scholarly insight may prove to be useful in understanding the factors that
cause stylistic changes in film scoring practices, as well as the impact of such changes on the artistic experience of a film.


This is a recording of the soundtrack for Star Trek VI (composed by Nicholas Meyer), which is meant to support the themes of the film franchise and its viewers. This soundtrack is primarily targeted toward moviegoers and fans of the Star Trek franchise. I plan to use (very briefly, as this is not a source I intend to use in a significant way) the opening credits sequence of this soundtrack as an example of a work that derived from Holst’s “Mars, the Bringer of War.” This would support my claim that Holst’s work has a far-reaching, long-lasting impact.


This recording of Russian composer Sergei Prokofiev’s score for Alexander Nevsky was intended for Soviet movie audiences to support the themes of the film. This is a secondary exhibit source that I will use alongside my primary exhibit of Holst’s “Mars, the Bringer of War” to better explain the process by which the “sound of war” was historicized, which is a component of by broader argument on the psychological and social causes behind derivation.


Sadoff’s article directly examines the purpose and effect of temp tracks in the film scoring process. Using specific musical examples from recognized films, the article provides ample evidence for the importance of temp tracks as a point of efficient communication between the director and the composer. Sadoff, a professor of music and director of screen scoring programs at New York University, makes the argument that film scores should be analyzed with the entire process of composition and production in mind as it would more accurately reflect the nature of film music, as opposed to treating film music like classical works that may be similar in sound but are quite different in character. Despite being slightly outdated, this article supports the value of temp tracks despite their sometimes controversial nature, and gives key counterarguments to claims that temp tracks are overly-restrictive and unnecessary. I additionally plan to use Sadoff’s detailed description of the function ands importance of the temp track to support the argument on the psychological reasons behind the use of music as a tool for communication.

The soundtrack to Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey* is notorious for its direct, unmodified use of classical works as part of the soundtrack. In this article, Scheurer chronicles the conflict between Kubrick (as the director) and North (as film scorer) in the process of composition for the movie that, in the end, resulted in the sole use of temp tracks in the final product with little to no newly composed music by North. A former professor of humanities at Franklin College, Scheurer explains the reasons behind Kubrick’s choice to use only existing works by composers such as Strauss and Ligeti, and the lasting impact of this soundtrack on the sci-fi genre. This article highlights a specific instance in which temp tracks were the source of contention between the director and the composer, and furthermore serves to illustrate the benefits and drawbacks of temp tracks on the filmmaking process as a whole.


Schrader’s documentary gives a broad overview of the film music industry, incorporating the perspectives of multiple renowned film composers, from Danny Elfman to Hans Zimmer. It contains multiple snippets of interviews in which the industry experts explain their inspirations and techniques behind writing film music, and their take on the turning points of film music history. It is not a very technical source, tailored so that non-musicians and casual moviegoers can still understand the details of the subjects being discussed in the documentary. This source, in conjunction with Eicke’s book, provide a comprehensive examination of the history of film music and the trends/changes that the industry has experienced from the beginning of sound cinema to modern electronic soundtracks.


This is a brief press article that informs readers of a lawsuit that was filed against Hans Zimmer by the Holst Foundation for copyright infringement. This is not a major source, and I will not be depending on it to support an argument. Instead, I will simply be using this source to provide tangible evidence of an example of derivation that demonstrates the lasting influence of Gustav Holst’s work. The information this source provides serves to emphasize the extent of derivation that is present.

These program notes, intended for reading by concertgoers who wish to better understand the music they would be listening to, detail the historical context behind Gustav Holst’s orchestral suite The Planets. This source is primarily informational in nature, but provides important perspective on the musical and historical aspects of Holst’s most famous work, in addition to some insight on Holst’s inspiration for the composition. This information will be useful in explaining the musical importance of “Mars, the Bringer of War” (the first piece in the suite) and its effect on Holst’s legacy, as well as to support the argument regarding the association between certain sounds and imagery.


This recording of the soundtrack for Star Wars IV was intended for a moviegoing audience to experience alongside the Star Wars film. It is one of the most recognizable and renowned film scores in history, and is a strong example of derivation from Holst’s “Mars, the Bringer of War.” I will use this source as a secondary exhibit to compare with Holst’s work, in order to explain the musical similarities between the two. It will serve as an example of derivation, further supporting the impact that Holst’s work had on film scores decades after its composition. Also, due to the similar thematic elements of both works, this source will also be used to transition into a discussion about the historicization of certain sounds and the association between certain sounds and ideas.


Zimmer’s soundtrack for the movie Gladiator is another secondary example to be used for the sake of comparison with Holst’s “Mars, the Bringer of War.” This soundtrack, like the other soundtrack sources, is intended for the audience of the film to enhance their experience of the movie. This source will be used alongside the Schweitzer source (which simply provides information on a lawsuit relevant to this score) to further explain the significance and legacy of Holst’s music. The shared thematic material between this soundtrack and Holst’s work also leads well into the historicization of the sound of war.