

Jerry Goldsmith: Planet of the Apes (1968) 'The Hunt'

Planet of the Apes (1968) is a science fiction film set in the future. Three astronauts land on a planet where apes are intelligent and humans are treated 'like animals'.

Jerry Goldsmith's score was groundbreaking for its time and is highly aggressive. Some parts, such as the main title music and the first part of the film, when the astronauts are searching the apparently deserted planet, use atonality and 12-note music to portray the barren landscape. There is also significant use of unusual instrumental 'effects'.

'The Hunt' is one of the key parts of *Planet of the Apes*. This music accompanies a violent sequence as mute humans are hunted through long grass by figures on horseback. The musical and dramatic climax of the sequence (where the Ram's Horn enters, in a clearly different key to the rest of the texture) comes as the viewers realise for the first time that the figures on horseback are apes.

Composing techniques

'The Hunt' uses several composing techniques that you could experiment with in your own music.

Ostinato Patterns

If you look at the score for 'The Hunt' it looks really complex, but much of it is based on ostinato patterns - a really good method for getting lots of music from not much material. From bar 11 Goldsmith sets up an ostinato pattern on piano and then throws long held notes over the top that crescendo into a snarl. He then repeats this, keeping the same ostinato pattern but with different notes thrown on top (bars 15-21 in the score). The same musical ideas come back later (bars 59-74 in the score). The composer has deliberately chosen notes that sound dissonant when played together. A simplified version of this is shown below:

Planet of The Apes
The Hunt - extract

Jerry Goldsmith arr. IB

Fast

Wind, Brass or String Sound

Plucked Sound

Piano Sound

ff

Eyes ad lib

ff

Repeat ad lib, with top staff transposed to different pitches

Try using ostinato patterns in your own music with different (and changing) musical ideas thrown over the top.

Bitonality/Polytonality

At the climax of the Hunt sequence the apes are seen for the first time. One of the ways that Goldsmith builds a musical climax here is by piling different layers of musical ideas on top of each other that seem to belong in different keys. You could hear this as one complex chord, but the music really does sound as though the different lines of music are in different key areas.

Planet of the Apes: Hunt Climax

Jerry Goldsmith

WW/Strings

Ram's Horn

Bass

Simplified version of bars 56-57

Try using different keys at the same time in your own music. You might have a piece for two instruments where each is in a different key, or write a piece where a melody is in one key and an accompaniment in another key. It doesn't necessarily have to sound really harsh: try using C major and E flat major at the same time - it may well sound 'bluesy'.

Unusual sounds

Planet of the Apes uses instruments such as an aluminium bowl, a slide whistle, a ram's horn, a gong scraped with a coin, and an electric harp. Sometimes conventional instruments are played in unusual ways. FX are also applied to several sounds. These unusual sounds all help to give the effect of an alien planet.

Try using unusual sounds in your own music, and transforming sounds using FX such as reverb, echo etc

Polyrhythms

This is where two or more quite different rhythmic patterns are piled on top of each other. In the example below, the top line has a pattern that repeats every 2 crotchet beats; the middle line has a chord that plays every three quavers and the bottom line moves in steady crotchets. The patterns start at the same time and come together again half way through the second bar. The effect of this is to create tension and an effect of confusion that suits the dramatic situation perfectly.

Planet of the Apes

The Hunt: Bars 84-87

Jerry Goldsmith

Try using polyrhythms. Experiment until you have two rhythms that are quite different (perhaps in different time signatures) then put them on top of each other and see how they sound. Try using music technology to help you hear the effect.

12-note music

Planet of The Apes

"The Search Continues"

Jerry Goldsmith transcr. IB

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Partially reproduced from Karlin, K and R Wrayburn, *On the Track*, Schirmer 1990.

This music comes from an earlier part of the film, where the astronauts are searching the planet. Here Goldsmith uses 12-note music to give an eerie, alien feel to the planet. The violin part uses all 12 chromatic notes one after the other, and this means the music feels like it is in no key (in other words atonal) as no one note is any more important than any other. Combined with the electronic echo effects and the strange instrumental sounds (eg gong scraped with coin) this gives a truly alien effect.

The success of the film relies totally on the audience believing the astronauts are on a very strange planet. Why? Watch the film and wait for the ending!

Try using the 12-note method in your own music. Need to find out more? Try

<http://library.thinkquest.org/27110/noframes/periods/serialism.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/music/classicalorchestral/tccenturyartrev5.shtml>

Glossary

Atonal/Atonality	Music in no key
12-note music	A system where the 12 chromatic notes in the scale have to be used in a certain order (called a tone row). This type of music is usually, but not always, atonal
Bitonal/Bitonality	Music in two keys at the same time
Polytonality	Music in several keys at the same time
Dissonance/Dissonant	Clashing harmonies (like playing C and C sharp at the same time)
FX	Effects - changing a sound electronically with, for example, reverb, delay, flange etc
Polyrhythms	Two or more different and sometimes conflicting rhythm patterns played at the same time
Ostinato	Pattern repeated over and over again (similar to a riff)

Resources and Further Reading

Web sites

www.scorereviews.com/
www.soundtrack.net/
www.filmmusicmag.com/

Links to a wide range of film music material, including more technical articles about the film music industry

Books

<i>The EDEXCEL New Anthology of Music</i> , Peters, 2000 Contains a full score and recording of 'The Hunt'
Davis, R (1999) <i>Complete Guide to Film Scoring</i> Birklee Press
Karlin, F, & Wright, R (1990) <i>On the Track</i> Schirmer This is currently out of print, but worth trying to track down in libraries. Described as 'A contemporary guide to film scoring' this is a handbook for composers at an advanced level, but contains some excellent material including analysis of <i>Planet of the Apes</i> , <i>Star Wars</i> , <i>Jaws</i> , <i>ET</i> etc
Karlin, F (1994) <i>Listening to Movies</i> , Schirmer Looks at music cues for <i>The Magnificent Seven</i> , <i>Close Encounters of the Third Kind</i> , <i>The Untouchables</i> and <i>North by Northwest</i> .
Prendergast, R (1992) <i>Film Music, a Neglected Art</i> Norton Examines older films, but has a good analysis of <i>Psycho</i> .
Tonks, P (2001) <i>Film Music</i> Pocket Essentials Good summary of film music in general, with a brief section on <i>Planet of the Apes</i>

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