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Critical Analysis

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1 Introduction:

Film music as a term defines a whole different world in itself, the world with impeccable amount of creativity and the world many people as an audience are unaware of. Talking about film music, it is hard to imagine that there was a time without music in films. As a millennial of this generation, it seems unreal to believe the movies can be made without musical approach. The music in films represent the pallet of the film, it is not just melodic music to please your ears. The music in films can really change the whole point of view of the audience while sitting in the dark room and staring at the big screen. Many great directors and film makers nowadays believe that music is the most essential essence of the film, if anything goes wrong with it the quality and the strength of the film will be negatively affected. That lays a lot of pressure on music directors, as they are responsible to add the whole musical aspect of the film.

One of the phenomenal examples of how aesthetic of film music is important for the visuals in the most popular BBC series known as "Sherlock". It all began in 2010, when it was aired and broke all massive records as compared to the usual BBC drama series. As an audience, I was a huge fan of this series, as it dramatically pushed the limits of audio and visual cinematic world. The number of soundscapes and instrumentation used in this piece of art will really make you think about how music really effects the power of cinema. I am going to analyze *Episode1 of Season3*, which will take you on the journey of emphasis and fundamentals of film music.

1.1 Brief:

After completing two seasons, the third season is expected to raise the bars in terms of storytelling and thematic music and last two episodes consists of various themes which adhered to the audience since episode 1. Fundamentals change when you compose music for films while the approach is different with web series. As movies remain with you for couple of hours, web series on the other hand carry on revealing and opening new doors to hold the interest of the audience.

The rules are pretty much similar with musical aspect as well, each character have their theme so people can feel the presence of the character and knows exactly the direction as to where the story is heading. This episode reveals the secret about the death of Sherlock in the last episode of season 2, as it the first episode of season 3 people already anticipate flashbacks with connecting storytelling. Composing music for series like Sherlock, the composers have to be very precise about their musical approach.

1.2 Main Theme-(Track 1/ 8:40)

The main theme also known as 'opening theme' for Sherlock plays an essential role to analyze the other musical aspects of the whole series. Most of the themes are composed by keeping the physiognomies of the character in mind, as theme also defines the real side of the character which helps audience to connect to the character and feel similar emotions as the actor on screen. With Sherlock, the opening theme always comes after the prequel or with short story pallet, and the reason being is not in the beginning is quite apt. With the mystery/thriller genre, it is important to keep the audience on the edge about what may happens next, which increases the demand of the episodes and help the series financially and enhance the popularity amongst mass.

1.2.1 (Track 1.1 / 8:40)

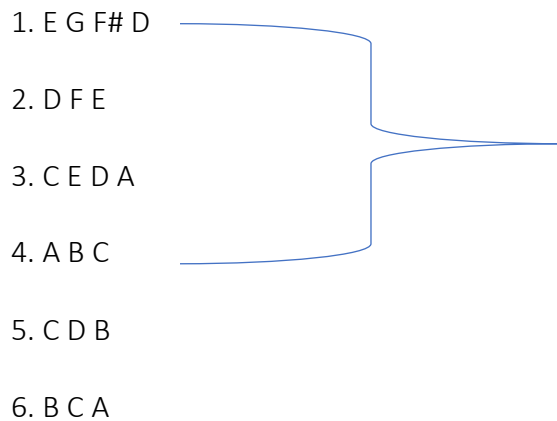
The opening theme begins with the buildup of drums or other percussive instrument, which conveys lot of information about Sherlock as a character. As the buildup begins, it gives a tension of sounds coming out of nowhere and there is no opening sound or particular voice which tells that Sherlock is going to arrive. If you analyze a lot of the sherlock's episodes, the similar gesture is maintained about his presence. Most of the scenarios, Sherlock makes an appearance without giving assumptions and warnings, which enhances the excitement amongst the audience about their favorite character. Even in the diegetic world of this episode, everyone assumes he is dead, but the audience figures out that he is alive in the beginning of the episode. This is the brainpower of film making that they can show two different worlds of diegetic and non-diegetic at the same time. This concept is very popular in horror/thriller/action films. According to the fundamentals of film music, this can also be known as 'Emphasis of Movement'. In this, the sounds describe the behavior of the scenarios by making them sound more precise.

1.2.2 (Track 1.2/ 8:41)

This section of the theme can be considered as the 'major melody', as this melody occurs various times in most of the seasons and episodes. It can also be contemplated as Sherlock's theme as this particular melody talks a lot about Sherlock's behavior and his enigmatic charisma. The theme revolves around the key of Am (A minor) or C Major, there is no precise reason behind they chose this key, but the notations of the melody really mean somethings thought-provoking.

The melody starts with A minor chord which is the root chord and it carries on with Am/D/Dm, with these chords the melody is layered on this chord progression. Now we will

closely analyze the notes of the melody and divide them into section names as 1-6, which will make it easier to define what particular section we are discussing.



These are the exact notes played in the melody. If you closely evaluate these notes the melody starts with note E in section 1 and ends at D, and in the section 2 the melody starts with D and ends at E. These movements in the theme explains the way how Sherlock solve his most of the cases, by co-relating some of the cases in past as well as by going to his memory place to strictly remember what exactly can help him to solve the case.

He also refers to this gesture as his 'Mind Palace', after researching more about Sherlock Holmes, I got to a point of gaining knowledge about his cognitive behavior. There is a similarity in sections 3/4/5 as well, which leads to the conclusion of repeating the same technique going back and forth. It also talks a lot of about each and every case as superiorly related and is the part of his memory.

1.2.3 Electric Guitar Theme (Track 2/2:04)



As a film music composer, it is very essential to not lose the dynamic of the characters presence on screen with the series like Sherlock where the character have different phases and different scenarios to deal with. This is one of the perfect examples as how the same theme, which we discussed earlier have such a different variation to it. And how the visuals are so important to such variability, the whole scene loses its persona if the same theme is repeatedly used in the series. Same notes were used in the segment as in the major melody, the instrumentation of this theme also helps it to be more efficient and acceptable to the audience. Heavy electric guitar riffs with bass and dynamically loud electronic drums helps to get that adrenaline in the musicality without any visuals itself, such music can also be used in the chaotic visuals on screen for instance like a chase scene. But if we listen to it carefully the

theme is only used for couple of seconds and is unfinished, there is also a reason behind it. Many a times, the composer have a limited time frame to finish the music sequel for the particular scene, it always depends on the film director as to how long he wants the music to be audible. As music or melody is not the only sound we listen to in the film, there are many other audible reverberations which is synchronized to make that scene more realistic and authentic. Audience always connects with the scenes which are even fictionally possible till the time they are watching any futuristic film. But talking about sherlock, he is an ordinary human with some impeccable detective skills. Most of the things he does in the series can be conventionally accepted by the mass.

1.2.4 Fast Forward Theme: (Track 3/ 16:38)



As discussed earlier about having a limited time frame for music in a scene, this can change the whole other perspective of what exactly that scene is trying to convey. There are various techniques used by composers in such scenarios, there are enormous types of techniques preferably used by the composers. The speed or in the musical term 'time signature' or 'bpm' (beats per minute) shifts in various form is one of the examples used in this particular piece. Musically the piece sounds so convincing and appropriate for this scene, but the tempo of this section is very different from the original tempo. There can be various reasons for this, one of them is the limited time or something related to the sequence which is not being shown at the moment. In the functionality of music, the technique which is being used here is "Emphasis on Movement", reason of using such determined techniques in the moving images helps to have a build-up in the story visually as well audibly. Even in this scenario as the theme begins, it is only with one instrument instead of a whole orchestra, as this particular theme and scene is only for the main character (Sherlock). Even the dialogues in this scene consistently emphasis on Sherlock, dialogues like "Welcome Mr. Holmes" and with the suave response of Sherlock his brother "Thank you Blud". With such affective visuals and dialogues the scene without any audio or background music seems pretty uninteresting.

Talking about visuals here in this scene while this theme being played, its Sherlock looking to the whole city of London from the top. No one else is in the frame, it is kind of a warning to the city or very welcomed feeling to his city as he was undergrounded from last couple of years. This theme goes perfectly with the visuals, the timing of the theme is also been compromised, as it is just a couple of second scene. All the themes have the same time signature in this episode which is 3/4 or 6/8, the tempo varies on different musical sections due to many other circumstances. If we listen to all these themes carefully without any visuals, each theme has its own color and value. With this is the instrumentation, there is a gist of French Horn in the beginning and Clarinet in the end. Such piece of creativity helps the composer to use different instrumentation with different themes, second after theme the

'Tail' is attached which is the technique used to switch the whole mood of the scene from one scenario to another.

1.2.5 Ostinato Theme: (Track 3.1/ Sting)



This 8 second piece of music describes the various impression of Film Music; thus, it is important to analyze such minute details of music. The vibe of the theme is very catchy and interesting in terms of tonality as well the way it is being composed. Numerous forms of arpeggiated staccatos and the major melody with many other delayed tones, in this piece there is the gist of major melody. Only the first few notes of the melody is been played with the very known expression of orchestration pieces known as "Ostinato". I am going to attach a version of the Ostinato theme I played on Logic in my compressed track file, to emphasis more on the major notes which are E G F# D. According to Tagg's Main Functions of Film Music, the technique known as 'Symbol' is applied to this theme. This technique gives the audience the presence of the character even when they are not visually available on the screen. Lately, this technique has become common in the genre of thriller/suspense films, this gives audience the mood of tension and expectation in the film.

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