

Music

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The following table is **an example** of when and how music is used in film.

Function	Purpose	Musical characteristics	Visual clues (if applicable)
Credits	Keep the audience entertained during acknowledgements. Beginning credits give the audience an idea as to the genre of the film e.g. horror, romance, drama, action etc. End credits are often popular music which is then used to promote the film in trailers, unless a composer has written the score of the film.	Beginning credits have music that matches the genre of film (e.g. fast, loud music by electronic instruments or a large orchestra for an action film) or the period or place it is set (e.g. African instruments and rhythms, foreign language for a film set in Africa). Unless the music is written specifically for the film by a composer, end credits often feature a popular song.	Words on the screen.
Mood and atmosphere	Helps the audience understand how everyone in the scene is feeling or the general mood of an occasion.	Sad music is generally p in dynamics, a <i>Lento</i>, <i>Andante</i> or <i>Moderato</i> tempo and is gentle or warm in tone colour. It has a minor tonality, long note values, a thin texture and often uses strings or piano. Happy music is generally mf – f in dynamics, <i>Allegro</i> tempo, has short note values, major tonality, can be dense in texture (many layers of sound), use high pitches and often uses woodwind or brass instruments.	The camera looks at how everyone in the scene is feeling.

Dramatic effect	Can be a 'ta-dah' type moment or the opposite. Used to create contrast and highlight something in the scene.	Often, dramatic moments may feature large choirs (not singing words, but rather 'aah' or something similar), a musical pause on a loud note, big orchestras, a <i>sforzando</i> , suddenly dense texture etc. Or, it could be exactly the opposite with a <i>subito piano</i> , sudden thinning of texture or sudden gentle tone colour. Dramatic effect can also be an increase in tension, created by use of a <i>crescendo</i> , thickening of texture and ascending pitch that is then maintained when it reaches the climax (there is no sudden silence, crash or scream as there is in foreshadowing).	The camera often pans out to an expansive view or to show a large castle or deep ravine, etc.
Sense of locale	Gives the audience a feeling of the time or place in which the scene or film is set.	Music characteristic of a particular time period (e.g. a Classical string quartet) or country (e.g. Indian music or African music) or setting (e.g. jazz music in a jazz club or dance music in a nightclub etc.)	The image on the screen matches the music. For example, people dancing in a nightclub.
Character emotion or identification	Helps the audience connect with the emotion of a character without them having to say anything. Helps the audience identify a hero or a villain.	Sad music is generally <i>p</i> in dynamics, a <i>Lento</i> , <i>Andante</i> or <i>Moderato</i> tempo and is gentle or warm in tone colour. It has a minor tonality, long note values, a thin texture and often uses strings or piano. Happy music is generally <i>mf</i> – <i>f</i> in dynamics, <i>Allegro</i> tempo, has short note values, major tonality, can be dense in texture (many layers of sound), use high pitches and often uses woodwind or brass instruments. Music for a hero could use a fanfare type theme, major tonality, bright tone colours etc. Music for a villain could use a dark, foreboding type theme, minor tonality, low pitches, grumbling tone colour etc.	The camera focuses mainly on one person.

Pace and action	Gives the sense of a chase or of movement or action.	Pace music is generally a <i>Presto</i> or <i>Allegro</i> tempo or it has short note values that make the music seem fast. There can be use of <i>pizzicato</i> or <i>tremolo</i> by stringed instruments. The music will slow down or note values will lengthen when the character or object slows down or if the camera moves to something that is not moving quickly. Action music can use <i>forte</i> dynamics, drums, cymbals, and short accented notes that reflect the action on the screen.	A pace scene is often a chase or someone or something moving quickly. It could alternate between moving quickly and slowly or it could speed up or slow down. An action scene is often a fight scene.
Foreshadowing	Is used to create suspense or a sense of impending danger.	Characterised by tension and a climax in the music through a contrast between extremely high, often dissonant notes (usually on violins) and a very low, grumbling pitch. There is also the use of <i>crescendo</i> and/or <i>accelerando</i>, an increase in texture, short note values, ascending pitch and bold, strong tone colours. The climax is a crash, <i>sforzando</i> note, sudden silence or scream etc. The dynamics and texture are not maintained as they are in the tension created for dramatic effect.	Usually used in a scary scene.