

Classroom Online Resource Document (CORD)

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Characters and their musical themes in drama/movies

The leitmotif is assigned to each character and appears in scenes when related characters or moods come

* Definition of leitmotif (leading motive)

- a recurrent theme throughout a musical or literary composition, associated with a particular person, idea, or situation
- a recognizable musical theme; short musical idea, often memorable associated with a character, an object, a dramatic situation, a relationship between characters

* Background

Richard Wagner, 19th century German composer

A representative composer who applied the idea of leitmotif for his musical writings for operas

Developed the idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total artwork) where drama and music are connected expressions of a single dramatic idea

An example: Der Ring des Nibelungen (1853-1869) -a Ring cycle Das Rheingold Die Walküre (The Valkyrie) -Ride of the Valkyries https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRU1AJsXN1g Siegfried Götterdämmerung (Twilight of the Gods)

* 3 common types of leitmotivs in dramas or movies

Hero (good guy, girl,) Villain (bad guy, animal, ghost...) Girl or Princess (as a God, purity, or an ideal entity above human beings)

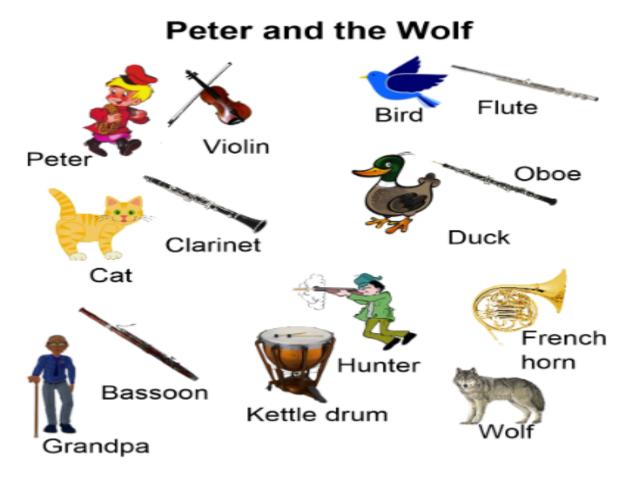
* Classical example

The story of Peter and the Wolf is told by a narrator with musical performance (by Prokofiev)

Each character is represented by the sound of each instrument with associated short melodies

e.g) cat-clarinet, duck-oboe, bird-flute, grand father-bassoon, wolf- 3 French horns, Peter-strings, a rifle shot-timpani and bass drum





Peter and the Wolf by Serge Prokofiev https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MfM7Y9Pcdzw