

Batman Returns.

Selected Scenes.

D. Elfman 1992.

Points of interest

* Elfman’s relationship with Tim Burton
* Elfman’s career as a film composer.
* The use of leitmotif and the influence of Wagner, Hermann & Steiner
* Elfman’s use of performance techniques.
* The use of major & minor keys to represent good & evil.

**Most commonly used time signatures**

**4/4 - 4 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**3/4 - 3 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**2/4 - 2 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**6/8 – 6 quaver beats in a bar.**

Film Music

Set Work 3

* Most melodic material in the score is derived from three character motifs – Batman, The Penguin & Cat woman.
* These melodic motifs are subject to transformation throughout the sore.
* Melodic shapes are transformed by the use of augmentation and diminution.
* The character motifs are often fragmented
* The Batman motif is bold and uses leaps whereas both the Penguin and Cat woman themes are conjunct.

**Melody**

* The score of *Batman Returns* is through- composed and is based around the use and transformation of leitmotifs.
* *Birth of a Penguin Part 1* can be divided into six sections each highlighted by a change in key.
* *Birth of a Penguin Part 2* is in two sections again each one highlighted by a different key.
* *Batman Versus the Circus* is in five sections identified by different keys and textures.
* *Rise and Fall from Grace* is again, in five sections

highlighted by changes in metre*.*

**Harmony & Tonality**

* The harmony is functional and minor keys are used to reflect the darkness of the film.
* Modulations are made to unrelated keys.
* Chromaticism is used to great effect throughout the score, especially in the use of dominant and diminished 7ths.
* Elfman makes use of the whole-tone scale.
* Open chords are used to disguise the key.
* Parallel chords are used throughout the score.
* The tritone is used to represent death.
* Chromatic shifts are used.

**Structure**

**Social & Historical Context**

**Sonority**

**Texture**

**Rhythm, Metre & Tempo**

* The score is made up of constantly changing textures.
* Many polyphonic passages are made up by layering different musical patterns.
* Pedals are used to support the harmony and also to provide rhythmic drive.
* Monophony is used at some points to provide a stark contrast.
* Moments of great drama are emphasised by polyphonic writing.
* Homophony is used to make a character motif prominent.
* Rhythmic devices are used to great effect throughout the score. Elfman employs:
* Augmentation and diminution of motifs.
* Constantly changing metres.
* Rhythmic ostinato.
* Cross rhythms.
* Syncopation.
* The heavy use of triplets and sextuplets.
* Rhythmic displacement over the bar line.
* Interpolation is used – the extension of beats in a bar.
* Elfman was influenced by the drama of Hermann’s *Psycho* score.
* Elfman was influenced by the techniques of Steiner and Wagner in his use of leitmotifs and thematic transformation.
* Elfman uses techniques used by Richard Strauss to suggest the correlation between good and evil. (Batman is seen as a hero and a villain).
* The score mixes traditional instrumental music with synthesised sounds.
* Elfman employs a large orchestra including many unusual instruments such as pipe organ and celeste.
* A wide array of percussion is used.
* Electronics are added via a synthetic choir.
* Instrumental playing techniques include: arco, pizzicato, tremolando, glissando, con sordini, stopped horns, lip trills & flutter tonguing.
* Dynamics are used to great effect throughout the score.

Wider listening: *King Kong –* Steiner, *The Ring Cycle -* Wagner, *Also Sprach Zarathustra– R.* Strauss.