Points of interest

* The collaboration with Alfred Hitchcock.
* The development of the ‘Hitchcock’ chord.
* The influence of Steiner & Wagner.
* The use of string instruments.
* The use of the tritone.



Psycho.

Selected Scenes.

B. Hermann 1960.

**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 1

**Harmony & Tonality**

* Much of the score relies on non-functional harmony.
* There are many instances of atonality and extreme dissonance.
* Hermann makes use of chromatic, extended chords like major 7ths and 9ths.
* Hermann created the ‘Hitchcock’ chord. (A minor chord with added major 7th).
* There are many instances of diminished and half-diminished chords being used.
* Hermann uses dissonant cluster chords.

 **Melody**

* Melodies are created through leitmotifs used to represent characters and places.
* Hermann develops melodic lines using devices such as repetition, sequence and fragmentation of themes.
* The *Marion* theme is characterised by the use of a rising perfect 5thin the first part and a diminished 5th in the second. (The tritone signifies death).
* Melodic lines often take the form of ostinatos

**Structure**

* The structure of each cue of the Psycho score is through-composed.
* The music is governed by the use of leitmotifs and their development.
* *Prelude* can be divided into four distinct sections.
* *The City* is built up using six musical leitmotifs.
* *Marion* has a structure of AABA.
* *The Cellar* is built up using subjects and countersubjects.
* In *Prelude* constant quaver movement provides continuous

drive and energy.

* Much of the music uses syncopated rhythms to build tension.
* *Marion* begins after an anacrusis.
* In *The Murder* downbow accents are used to create a feeling of savagery.
* *The Cellar* takes the form of a moto perpetuo (constant motion).
* Rests are used to disguise the pulse.

**Social & Historical Context**

**Sonority**

**Texture**

**Rhythm, Metre & Tempo**

* Hermann was influenced by the gesamkunstwerke of Wagner.
* Much of Hermann’s music was influenced by Steiner.
* The reduced scoring was unusual at the time.
* The ‘Hitchcock’ chord took inspiration from Wagner’s ‘Tristan’ chord.
* Many of Hermann’s compositional techniques were inspired by Stravinsky.
* Hermann uses the tritone to represent death. (A Baroque period conception).
* The score is limited to just strings which are mainly muted (con sordini).
* The shower scene is senza sordini to give it weight and importance.
* Glissandi are used to create the famous slashing chords.
* The whole tessitura of instruments are used.
* Dynamics play a pivotal role in the drama of the music.
* Changes between arco and pizzicato create tension.
* Techniques like tremolando and sul ponticello are used.
* String writing is often divisi.
* The textures throughout are constantly changing according to the plot-line.
* *Prelude* features homophonic and homorhythmic writing.
* Homophonic textures are often created by building up layers of ostinato ideas.
* Block chords are used in *Prelude.*
* In *The Murder* the texture is built by layering cluster chords from the top note downwards
* Octave doubling is used.

Wider listening: *King Kong –* Steiner, *The Ring Cycle –* Wagner, *The Rite of Spring –* Stravinsky, *Wozzek –* Berg.