

TEACHER NOTES

JIM HENSON

Here are Musical Director Jim Henson's personal reflections on the main themes from the production:

THE MAIN THEME

This theme makes strong use of the tritone, as marked above. This naturally creates some tension and adds to the drama of the theme. It has a strong sense of adventure about it.

Alan Silvestri uses the first two bars of the theme as a mini motif throughout the score and also uses the tritone interval to create some smaller motifs, using this tension to highlight the perils of time travel (e.g. heard on flute as Marty writes a letter to Doc explaining about his future death).

THE SECONDARY THEME

This theme crops up at many places and is often used with differing orchestrations to provide a variety of dramatic effects. When played with full brass section and up tempo, it sounds triumphant and victorious, (e.g. when Marty successfully travels back to 1985) and when orchestrated with strings and woodwind taking the lead, and played at a slower tempo, it underscores some of the more romantic moments when characters come together (e.g. when George reunites with Lorraine after rescuing her from Biff in the car).

THEME VARIATION - DIATONIC

By taking the tritone of the main theme and dropping that interval to make a perfect fourth, Alan Silvestri makes a more diatonic theme variation. This theme has a warmer more reflective feel to it, and often underscores moments where the characters are more introspective. (e.g. when Doc and Marty discuss their time together in 1955 in the diner before they attempt their plan to send Marty back to the future).

MOTIF - DANGER

There are several minor motifs which you hear throughout the show. This one is used to represent some form of **danger** to the characters and often heard in the bass section of the orchestra during dramatic moments, such as the fight at the end of Act One. It is also played on a high celeste and can be heard in the background when Doc describes to Marty that his brother is in danger of disappearing due to Marty's interference with the time-continuum.

MOTIF - Danger



THE DISCOVERY MOTIF

Alan uses chords that are related with the tritone interval to create other little motifs. This motif is used to represent a discovery moment for characters and appears often in muted trumpets (e.g. when Doc is learning that his inventions will actually work after Marty has travelled back to 1955).

MOTIF - Discovery

E B \flat G D \flat

THE TIME-TRAVEL MOTIF

This one illustrates moments relating to time-travel, along with other falling motifs with a dissonant characteristic. These uneasy tonal relationships illustrate the dangers and pit falls of time-travel (e.g. when Marty looks at the photo of his siblings and sees them fading away).

MOTIFs - Time-travel related

6 8^{va} 8^{va}

MOTIFS FOR DOC

Doc has his own little set of musical characteristics in Alan's score. Listen out for a more staccato rhythmic feel, and again, built on chords related through the tritone. These represent his manic brain activity and quirky thought processes. For example, it is heard when Doc is working out how to send Marty back to 1985 during the underscore for the song 'Future Boy'.

MOTIFs - Doc related

E B \flat E B \flat