One Does Not Simply Walk Into Mordor: Sound and Music as Suture in the
Opening Sequences of Peter Jackson's Middle-earth Films

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Keywords: suture, opening sequences, Lord of the Rings, Howard Shore, worldbuilding.

Abstract:

The opening sequences of narrative films are perhaps the most important moments for establishing a coherent film-world and drawing a viewer into a space and time often quite different from their own, and yet these moments remain largely untheorised within film studies and film music theory in particular. This article analyses the uses of music and sound in the opening sequences of Peter Jackson's Middle-earth trilogies: *The Lord of the Rings* (2001-2003) and *The Hobbit* (2009-2011). The paratextual nature of opening sequences might lead us to understand them as theoretical gateways or airlocks, but it is the psychoanalytical concept of suture that proves most effective in theorising music's dual roles in drawing an audience into a film-world and simultaneously building that world around them. Motivic and harmonic investigation draws particularly on Scott Murphy's theories of transformational analysis to understand the different ways that musical language can be established as a form of cinematic suture.

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Boromir's seemingly insignificant statement from Peter Jackson's *The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001) that 'one does not simply walk into Mordor' was only ever meant to highlight the treacherous nature of the journey to be undertaken from Rivendell to Mount Doom, but has since been adopted into digital culture as a meme and altered to suit any context. The phrase, often accompanied by the image of a pensive Boromir, has been shared across several social media platforms and even referenced by Google Maps (see Figure 1).¹

Figure 1 – Walking Directions from 'The Shire' to 'Mordor' on Google Maps

Although the opening 'one does not simply' of Sean Bean's now notorious line has been suffixed with such endings as 'resist bacon', 'find someone like you' and 'go to IKEA and only buy one thing', the original line remains true in several ways. The route *is* riddled with orcs and marshes and poisonous fumes – but the act of film-watching in a cinema is *also* riddled with identification processes, boundary crossings, and socio-cultural spaces that an audience member must travel through (whether they realise it or not) in their film-watching experience. Before viewers can even get to Mordor – even before the film has begun (although a film's exact beginning point is another matter) – they must pass from the outside world into the darkened space of the cinema, where distractions must be captured and bound, and discomforts, annoyances, and other obstacles to the immersive experience must be limited and controlled. There viewers may be set upon by capitalist machines and bombarded with advertising before the film is silently announced, and after a few words of warning from the oracles of film classification, the viewers find themselves at the foreboding and intriguing gates of the Opening Titles. Even then, safe passage through that gateway into the world of the film is not assured. Disruptive questions might be posed by the

style of the titles – the font might jar or the music irritate, putting the viewer on guard and making it difficult for them to accept and dwell in this alternative land.² One does not simply walk in, sit down, and watch a film.

The transitional processes involved in the cinematic experience have been explored by writers such as Rajinder Dudrah (2012) and Annette Kuhn (2002; 2010), the latter focussing in large part on memories of cinematic experience in her book *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory* (2002). Kuhn recognises the elastic nature of time and space for movie-goers within the physical space of the cinema, and the roles that lighting, décor, warmth, and comfort play in enabling the subject's transition into the film-watching mode. Today, cinemas and multiplexes may erect themed lobby installations or play franchise-specific music in order to extend these transitional processes, starting them even before an audience has entered the cinematic space. Several spaces, processes, and practices are identified in the above paragraph on transitions into film watching (the realm of the Hollywood blockbuster could easily be thought of as another filmic space or world). Each space that a viewer travels through in the film-watching process plays a different role, and these vary considerably in different contexts of home, cinema, or elsewhere. Once the film starts, however, the processes in play are very much the same, and it is these moments – as the lights dim and the storytellers or enunciators of the film proper (image, text, sound and music) start to speak – that are analysed here. Though text and image do much to depict or describe a film's world, this article focuses on the roles of the two more immersive or perhaps subliminal storytellers at work: sound and music.

The objects of our study are the opening sequences of not one film, but of each instalment of a film franchise – namely Peter Jackson's two Middle-earth trilogies: *The Lord of the Rings* (2001-2003) and *The Hobbit* (2012-2014). There is little existent scholarly work that theorises the role of a film's opening sequence in the film-watching experience – what

there is focusses largely on the visual aspects of design (this tradition indebted in no small part to the pioneering work of Saul and Elaine Bass). Even the 2014 special issue of *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* places the opening titles alongside trailers and end credits, though this still represents an important contribution (see Powrie and Heldt, 2014). Other essays that focus on the roles of sound and music in opening titles include that by Giorgio Biancorosso (2001) and the work of Guido Heldt (2013), and though without direct mention of music, essays by Georg Stanitzek (2009) and Tim Johnson (1995) also represent notable forays into the field. In terms of the analysis of music in opening sequences, the work of James Buhler is of particular significance. Buhler's chapter on *Star Wars* (2000) begins with a detailed exposition on the film's opening title sequence, and his contribution to Stephen Meyer's *Music in Epic Film* (2016) provides a more generalised look at music's role in the diegeticisation of corporate logos in opening credits. His chapter on the music of *Source Code* also highlights the mythologizing power of corporate credits and more explicitly links filmic fantasy to capitalism (Buhler, 2013). However, it is his chapter 'Enchantments of *The Lord of the Rings*' (2006) that includes a most illuminating analysis of the role of sound in the opening sequence of the first of the Jackson films, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001), and which provides a good starting point for this study.

Each of the six films under analysis here open in much the same way. From darkness, animated production logos and a few opening credits give way to the film's main title ('*The Lord of the Rings*' or '*The Hobbit*'), before an opening prologue section, and then the film's secondary title card (i.e. '*The Fellowship of the Ring*'). Notably, sound begins in the darkness before the first logo, thus building the sound-world first.³ In line with Tolkien's own mythology (in which the created world is born of celestial sound), Buhler identifies sound as the instigating force in the film's opening as sound begins in the darkness before the first logo, and also points to how sound can blur the lines between the film-world and

ours: ‘appearing in advance of the filmic image and consequently seeming to draw the latter into being, sound raises the question of origin: where does the film begin? This enigma in turn presses an ontological question: where does the world – indeed being itself – begin?’ (2006, p.232). Just as sound seems to pre-empt or extend the film’s beginning, the film-world emerges from the darkness as seemingly pre-existent, rather than coming into existence with the start of the film – a perfect example of the logos and prologue acting *paratextually*, as a threshold between the text and the viewer or between the primary and secondary worlds, blurring the lines between text and paratext. This removal of a film or film-world’s clear starting point facilitates the viewer’s transition into the film and its world by erasing or smoothing over these boundaries.

Sound is not only exalted through its precedence of *The Fellowship of the Ring*’s opening image as noted by Buhler, but also through its foregrounding in the opening sequence with the use of visual silence – twenty-five seconds of black screen separate the New Line studio title and the main *Lord of the Rings* title, leaving audiences with nothing to orient them spatially and little choice but to focus entirely on the disembodied voice of the prologue’s female narrator (an *acousmêtre* later embodied in the form of Cate Blanchett’s Galadriel). The fact that this voice is heard first in Sindarin, one of Tolkien’s invented Elvish languages, before being translated into English three seconds later, creates a moment of hesitation. What is this unknown language? Who is speaking? Why does the speaker require translation? This hesitancy is similar to that referred to by Tzvetan Todorov (1975) between the marvellous and the uncanny, and thus the prologue’s (and thereby the film’s) fantastic nature is heightened by the estranging use of sound and the joining of the familiar with the unfamiliar. The efficiency with which this film world is aurally established before the main title is remarkable – viewers may not recognise the language, but they know they are not in the world they were in a few minutes prior. The film-world is sonically

constructed *around* the audience, rather than visually *in front of* the audience. The use of total darkness thus provides a kind of audiovisual airlock: for twenty-five seconds the audience is enclosed in a paratextual vestibule that carries them from one world to another, allowing the familiar air of the cinema to drain out while the unfamiliar air of this new world floods in in the form of sound, invasively flooding their ears before their eyes are allowed to catch up.

This airlock analogy is borrowed from Jonathan Gray who in turn borrowed it from literary theorist Gérard Genette, whose influential work on the paratext has been largely adopted into film and game studies to theorise textual elements that stand at the borders or thresholds of the primary text in question (see Gray, 2010; Kamp, 2016; Genette, 1997). Just as front and back covers, front matter or blurbs facilitate and condition a reader's entry into the world of a book, so opening titles, corporate logos, menu screens, and trailers condition a viewer's entry into a film or a player's entry into a game. Gray quotes Genette to highlight the importance of paratexts in *fictional* texts, an important distinction considering the highly fictional nature of fantasy worlds such as Middle-earth:

far from being tangentially related to the text, paratexts provide "an airlock that helps the reader pass without too much difficulty from one world to the other, a sometimes delicate operation, especially when the secondary world is a fictional one." In other words, paratexts condition our entry to texts, telling us what to expect (2010, p.25).⁴

Fantasy films, then, require a high degree of care and attention in the creation and constitution of their paratexts to enable safe passage into and out of the film worlds; at least, the most successful of these films will aim to smooth these paratextual transitions by minimising the amount of cognitive dissonance experienced by viewers and creating as airtight a seal as possible, in order for the fantasy to be most successful through what Michael Saler refers to as the 'willing activation of pretense' (2012, pp.30-32). Genette's airlock analogy may prove useful in understanding the ways that music transports us from

our world into the space and time of another world that may be significantly different to our own.

Image 1 – ‘*Lord of the Rings*’ title card from *The Fellowship of the Ring*

Space and time are important notions to establish in transporting an audience into a fantasy film-world. The first moments of *The Fellowship of the Ring* establish a sense of space and depth in a variety of ways, many of which become recognisable tropes employed in future episodes. Visually, the New Line and *Lord of the Rings* titles are both animated and rendered distinctly three-dimensional, turning a two-dimensional screen into an inhabitable space and drawing viewers into it – particularly the *Lord of the Rings* title whose metallic materiality makes it seem tactile, and the dawning of the sun on its ridges suggests a sense of beginning. Aurally, the two voices at the start of the prologue (Elvish and English) are positioned differently in the sonic field – the whispered Elvish being quieter, more distant and harder to make out, and the English voice noticeably louder and extremely close with very little reverb. Not only does this create an enlarged sense of filmic space, but it engenders stronger identifications with the voice of Galadriel, a comforting closeness in the presence of the unknown. This vocal foregrounding is also used later in the film when Galadriel speaks telepathically inside the minds of other characters and is seen to be heard only by them. Hence, it is likely that on subsequent viewings the recognition of this voice and its aural proximity might give repeat viewers the impression of hearing it inside their own minds. There are therefore several ways in which such aural and visual subjective positioning is used to draw a viewer into a world that is simultaneously being constructed all around them.

Regarding temporality, the seven-minute prologue provides a history of the Ring and a prehistory for the trilogy’s main narrative, detailing events that took place roughly three thousand years before the film’s (second) beginning. The opening monologue sets up this

prehistory, alluding to a forgotten time; ‘...much that once was is lost, for none now live who remember it.’ The audience’s transition into the world and time of the film narrative is aided by this temporal leap – first they are introduced to Middle-earth and (part of) its history, taken back to a forgotten past and made familiar with the sights, sounds and races of Middle-earth. Then they are brought back to the present, or *a* present; having been familiarised with Middle-earth’s history they are then introduced to the Shire, either consequentially as the narrative begins, as in the theatrical release, or by Bilbo Baggins in a kind of secondary prologue in the extended edition.⁵ Narratively the prologue and its large temporal leaps actually *enable* a smoother transition for the viewer by dislocating them from their own present world and time before relocating them in a kind of alternative present, and by processing these transitions one after the other rather than simultaneously. Here the concept of an airlock must evolve to become something more flexible or manoeuvrable – something that is able to transport viewers to a multiplicity of places on their paratextual journey into the text, rather than a linear route from A to B.

Example 1 – ‘History of the Ring’ theme from opening of *The Fellowship of the Ring*

Once the audience finds themselves in the Shire at the start of the film’s main adventure, they are not only well-versed in the legends of Middle-earth and familiar with many of its sights and inhabitants, but they have also been made *musically* familiar. At least ten of composer Howard Shore’s major themes are introduced throughout this seven-minute prologue, the most prominent being the ‘History of the Ring’ theme, a dark and sinewy motif which is first played by violins over the *Lord of the Rings* title (see Example 1). The theme is heard eleven times on four separate occasions in the prologue: four times over the title and introduction of the rings of power, once when Isildur takes the ring from Sauron’s hand, three times at Isildur’s death and the ring’s escape, and three times at Bilbo’s discovery of the ring. Thus, even before the film’s main narrative has begun the ‘History of

the Ring’ motif has become intrinsically bound to the Ring itself and its own journey – in Shore’s words, ‘it’s showing you how the Ring has travelled from hand to hand’ (Adams, 2010, p.136). The very first melodic musical material heard in the entire franchise, however, is the ‘Lothlórien’ theme, a soft drone of open fifth strings and a haunting chorus of female voices singing a simple melody based on an Arabic mode (the *maqām hijaz*, see Example 2).⁶ The sound of voices singing in unison ‘conjures the chant of an ancient world’ (Buhler, 2006, p.235); to quote Howard Shore again, ‘this is Middle-earth of thousands of years ago’ (Adams, 2010, p.51). Thus, the ‘Lothlórien’ theme not only serves to represent one particular community of Elves, but also evokes the ancient, prehistoric sound of Middle-earth (notably through the codified othering of both Arabic tonalities and female voices). This makes both musical and mythological sense, as the Elves are the most ancient, quasi-angelic race within Tolkien’s legendarium. The fact that the ‘Lothlórien’ theme is used as a precursor or perhaps invoker of the main title, and in a more ‘enchanted’ instrumentation than the horns and orchestra that follow, lends the theme an added affective layer of transcendence. Hence, when it returns later in the film in Lothlórien proper, its earlier introduction brings with it these mythical and cosmogonical connotations.

Example 2 – ‘Lothlórien’ theme from *The Fellowship of the Ring* and the Arabic *maqām hijaz*

Although many of the above examples line up with the paratextual analogy of the airlock, they also serve to prove its insufficiency through their multiplicity of meanings and pathways, particularly their non-linear semiotic efficacy. Thus, an interpretation of the ways in which music works paratextually *throughout* the film text as well as at its borders requires a more elastic theoretical apparatus – one which can describe not only the transportation of viewers and the constitution of subjectivity, but also the continual construction of the world itself around the subject, and which reflects the more porous, organic nature of subjectivity and its need to breathe. Here we must turn to the psychoanalytical concept of *suture*. There

are numerous parallels between Gray's airlock analogy and that of suture – both bring or connect two things together to create an airtight or watertight seal, restoring stability to a structure or atmosphere and creating a smooth surface or transition. However, where Gray's entryway paratext rigidly 'conditions our entrance to texts' (2010, p.25), suture allows for a plurality of subjective identifications and transition points, hooking a viewer and tugging them in the direction it wants them to follow, as opposed to an airlock which provides only one way in or out.

Originating in Lacanian psychoanalysis, suture theory was adopted and extended into film theory by Jean-Pierre Oudart (1969) and Daniel Dayan (1974), and drawn on by film music scholars such as Claudia Gorbman who argues that narrative film music renders the listener an 'untroublesome viewing subject', stating that 'music may act as a "suturing" device, aiding the process of turning enunciation into fiction, lessening awareness of the technological nature of film discourse' (1987, p.5).⁷ This is something of an elaboration on the more classical definition of suture whose primary example is the shot/reverse-shot technique – when an audience is shown one shot followed by the reverse-field shot (or point-of-view shot), thus tying or 'suturing' the two together to create a more cohesive and closed subjective space for the viewer to occupy. Although there is no direct musical equivalent to the visual suturing power of a reverse-view shot, film music scholars have often recognised music's ability to draw audiences into filmic spaces and to engender subjective identifications with specific characters or spatiotemporalities (see Winters, 2014; Buhler, 2000; and Heldt, 2013), and thus the leap to identify music as one manifestation of cinematic suture is no great one.

Suture theory has naturally stretched and unwound slightly in its adaptation and application to music, but it still lends itself well to theorising how music aids the building of film worlds, how it draws audiences into the worlds, and the ways in which it helps to

smooth over these liminal transitions. Claudia Gorbman identifies music as suture that covers or disguises the film's enunciation – the technological apparatus 'speaking' the film and the restrictions of this apparatus – but fails to identify music's role as a discursive voice and an integral part of the enunciation itself. This is highly important: music can be both enunciator and enounced; suture and suture; disguise and disguised. Music is able to simultaneously represent the present one and the absent one,⁸ character and viewer, seen and unseen, and so it can be both present and absent, heard and unheard, inhabiting the meta-diegetic space that exists simultaneously in the world-of the film and the real world and helping to tie the two together.⁹

Although filmic suture can be found at any point in a film, it is arguable that the greatest amount of suture may be required at a film's beginning, both to draw viewers into the film world and to give the world a sense of coherence or completeness as a subjective space for the viewer to inhabit. There is arguably an even greater need for suture in the openings of *fantasy* films due to the imaginary distance often required in the leap from primary to secondary worlds; as Alec Worley puts it, 'the greater the imaginative distance, the harder some audiences find it to make the jump' (2005, p.10). This is further evidence that musical suture is required, as identified above, to bring the film world closer to our world and make this leap into more of a step. James Buhler alludes to an important duality in Gorbman's interpretation of suture which is convincing and proves useful in my analyses:

"Gaps, cuts, the frame itself, silences in the soundtrack – any reminders of cinema's materiality [...] are smoothed over, or 'spirited away' ... by the carefully regulated operations of film music". In this way, film music facilitates absorption and identification with the narrative by "draw[ing] the spectator further into the diegetic illusion." (Buhler, 2014, p.402; quoting Gorbman, 1987, pp.58-59).

Thus, suture (and film music acting as such) can be understood to be smoothing over the cinematic edges and joins of the constructed film world, and simultaneously drawing a viewer into the world being constructed; in other words musical suture can be seen to act both on the subject and the subjective space, pulling the viewer into the world and sewing up

the holes around them, and I employ the term henceforth to describe both of these inextricably linked musical functions in one dual process. This process is an inherently ideological operation in that suture asks the viewer to identify with the film and to occupy a subjective position within its world, and so in terms of the ongoing fantasy the stakes are high – if the music is confusing, jarring, understated or overstated, the suture is weakened and the fantasy of the film rendered ineffective or incomplete. It is precisely music's ability to build worlds and simultaneously immerse us in them that makes it a vital form of suture, in fantasy film particularly.

Returning to the case studies at hand armed with a clearer understanding of musical suture we can look deeper into the agency of music and sound in more opening sequences. There are numerous tropes introduced in the opening of *The Fellowship of the Ring* that are reused in *The Two Towers* (2002) and *The Return of the King* (2003), many of which also appear in each instalment of *The Hobbit*. These opening tropes include a musical prelude over the New Line title, the 'History of the Ring' theme over the *Lord of the Rings* title, a narrative prologue of some kind, and the introduction of the film's most prominent theme over the film's title card. Table 1 shows how each of these tropes is employed and adapted in each of the films. These repeated musical devices are good examples of suture in play. They give the franchises a sense of coherence and consistency, while also allowing the audience to become familiar with the way into Peter Jackson's Middle-earth, (re-)entering it at different times and places but always with the same musical tropes to facilitate the journey. This familiarity, and particularly the repeated use of the 'History of the Ring' theme at the start of each film, helps to suture the viewer quickly back into the film world without having to spend time rebuilding it in consequent episodes. It is arguable that *more* work is required of music in the opening sequences of *The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King* because of the need to quickly rebuild or re-summon the pre-existing fantasy world and the

state of play at the starting point of each film, and thus music in these episodes acts to ritually conjure the familiar while simultaneously heralding the new.

Table 1 – Tracking tropes in *The Lord of the Rings* opening sequences

As can be seen in the table there are certain changes that Howard Shore makes to the scoring of these audiovisual tropes, most notably to the New Line title music and to the setting of the ‘History of the Ring’ theme in *The Return of the King*. In *The Two Towers* the brief horn and strings prelude over the New Line title consists of just eight bars and lasts only thirty seconds, but quickly re-establishes Shore’s musical world of Middle-earth in both harmony, melody, and instrumentation. Melodically the line consists of a series of rising scalar patterns in various transpositions, generally from tonic to minor third (see Example 3). This rising cell is found in two of Shore’s themes already established in *The Fellowship of the Ring* – the ‘Fellowship’ theme, and the ‘Seduction of the Ring’ theme (see Example 4), the similarities between which have been identified by Doug Adams (2010, p.76), and the cell can also be seen in the countermelody to the ‘History of the Ring’ theme (see Example 1 above). The six-time repetition of this opening figure increases the strength of its recollection of any and all of these themes, and places it comfortably within the musical vocabulary of Shore’s thematic catalogue. The use of horn melody and strings harks back to Shore’s preferred instrumentation of the ‘Fellowship’ theme, and also foreshadows the heavy use of French horns in the ‘Rohan’ theme which dominates *The Two Towers* score. Lastly, the chord progressions often move to harmonically distant keys – a feature of Shore’s writing already established in the first film. This can be best displayed through a transformational harmonic analysis of the cue, which requires a little more explanation.

Within the realm of film music analysis, and particularly when dealing with the musical language of neo-romantic composers as we are here, there are numerous ways to understand and describe the harmonic progressions, triadic movements, and techniques that

we identify at work. Frank Lehman's *Hollywood Harmony* (2018) provides a strong argument for the use of neo-Riemannian theory in the analysis of Shore's *Lord of the Rings* music, much of which is keenly critiqued in Lehman's discussion of the use of pantriadicism to evoke wonder in the form of 'awe' or 'frisson' (2018, pp.165-197). That said, there remains no standardised method for analysing or describing the progression from any one triad to any other. Although neo-Riemannian theory works well in the analysis of chromatic mediants, and there is an argument that long combinations of operations helps to algebraically depict perceived harmonic distance (see Lehman, 2018, p.138), alternative nomenclatural systems are proposed by analysts such as Scott Murphy (2014) and Erik Heine (2018). While Heine makes a strong argument for the associative connotations of four specific chromatic mediants (and refers to them in shorthand as 'M4', 'M3', 'm4' and 'm3'), Murphy's more complete system of tonal triadic progression classes (TTPCs) represents the most effective and, in my view, the clearest way of naming any progression between triads.

Scott Murphy's TTPCs take the form of X_nY , where X represents the tonicised or 'home' triad, Y the non-tonicised triad, their case (upper or lower) represents major or minor, and n is the ordered pitch-class interval between the roots of the first and second chords. Best explained by example, the TTPC 'M4m' therefore represents a major chord and the minor chord with root four semitones higher, for example C major and E minor. If E minor was the tonicised chord, and the progression was then from E minor to C major, the TTPC would be m8M (this is called its tonal inverse). Using neo-Riemannian operators (NROs) the shift from C major to E minor would be referred to as an **L** (Leading Tone) transformation, although this would also refer to the inverse movement and is therefore less specific without additional information – **L(M)** can be used to show the first chord is major. More distant progressions can be shown more simply using TTPCs rather than NROs. For example, the shift from C minor to D major can be expressed as **PRLRP(m)** or **PRPRL(m)**

or even **NLR(m)**, but in Murphy's system simply as 'm2M'. Lehman points out a further alternative of expressing any transformation as a transposition by an indicated number of semitones, but this also requires a further transformation to account for modal change from minor to major – hence this progression could be referred to as **T₂P(m)**. For comprehension's sake I have chosen to use only Murphy's system rather than a combination, though I recognise that the truest application of the TTPCs indicates a sense of tonicity and movement from the 'home' key of the first chord to the 'away' sound of the second. Where I am using the system simply to label progressions without implying this directional hierarchy I will make that clear.

The connection between suture theory and techniques of transformational analysis requires further explication here. The use of chromatic mediant progressions and other such harmonic techniques extends back into the late Romantic period, as do the numerous associations and connotations of these harmonic shifts. The cultural codification of particular triadic progressions as symbolic of magic, darkness, heroism, antagonism, and so on, lends these techniques a suturing effect: their own specific roles and abilities in the construction of imaginary worlds, through their enactment on us as viewers and through our comprehension of these learned associations from prior film-watching experience. Lehman remarks of this use of chromatic harmony, 'in the hands of countless film composers, it has been the tonal idiom of choice for the weird and wonderful. This all-purpose alterity is used to fulfil four closely-related aesthetic needs, *all of which involve situations outside the realm of everyday reality*: intensification, fantasy, unusual psychology, and sublimity' (2018, p.70, emphasis my own). In the construction of fantasy film worlds, then, chromatic or pantriadic harmonies should be recognised as key pieces of musical suture playing a prominent worldbuilding role, especially where these worlds are fantastic in nature or indeed outside of our own notion or perception of reality.

Example 3 – Opening music from *The Two Towers* with harmonic and transformational analysis**Example 4 – Rising third cell in two other *Lord of the Rings* themes**

Returning to the opening of *The Two Towers*, Example 3 contains a harmonic analysis of the first musical cue of the film, with each triadic shift expressed as a TTPC above, and what is clear is Shore's use of minor chromatic mediants as the harmony shifts from bar to bar. This passage is *not* an example of pantriadic chromaticism because modally the melody centres on a kind of diminished scale of F minor and then around A aeolian. The tonal centre of Fm is strengthened through its return in the third bar, which in turn strengthens both the m3m and m4m by making them 'absolute progressions' through their contrasting sounds – first to A $\flat$ m then to Am. After the open D chord the music also returns immediately to the tonal centre of Fm again for the 'History of the Ring' theme. Although there are no functional cadences to speak of there is a strong sense of direction in the second half with clear voice leading between chords. This breaks all three of Lehman's rules for pantriadicism (2018:, p.66). However, all of these modulations are considered by Scott Murphy to be chromatic. Five or six different TTPCs are employed here (though the m9m and m1M do not include the abovementioned tonicization), many of which can be found elsewhere in Shore's thematic library, giving this sequence a distinctly 'Middle-earthian' harmony. More specifically, the m3m and m4m progressions are characteristic of Shore's music for Gollum, being found in both the 'Pity of Gollum' theme and in 'Gollum's Song' (see Table 2). Similarly, the M2M is one of the few chromatic progressions that appears within the 'Fellowship' theme, and the combination of two M2Ms (resulting in a wider and indeed rarer M4M) in both the 'Fellowship' motif and the opening cue creates an even stronger link between them. Thus, the first eight bars of *The Two Towers* evoke recognisable strains of Middle-earth harmony; first Gollum and then the Fellowship. This is just one of

several ways in which the sonic language of Middle-earth is quickly re-established by harmonic musical suture before any more familiar thematic material has been heard.

Table 2 – Harmonic comparison of music for Gollum and the Fellowship with the opening of *The Two Towers*

Solidifying its relationship with the appearance of the golden *Lord of the Rings* title, the ‘History of the Ring’ theme evokes the same mythic sense of loss and sorrow in the *The Two Towers* titles as its first hearing: a solo violin rendition with molto vibrato, the two minor chords and m11m TTPC evoking a downcast, disheartened feel. The theme’s use here further tropifies it as a gatekeeper to Middle-earth, the only fitting musical accompaniment to the main title. After two iterations of the melody, though, the theme takes a different turn; where the *The Fellowship of the Ring*’s ‘History of the Ring’ theme fell to G#m for two more minor melodic iterations, here the harmony lifts to C lydian and the melody extends into soaring semibreves, now accompanying aerial shots of a snowy mountain range at sunset. The sense of awe and mystery evoked is heightened here by aural narrative clues; barely audible snippets of dialogue become clearer and reveal themselves as being taken from the previous film – a scene when Gandalf faces off to the Balrog and the two plunge into the abyss of Khazad-Dûm. Shouts from Gandalf and Frodo continue as the camera accelerates toward and into the mountainside to join the action taking place within and visually confirm the sonic recap of a scene audiences have previously witnessed. The use of sound here as a memory trigger eases audiences gradually into the recollection of a dramatic scene, placing them sonically, temporally and then visually into a familiar narrative moment, and it is helpful to think of these suturing threads as enacting in this order. The scene continues almost exactly as it did the first time, and although Shore rescored the whole section he copies the music that accompanied this scene in *The Fellowship of the Ring* almost exactly. The only differences are that in *The Two Towers* the music is a tone higher

than before, a change that very few would notice, and a small edit is made to the narrative order – Frodo’s cry of ‘NO!’ which previously *followed* Gandalf’s fall now *precedes* it. This allows the camera (and thus the viewer) to move with Gandalf into the abyss after the scene’s final shot, rather than staying with the fellowship as the scene breaks from the familiar and shifts to the new, detailing a previously unknown narrative thread.

Image 2 – Snowy mountains of *The Two Towers* opening sequence

The opening of *The Return of the King* is unusual in its divergence from the immersive techniques of the sequences already analysed, and indeed from the recognisable musical world of the franchise, for reasons that soon become clear. There remains a kind of musical prelude over the New Line title before the ‘History of the Ring’ theme accompanies the familiar *Lord of the Rings* title, but the overall styles of both the prelude and the ‘History of the Ring’ theme are drastically altered. A solo oboe sings an unfamiliar melody over orchestral chords in $\frac{3}{4}$ time that turn into a dance-like waltz, heightened by the characteristic use of triangle and pizzicato bass. The melody itself bears no resemblance to any of Shore’s established themes, and the harmony is more classically romantic, centring on B $\flat$ minor and alternating with E $\flat$ minor for the first two phrases and then C major for the second two with doubled harmonic rhythm. Undulatory harmonic fixations such as these are referred to as ‘fully Romantic’ by Joseph Kerman, describing alternations of tonic triads with colouristic chords in the music of Schubert (quoted in Murphy 2014, p.494). The two main TTPCs in play here are m5m and m2M, and although Scott Murphy mentions no common associations with m5m, m2M ‘tends to match up with a general experience of suspense or mystery’, which is certainly the case here as the triadic alternation immediately precedes the anticipated ‘History of the Ring’ theme (Murphy, 2014, p.488).

Example 5 – ‘History of the Ring’ theme: waltz setting from *The Return of the King*

The ‘History of the Ring’ theme itself is also transformed into a triple-time waltz (see Example 5), the biggest alteration the theme has seen so far in the franchise, and one that strikingly makes it clear that something is different. After one iteration the theme is cut short and cadences onto an A major chord to pivot into the next ‘Shire’-like section in D major. The setting of the ‘History of the Ring’ in $\frac{3}{4}$ rids it of its mythic weight and renders it more light-hearted. Where the original preceded a tale of legendary history, this dance-like waltz suggests an alternative, more recent history – which is exactly what follows. The prologue tells the history of Sméagol and his transformation into Gollum, a story that takes place 555 years prior to the main narrative and thus suits an archaic but less mythic musical accompaniment. Irish flutes and rich string chords paint a pastoral, Shire-like setting by drawing on Shore’s ethnic coding of the Shire as Celtic. However, the absence of the Shire’s thematic material and the introduction of new melodies create a setting that is at once recognisable as Shire-like and yet melodically unfamiliar. Once again, the very first musical material heard enables the spatiotemporal orientation of the audience through the adaptation of established audiovisual tropes, drawing viewers into the world with the same threads they are now so used to following and giving them clues as to *where* and *when* they are. This is musical suture in action.

There are many similarities and differences between *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* film trilogies, particularly regarding their opening sequences. Many of the established tropes from *The Lord of the Rings* continue within each of *The Hobbit* films: the font of the pre-title credits; the style and animation of the main title;¹⁰ its accompaniment with one of the film’s major themes; the camera travelling over a hand-drawn map; and a prologue section to provide historical information or narrative recapitulation. Thus, many of the sonic pathways into Peter Jackson’s Middle-earth are preserved in this second trilogy,

released nine years after the first, including many of Howard Shore's musical themes.

Where the *Lord of the Rings* title was thrice accompanied by the 'History of the Ring' theme, the *Hobbit* title in *An Unexpected Journey* brings with it a full hearing of the 'Shire' theme (in its 'Pensive' setting to be precise), with solo clarinet and pizzicato strings evoking the theme's pastoral sentiment. This nostalgic main title is preceded by thirteen bars of orchestral scoring accompanying the new studio titles – the mythic darkness of the familiar New Line title has now been replaced with the blue skies of the Warner Bros logo, which animates into the New Line logo (notably constructing the latter from parts of the former as a nod to Warner's acquisition of New Line in 2008) and is followed by the Metro Goldwyn Mayer logo, complete with Leo the lion and accompanying roars.

If the *The Fellowship of the Ring* opening can be said to create a subtle sense of mythic origin, the opening titles of *An Unexpected Journey* are comparatively brasher and more imposing, both visually and aurally. The bold orchestral scoring outlines a simple melody with suspensions and triadic progressions that bear much resemblance to Shore's *Lord of the Rings* music, although the melody itself is unfamiliar. As shown in Example 6 the two sharpened 4th suspensions resolving to the 5th of a minor chord directly reference the first two notes of the 'History of the Ring' theme, and the use of uncommon TTPCs such as the m1m, m0M (otherwise known as the **P** or 'parallel' transformation) and M1m (the **S** or 'slide' transformation) also give the first eight bars a distinctly Middle-earth feel for the audience familiar with Shore's existing sound-world, each of these featuring in themes from the first trilogy. Although the new titles and wandering harmony of the film's opening might give a sense of uncertainty, the dawning of light on the *Hobbit* title and a full iteration of the 'Shire' theme tries to put viewers (and particularly fans) at ease, once again drawing them into the Shire and the wider world of Middle-earth, and presenting it as homely and inviting. Several writers including Doug Adams and Vincent Rone have noted the homeliness of the

Shire music, the latter stating that ‘it is very easy, then, for us to consider the rustic, idyllic countryside and diatonic underscoring of I–IV–V–I (and the occasional iv) as “home”’ (Rone, 2018, p.40). However, the troubled production history of the *Hobbit* films was widely reported, most notably due to the last-minute change of director when Guillermo del Toro stepped out during pre-production and Peter Jackson stepped in (Topping, 2010). Fans were similarly unsure as to how the film would look in a higher frame rate at 48 frames per second, an aesthetic choice made by Jackson but met with apprehension (Laforet, 2012). Even the replacement of the opening black screen with the bright blue sky of the Warner Bros logo may have set fans on edge. Thus, this first episode had a lot to achieve in order to win *Lord of the Rings* fans over, and the use of familiar and indeed *comforting* or *homely* music was paramount in this effort. As Bilbo’s narration begins the prologue we hear two further (‘Rural’ and ‘Hymn’) settings of the ‘Shire’ theme – the music here doing everything it can to remind viewers of where they find themselves, all the while drawing on the most familiar forms of suture to reassure them that despite what they may have heard about the film, Middle-earth is just as it was, and all is well. However, compared to the opening of *The Fellowship of the Ring* this is a much more heavy-handed approach, and the loss of subtlety leads to a much more sudden demarcation of the film’s beginning.

Example 6 – Opening music to *An Unexpected Journey*, augmented 4th suspensions marked with *

Although *An Unexpected Journey* begins in a familiar location it takes a while for the exact time to become clear; it seems to be some time before Bilbo’s eleventy-first birthday, which is in fact *The Fellowship of the Ring*’s point of departure, and thus it is fitting that the same musical themes are used. The ten-minute prologue moves through at least four different temporalities as Bilbo gives a brief history of the cities of Dale and Erebor (including the invasion of Smaug the dragon) before recounting his first meeting with Gandalf (Sir Ian McKellen) as a child, leading to the narrative transformation of old Bilbo

into young(er) Bilbo (from Sir Ian Holm to Martin Freeman) via a sky-born smoke circle and the rewinding of roughly sixty years. Musically these temporal shifts are communicated through both familiar and unfamiliar sounds and motifs. Dale and Erebor are spatiotemporally new, and thus Shore takes the chance to introduce new motifs for each location – particularly for the Kingdom of Erebor and the dwarves who dwell there. These motifs are melodically original but their style and instrumentation are very much in line with related motifs from the *Lord of the Rings* catalogue, including the use of horns and low male voices for dwarf cultures. Shots of child Bilbo meeting Gandalf at a party with his characteristic fireworks are musicked by the instantly recognisable cod-Celtic folk strains of New Zealand group Plan 9, who provided Hobbit party music in *The Fellowship of the Ring* (and indeed all diegetic music for all six films), tying these two Shire parties together musically and thus helping to suture viewers familiar with the franchise swiftly into the mood, location and era of this short scene. By the time the viewer has arrived at the film title and been introduced to the new (young) Bilbo, music has actively sutured several new spaces and times into a familiar world, and in introducing these new spatiotemporalities and their signifying tropes has sufficiently and effectively sutured the viewer into the world, ready for another adventure.

The Desolation of Smaug begins with yet more new material, this time a simple two-note alternation in violins and winds with a wandering low string countermelody, all over the now familiar Warner Bros blue sky, golden New Line logo and MGM roaring lion. What is most interesting here is the harmony – all minor triads moving to distantly related keys and back again, adding yet another sinister note to the presence of these studio conglomerates. If, as Buhler (2006) noted, the evocative opening of *The Fellowship of the Ring* helped to mythologise the studio's involvement in the film's realisation, something rather the opposite is happening here: sonically, Warner Bros and the MGM lion are

depicted as menacing and foreboding. Transformational analysis proves fruitful once again, as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3 – Tonal Triadic Progression Classes in the opening of *The Desolation of Smaug*

The frequent use of m3m and m4m progressions is reminiscent of both the ‘History of the Ring’ theme and of the ‘Pity of Gollum’, and so the opening music fits very much with what one would expect from Shore’s harmonic Middle-earth language – and yet this is the most sinister musical opening so far. The addition of the m6m is intriguing – being the most distant or chromatic transformation of a tritone interval it has not featured heavily thus far in the franchise, and thus stands out as somewhat foreign. In a wider sense, Scott Murphy notes that often ‘m6m accompanies mortal threats and dangers issued less from adversarial characters, and more from situations, objects, or natural phenomena’ (2014, p.488), and this description fits perfectly with the sense of growing danger and unrevealed malice (of both Smaug and the Necromancer) at this point in the narrative. This association is confirmed by Frank Lehman, who notes of the same progression ‘the *minor T₆* progression (or **PRPR**[m]) is a favored tonal trope for conveying threats and evils beyond human understanding’ (2018, p.102, original emphasis). The brief moment of major tonality in the middle of this passage accompanies a sorrowful clarinet iteration of the ‘Shire’ motif, here cut short as the harmony refuses to follow it any further (staying on the tonic rather than moving to the subdominant). Thus, the music draws both *harmonically* and *melodically* on the memory banks of the viewer to suture them into Middle-earth at a specific point in the narrative, before the world is even visibly revealed. However, besides the clarinet melody there is little else to anchor fans into the world or to put them at ease, the homeliness of the Shire material being hollowed out and undermined by the sinister nature of the pantriadic material around it.

The opening sequence of *The Battle of the Five Armies* is in many ways the exception that proves the rule. The familiar studio titles roll, but where bold orchestral

strains have previously set about establishing the sonic language of the film a simple drone of open fifths takes their place, accompanied by the distant metallic sounds of Tibetan gongs and gamelan. As the WB logo shifts to the New Line title a low, sinister brass ostinato is introduced – a bulging, descending semitone which would remind even the most novice filmgoer of John Williams's *Jaws* motif – and this imbues the solid gold substance of the two logos with a more sinister nature, as this motif and the metallic sounds are both reminiscent of Shore's 'dragon sickness' music established in *The Desolation of Smaug*.¹¹ The now familiar 'Smaug' theme is heard just as MGM's lion is revealed eye-first, drawing similarly dark parallels between this previously tame beast (whose roar is notably preserved and amplified over the accompanying music) and the theme's signified dragon – and the suggestion of the studio conglomerates' sinister nature (perhaps in the eyes/ears of the franchise's most ardent fans) is thereby intensified. After a few moments of building tension under several opening credits, a climactic reiteration of the 'Smaug' theme accompanies the appearance of *The Hobbit* title, notably replacing the now expected 'Shire' theme. The 'Smaug' theme is about as far from the 'Shire' motif as musically possible – in fact, Smaug is in a sense a twisted inversion of the 'Shire' motif; the latter rising diatonically from tonic to dominant, the former falling more chromatically from tonic to dominant.

An examination of the forms of musical suture in action here reveals something quite different to Jackson's other five films. Where every other film begins with a prologue of sorts providing either historical information or narrative recapitulation, *The Battle of the Five Armies* instead picks up directly where *The Desolation of Smaug* left off – an angry dragon with a grudge about to lay waste to an entire town. The threads of musical meaning gradually being added to the opening sequence serve as forms of suture, conjuring images of dark or cursed gold, reintroducing Smaug the dragon musically, and thus tying the beginning of this film to the end of the previous one. Rather than introducing anything new or separate

as in the other openings where a greater level of worldbuilding suture is required, here the musical suture is purely *narrative* in function, reminding viewers of the most recent plot points and of the villain on the rampage, and bringing them swiftly back to the very moment in time that the previous instalment finished. This sets the opening of *The Battle of the Five Armies* apart from the other five openings analysed here, and the lack of prologue requires a different form of musical suture in order to bring viewers directly into the heat of the action. The use of the ‘Smaug’ motif over the *Hobbit* title breaks with the established use of the ‘Shire’ theme that informed audiences had come to expect, and indeed this shortened introduction to the film and to Middle-earth more widely may be one of many features that contributed to the film’s poor reception. Rather than bringing us in via the homeliest region of the fantasy world (the Shire), here music sutures the audience directly into the path of an angry, fire-breathing monster.

It is clear that there are several important processes going on during the opening sequences of the *Lord of the Rings* and *Hobbit* films, and that music and sound play vital roles in both the absorption and immersion of the viewer and the building (or indeed *rebuilding*) of the film-world around them. Music in particular acts as a form of suture in the first few moments of each film, pulling an audience into the film-world while sonically constructing it around them, either through the affective use of previously unheard music, or through the use of established musical tropes, motifs, and other sonic apparatus. Viewing the very first moments of a film as a paratextual gateway into a film-world enables us to better understand the transitional processes in play and the ways in which music and sound facilitate this journey, and the case studies here show in detail how the recurrent use of audible tropes within episodes of a filmic franchise can accelerate and streamline these transitions, quickly reminding an attentive viewer of the world they are returning to, and often informing them more specifically of *where* and *when* in that world they find

themselves. Semiotically speaking, a small ‘signifier’ comes to represent a large ‘signified’, and the efficiency with which music is able to draw on memory and transport viewers back to familiar film-worlds is what makes the music of opening sequences so important, and what elevates sound and music to arguably the most important worldbuilding agents in these moments.

As the Hollywood franchise continues to dominate Western cinema and constitute the vast majority of the ‘Big Six’ film studios’ output (see White, 2019), it is now more important than ever to understand how these films build vast, epic worlds and take us ‘there and back again’ countless times. As these franchises become more and more transmedial, and with a new *Lord of the Rings* television series in production by Amazon, the transmedial nature of musical worlds is a key area of research – but even within film studies, opening sequences remain largely untheorized; closing sequences even more so (though Annette Davison’s 2014 article on television end credits represents an important contribution). If music and sound are able to transport us into the world of a film, then how might they act at a film’s closure to help smooth our transition back to the real world? Might there be comparable processes taking place within the more economical episodic formats of television series? And if so, how might credit music enact to entice us to stay within a particular narrative world in the age of binge-watching? It seems likely that the musical suturing processes identified here may well be present elsewhere in the film-watching experience and indeed in the consumption of transmedial franchises, and further work is needed in these areas to bring the suturing power of sound and music to light. What is most clear, though: one does not simply ‘watch’ a film.

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Tables, Examples and Figures

1)

Figure 2 – Walking Directions from ‘The Shire’ to ‘Mordor’ on *Google Maps*

2)

Image 1 – *The Lord of the Rings* title card from *The Fellowship of the Ring*

3)

Example 7 – ‘History of the Ring’ theme from opening of *The Fellowship of the Ring*

The musical score is written for two staves in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as ♩=50. The top staff is for Violins, and the bottom staff is for Strings, brass, and harp. The score consists of four measures. The first measure features a melodic line in the violins and a harmonic accompaniment in the strings. The second measure continues the melodic line with a rest in the strings. The third measure features a melodic line in the violins and a harmonic accompaniment in the strings. The fourth measure features a melodic line in the violins and a harmonic accompaniment in the strings, with a 'sim.' (simile) marking.

♩=50 Violins

Strings, brass, harp

horn, cello, bass

sim.

4)

Example 8 – ‘Lothlórien’ theme from *The Fellowship of the Ring* and the Arabic *maqām hijaz*

5)

Table 4 – Tracking tropes in *Lord of the Rings* opening sequences

Film	New Line Title	<i>Lord of the Rings</i> Title	Prologue [dur.]	Film Title
<i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i>	Ethereal, glassy sounds. 'Lothlórien' theme – female choir and string drone.	'History of the Ring' theme introduced -four full iterations.	[6:55] 'History of the Ring' – seven more iterations. Introduction of Bilbo.	Extended Edition (EE) = 'Fellowship' theme. Theatrical Release (TR) = 'Shire' theme.
<i>The Two Towers</i>	8-bar $\frac{3}{4}$ melody on horn and strings ascends through several keys. Instrumentation reminiscent of 'Rohan' theme.	'History of the Ring' theme, a touch faster but identical in orchestration, metre and key. Altered after two iterations, simpler melody and lydian modality.	[3:28] Gandalf and Balrog battle. Repeated music from same <i>The Fellowship of the Ring</i> scene but notably a whole tone higher.	EE = 'Rohan' theme – reduced iteration, violins rather than horns, tonic pedal, diminished intervals. TR = 'Fate of the Ring' theme.
<i>The Return of the King</i>	Oboe and violins set up waltz-like dance metre.	'History of the Ring' theme shifted into $\frac{3}{4}$ time over arpeggiac string accompaniment. One iteration, cut short and cadenced onto subdominant.	[8:55] Sméagol back-story, Frodo and Sam in Mordor, fellowship in forest.	'Gondor' theme – just first half (unfinished). Same in both editions.

6)

Example 9 – Opening music from *The Two Towers* with harmonic and transformational analysis

TTPCs: m3m m9m m4m m1M M2M M2(M)

Fm Abm Fm Am B $\flat$ C D(open)

$\text{♩} = 48$

Horns

Lower strings, timpani

The image displays a musical score for the opening sequence of 'The Two Towers'. The score is written for Horns (treble clef) and Lower strings/timpani (bass clef). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 48. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The score consists of seven measures. The first measure is Fm, the second is Abm, the third is Fm, the fourth is Am, the fifth is B-flat, the sixth is C, and the seventh is D(open). Above the score, a box contains the TTPCs (Transformational Tetrads) for each measure: m3m, m9m, m4m, m1M, M2M, and M2(M). The Horns part features a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, while the Lower strings/timpani part provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

7)

Example 10 – Rising third cell in two other *Lord of the Rings* themes

The image displays two musical staves in 4/4 time. The first staff, labeled 'Fellowship Theme (2nd half)', shows a sequence of notes: a half note G4, a half note A4, a dotted half note B3, a quarter note C4, a dotted half note D4, and a quarter note E4. A box highlights the first three notes (G4, A4, B3). The second staff, labeled 'Seduction of the Ring theme', shows a sequence of notes: a half note G4, a half note A4, a dotted half note B3, a quarter note C4, a dotted half note D4, and a quarter note E4. A box highlights the first three notes (G4, A4, B3).

Fellowship Theme (2nd half)

Seduction of the Ring theme

8)

Table 5 – Harmonic comparison of music for Gollum and the Fellowship with the opening of *The Two Towers*

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Chord progressions</u>	<u>TTPCs (comparisons in bold)</u>
‘Pity of Gollum’	B $\flat$ m F $\sharp$ m B $\flat$ m D $\flat$ m Fm	m8m m4m m3m m4m
‘Gollum’s Song’	G $\sharp$ m Bm Cm D B Bm Cm D	m3m m1m (<i>m3m+m1m</i> $\approx$ m4m) m2M M9M M0m m1m m2M
‘Fellowship’ Theme	A C A F C Dm F G A C A F G A	(M3M M9M M8M M7M M2m m3M) M2M M2M (M3M M9M M8M) M2M M2M
<i>The Two Towers</i> opening	Fm A $\flat$ m Fm Am B $\flat$ C D	m3m (m9m) m4m (m1M) M2M M2M

9)

Image 2 – Snowy mountains of *The Two Towers* opening sequence

10)

Example 11 – ‘History of the Ring’ theme: waltz setting from *The Return of the King*

The musical score is for a waltz setting of the 'History of the Ring' theme. It is written for violins, winds, and lower strings/brass. The tempo is marked as 120 beats per minute. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score consists of two staves. The upper staff, labeled 'violins, winds', features a melody with a half note, a quarter note, and a half note, followed by a series of eighth notes and a final half note. The lower staff, labeled 'lower strings, brass', provides a harmonic accompaniment with a series of eighth notes and a final half note. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

11)

Example 12 – Opening music to *An Unexpected Journey*, augmented 4th suspensions marked with *

The musical score is arranged in two systems, each with three staves. The top staff is for Violins, the middle for Violas, and the bottom for Lower strings, brass. The tempo is marked as ♩=60. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The score consists of 16 measures. Augmented 4th suspensions are marked with an asterisk (*) in measures 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, and 16. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes in the upper staves, and sustained chords or moving lines in the lower staves. The bottom staff ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

12)

Table 6 – Tonal Triadic Progression Classes in the opening of *The Desolation of Smaug*

Triads	Em Bbm Em Gm Bbm Dm (– D5 – D –) Em Gm Bbm Dm...
TTPCs	<i>m6m m6m m3m m3m m4m (–m0M–M2m–) m3m m3m m4m...</i>

Endnotes

¹ Unfortunately, this ‘Easter egg’ is no longer functional.

² The problematic nature of the *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (Gareth Edwards, 2016) opening titles and their lack of crawl text and thus mixed reception amongst Star Wars fans is one example of the difficulties that can be faced by film-viewers in accepting and indeed entering into the fantasy of a film during its opening sequence (see Coggan, 2016).

³ Jackson here draws on an established technique of beginning films with sound in darkness even before corporate logos, perhaps the most notable example of this being Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) which opens with three minutes of Ligeti’s *Atmosphères* over a black screen before the MGM logo and the famous Strauss opening.

⁴ Gray omits a word from Genette’s original text which reads ‘without too much *respiratory* difficulty from one world to the other’ (1997, p.408, emphasis mine). This removes emphasis from the living, breathing nature of the reader/viewer, which I will return to later.

⁵ Although the theatrical releases for all Jackson’s *Lord of the Rings* and *Hobbit* films are widely available New Line also released ‘extended editions’ with longer runtimes, which include up to an hour of extra scenes and a wealth of supporting material in the form of appendices. These extended editions contain not only extra material but altered scenes, particularly some scenes where different music is used to accompany the same visual material, as detailed in Table 1.

⁶ The first sonic material heard in the franchise is the collection of glassy, ethereal sounds that accompany the animation of the New Line Cinema logo, as identified and further analysed by Buhler (2006). This non-tonal musical moment reappears later in *The Fellowship of the Ring* to accompany Frodo’s awaking in Rivendell, perhaps to amplify the liminal nature of the dreamlike state in which the scene begins, and I am indebted to one anonymous reviewer of this article for that particular revelation.

⁷ Jeff Smith provides a critique of some of Claudia Gorbman's main theses, most notably the trope of 'inaudibility' that she claims film music must adhere to in order to maximise its own affective power; the notion that for film music to be most effective it should not be consciously 'heard' or attended to (Smith, 1996). For Smith, psychoanalytical theories place too much emphasis on the so-called (theoretically impossible) 'unheard' nature of music, leaving little room for theorising the cognitive processes involved and thus reducing a psychoanalyst's understanding of the wide variety of listening modes and competencies to '*subjectively-engaged and musically-unaware*,' or vice versa. These cognitive processes represent a major dimension of film music's worldbuilding agency, as hearers (re)cognise specific worlds and orientate themselves spatiotemporally within them.

⁸ The 'absent one' is a concept taken from Jean-Pierre Oudart's definition of suture, signifying that which is unseen in a cinematic shot – an off-screen presence created by the limited scope of the cinema screen (Oudart, 1969).

⁹ I use the term 'world-of' here in reference to the work of Daniel Yacavone (2014), whose distinction between the 'world-in' and 'world-of' a film or indeed a fantasy franchise is of great benefit when considering the inhabitation of imaginary film worlds.

¹⁰ The *Hobbit* title is depicted in the same 3D golden lettering as the *Lord of the Rings* titles were, with sunlight dawning on it from the side – an effect which is heightened by the 3D releases of the *Hobbit* films, making the films (and this title image in particular) even more immersive.

¹¹ 'Dragon sickness' is the unhealthy obsession with gold that leads to hallucinations and other psychological disorders, experienced by Thráin II and later by his son Thorin Oakenshield.