

44. Jerry Goldsmith

Planet of the Apes: The Hunt (opening)

(For Unit 6: Further Musical Understanding)

Background information and performance circumstances

Jerry Goldsmith (1929-2004) was a prolific American composer of scores for films and television series. Three of his most successful collaborations were with the director Franklin J. Schaffner with whom he worked on *Planet of the Apes* (1968). Goldsmith was particularly noted for his experiments with instrumental sound. In his score for *Alien* he used a *shofar* (a ram's horn used in Jewish services), as well as a steel drum and serpent (a large curved type of bass cornett). He also enthusiastically embraced the use of new electronic instruments, though he liked to use a full symphony orchestra where possible, often in conjunction with ethnic and electronic instruments. This can be seen in his score for *Planet of the Apes*, though electronics in music were not yet at a very advanced stage.

In the hunt scene of the film, armed apes on horseback are chasing a group of stranded humans. Goldsmith uses a variety of devices to emphasise a sense of terror, including:

- **unconventional instruments and techniques; prominent use of percussion instruments** (see section on 'performing forces')
- **dissonance** (see section on 'harmony')
- **avoidance of traditional tonality** with suggestions of **serialism**
- harsh **driving**, often **syncopated rhythms** (see section on 'rhythm and metre')

All these features are frequently found in twentieth-century music as a whole.

Performing forces and their handling

- **Large symphony orchestra** with a number of **additions**.
- **Triple woodwind** including bass clarinet and double bassoon.
- Unconventionally, **all oboe players are required to play cor anglais** at times, e.g. bar 1.
- Similarly, **all flute players are required to play piccolo** at bars 64-65 and elsewhere.
- Usually there would be only one cor anglais and piccolo in a large orchestra.
- There is a **standard brass section** of 4 horns, 3 trumpets and 3 trombones, but no tuba.
- Unconventional additional **ethnic instruments** include a **Ram's horn** and a **Tibetan horn** – both used to suggest primitive/otherworldly aspects of the apes.
- Percussion includes 'ethnic' instruments, including **boo-bams**, bar 10.
- **Electronic instruments** include an **electric harp** – essentially a normal harp using a microphone. There is also an **electric bass clarinet** in bar 52.
- **Strings** play a relatively **minor role**, though the long notes in the violin are important e.g. bar 11.

- The **piano** is one of the most **important** of all the instruments, with its own solo motif in bar 4, etc. as well as having driving **ostinati** based on the same figure at e.g. bar 11.
- Brass use a variety of **mutes**, for example:
 - **wood mute** for horn in bar 10
 - **straight mutes** for trombones at bar 23
 - **plunger mutes** for trumpets at bar 55
- Violins have **false (stopped) harmonics** – bars 68-69, played by pressing down the string on the fingerboard with one finger, then lightly touching the same string with the little finger while the string is bowed. This produces a note of very high pitch.
- **Percussion** instruments are particularly **important** in this piece:
 - they reinforce the **sense of terror**
 - **timpani** are used on 1st beat of the bar at the beginning, doubled by piano to give powerful rhythmic impetus.
 - **ethnic instruments** convey a sense of the strangeness of the apes, e.g. boo bams (bar 10)
 - **unusual instruments** e.g. **vibra slap**
 - **piano** used for *ostinati*/riffs (bar 11)
 - fragmentary **xylophone** motifs important (bars 13-14)
 - side drum **roll** crescendos to build climaxes (bars 84-91).



Texture

- Frequently complex textures built over **riffs**.
- Begins **homophonically** with a **homorhythmic** theme in the woodwind with rhythmic reinforcement in timpani, piano and lower strings.
- **Heterophonic** texture at bar 10 with violas and cellos having a more elaborate version of the double bass and Bassoon 2 and 3 music. These instruments in turn have a more elaborate version of the minims in the Bassoon 1, bass clarinet and horn parts.
- The texture from bar 11 is typical of the texture of much of the extract: a riff in the piano accompanies **long held notes** (here in the violins), leading to a dissonant chord and fragmentary melody (here a 3-note motif in xylophone, flutes and piccolo).
- At bar 23 the woodwind take over the *ostinato* (riff).
- There is a **tutti** climax at bar 42 with powerful cross-rhythms, but essentially a homophonic texture accompanying a 3-note figure in the trumpets.
- **Polyphony** begins to build as we approach the next climax. From bar 52, there is a 2-note chromatic rising figure in the bass, with a rising 5th figure in the Ram's Horn and additional rhythms in the percussion. There is **polyrhythm (multiple simultaneous rhythms)** from bar 55. This is the polyphonic climax of the piece.
- There is a slight change in the riff texture from bar 59, where there are now rapid repeated notes in **thirds** in the violas.

- There is a new **2-part contrapuntal texture** in the strings from bar 74 featuring **free imitation** between upper and lower strings.
- The extract ends with several **simultaneous *ostinati*** (from bar 84).

Structure

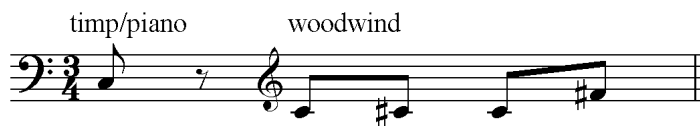
Bar	Comment
1-10	Dramatic introduction of two of the main motifs. The first occurs in bar 1 with C in piano and timpani, then C-C#-C#-F# in woodwind. (Remember the cor anglais sounds a perfect 5 th lower than written.) This bar of music occurs no fewer than 6 times in the first 7 bars. The second motif in bar 4 is a chromatic piano idea in 8ves (extended in bars 8-9 to cover all 12 chromatic notes of the scale). A single link bar featuring heterophony (bar 10) leads to the next section.
11-22	Here the piano motif returns as a riff, now on G instead of C. Two more important motifs are introduced for the first time: a long sustained violin note with a <i>crescendo</i> to a discord (bar 13) and a rapid 3-note figure on xylophone, flutes and piccolo. The ideas are repeated over the same riff from bar 15, with varying long violin notes. A new cross-rhythm is introduced on the conga drum at bar 16. The 3-note motif is found in a freely inverted form at the end of bar 17 and then in a new triplet form at the end of bar 21.
23-37	The riff is now taken over by woodwind, while the long notes move to trombones. Here the tonal centre is E flat. There is a new bass line in lower woodwind and double bass. The opening motif returns at bar 26, now on the strings, with the initial timpani note reinforced by the snare drum. All these ideas are repeated.
38-44	The music now rapidly builds up to the first main climax. The riff is treated to a rising sequence in bars 38-39. A wide-leaping descending chromatic quaver line (bars 40-41) leads to the climax at bar 42. The high pitched trumpet music here is another variation of the rapid three note figure, now starting on the beat instead of on the up-beat.
45-51	The riff now returns to the C tonal centre from the beginning of the piece. The long held notes are on the horns for the first time. Isolated, fragmentary notes on xylophone, etc. create an almost pointillist texture.
52-58	The music then builds rapidly to the second climax. A repeated 2-note, rising semitone phrase in the bass is combined with rising and falling fifths in the ram's horn. There are new percussion figures and a pedal E flat in the harp. The climax at bars 55-58 employs the whole orchestra in a number of simultaneous <i>ostinato</i> phrases.
59-73	The riff returns again, now based on G, with a new semiquaver repeated note accompanying motif in the violas. The long notes return on muted trumpet at bar 63. The rapid 3-note figure returns much as it occurred first, but now on the trumpet as well (bar 64-5). The long note thus ends on the 3-note motif, instead of the discord. Note the stopped (false) harmonics in the violin.
74-83	A new passage for strings in dissonant 2-part imitative counterpoint follows with vibra-slap, the only other instrument. The music alternates between rapid rising scales, long notes and wide leaps.

84-end	The final climax point of the extract. There is a new insistent <i>ostinato</i> in the bass with jarring repeated notes in the upper strings and woodwind, accompanied by side drum roll. The bass <i>ostinato</i> is finally doubled in long notes by the lower woodwind, creating a heterophonic effect (bars 88-end).
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Melody

The piece is built up from a number of **short, fragmentary ideas**, most of which do not last longer than a bar.

- The opening **motif** consists of **5 notes** only. Note the importance of the **rising semitone** and then a **leap**. **Repetition** is important – the phrase is played 6 times in the first 7 bars.



- The second motif in the piano, bar 4, is derived from the main theme of the film. The motif combines **wide leaps** with **semitones**.



- The piano **motif** of bar 4 is **extended** to encompass **all twelve chromatic notes** of the scale in bars 8-9, leading back to the starting note C. It is subsequently treated in a serialist manner.
- The motif returns as a **riff**, now on G at bar 11 (see the notes on 'structure' for information on other transformations).
- The next main ideas are grouped together: the **long held violin note** beginning at bar 11 leads to a loud discord and a group of three rapid notes (C-E flat-D), i.e. rising minor 3rd and falling semitone (note again the importance of this latter interval). The motif is an exact **inversion** of the first three-note figure of the film music.
- The figure is then **transformed** twice. In bars 17-18 there is a **free inversion** (a falling major 2nd followed by a falling major 6th). In bars 21-2 it is made into a triplet figure with an **extra note** added in front and **transposed** up a perfect 4th.
- At bar 23, the riff is heard in oboe, clarinet and harp in E flat, the long note motif is heard in trombones, and the bass line is a **retrograde** of the 12-note idea heard in bars 8-9.
- At bar 27, the bass line of bar 23 is inverted (i.e. **retrograde inversion** of bars 8-9).
- Bar 32: bars 8-9 heard in **inversion** (see double bass).
- There is a further transformation in bar 42 where the original rhythm is retained but there are now two consecutive semitone intervals, now beginning on the beat, instead of before the beat.

Tonality

- The music is **not tonal** in the standard sense. Nevertheless it uses a system of **tonal centres** in which the central note is repeated frequently at the beginning of a bar, often as an **articulated pedal**, e.g. **C** bars 1-4.
- The tonal centre moves to **G** in bar 11, then **E flat** in bar 23.
- The modulation of a 3rd from **G to E flat** and later from **E flat to C** (called a **tertiary modulation**) is common in film music and was first used extensively in the nineteenth century from Beethoven and Schubert onwards.
- The emphasis on **semitones** (see the section on 'melody') helps destabilise any sense of tonality.
- One of the most **chromatic** passages occurs in bars 8-9 when **all twelve notes of the scale** are used. This theme is treated using some **serial** methods, though it isn't serial music in the manner of Schönberg.
- Goldsmith uses **verticalisation** of the row to destabilise any sense of tonality (see below).

Harmony

- The harmony is **dissonant** through most of the extract. The opening chord on beat 2 of bar 1 has an A in the viola clashing against a B flat in the cello.
- Where there is not dissonance there are often **bare octaves**, e.g. bar 1, beat 1.
- **Verticalisation** of the chromatic melodic notes of bars 8-9 forming the 'series' adds to the dissonance. For instance, in bar 1 the two string chords contain notes 1-4 and then 5-8 of the 12-note motif, while the final four notes appear on the final quaver in the wind parts.
- The chord on beat 3 of the first bar could be described as a **13th chord**.
- The harmonic interval of a **semitone** is as important as the melodic interval. The climax of the long held violin note at bar 13 and elsewhere ends with a loud semitone clash.
- At bar 26 this interval is expanded to form a **3-note chord**, including a **diminished 5th** (C to G flat) in the trombones. The diminished 5th is again a harmonically destabilising interval.
- The interval of a semitone is **inverted** to form a **major 7th** in the piano part in bar 84, etc.
- Some of the most dissonant harmony of all is found in the first climax at bar 42. The **chord** at the end of the bar **includes all twelve chromatic notes**. The notes of this chord are introduced one by one from bar 40 in the order of the retrograde of bars 8-9.

Rhythm and metre

- **Hard, driving rhythm** is an essential ingredient in chase music.
- There is an almost continuous **quaver rhythm** in the opening 7 bars, with strong **emphasis on the first beat of the bar** provided by timpani and piano in octaves.
- This rhythm becomes **continuous semiquavers** in bar 11 in the piano riff.

- There is then a **quaver on every single beat** from bar 23 to bar 41.
- There is a **cross-rhythm** in the conga drum at bar 16 which is effectively playing first and second beats in 6/8 time over the 3/4 riff.
- **Syncopation** is frequent, e.g. bars 24-25 in bassoons.
- Cross-rhythms become more intense at the first climax at bar 42 when there is a **triplet** crotchet motif in the strings set against repeated quavers in the woodwind and a semiquaver phrase in the trumpets.
- The **isolated notes** and **fragmentary phrases** in the xylophone at bar 46 onwards create a **pointillist** effect.
- The most complex rhythm occurs at the climax at bar 55 with **septuplet** scales against triplet crotchets, semiquaver and quaver percussion, etc.
- There are **sextuplet** scales in the strings at bar 74.
- Meanwhile, the **time signature changes** frequently. This helps create the sense of unease required by the film drama at this point. The music begins in **triple time** (3/4) but changes to **quintuple time** (5/4) for the link bar (10) at the end of the first brief section.

Further Reading

Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, (Oxford, 2001), Vol. 10, pp. 107-108.