

**Striking a Chord: Music's Narrative Resonance in *Green Book*  
and *Whiplash*.**

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## **1. Abstract**

Music in cinema serves as a powerful narrative tool, capable of evoking emotions, shaping moods, and enhancing thematic depth. This thesis examines the multifaceted role of music as a narrative device in the films *Green Book* (Farrelly, 2018) and *Whiplash* (Chazelle, 2014). The study focuses on how music contributes to character development, thematic exploration, and narrative progression, utilizing both diegetic and non-diegetic music. The research employs a detailed musical and cinematographic analysis to uncover patterns and differences in the use of music in these films. It investigates how musical elements interact with cinematographic techniques such as mise-en-scène, framing, and editing to shape the visual storytelling. Key findings reveal the significant role music plays in reflecting cultural contexts, driving narrative tension, and deepening character arcs.

By integrating theoretical frameworks from film music theory, narratology, and cognitive film theory, the thesis argues that music is not merely an accompaniment but a crucial component of the narrative structure. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the interplay between music and story in film, offering insights into the broader field of musicology by analyzing elements like energy, patterns, and rhythm. Ultimately, it demonstrates that music significantly enhances the storytelling experience, making it an indispensable tool in cinematic narratives.

**Keywords: Music, Narrative Device, Film Analysis, Four Pillars of Music, Diegetic & Non-Diegetic Sound**

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## 1. Introduction

Within the realm of cinematic narratives, music not only functions as an accompaniment to films, but also plays a crucial role in creating emotional scenes and story arcs. It is a sculptor of the intangible and a transforming force in cinema, weaving the spectator through a tapestry of emotional and thematic turning points while building the psychological journeys of the characters. The exploration of this phenomenon is the foundation of this thesis, particularly as observed in the films *Green Book* (Farrelly, 2018) and *Whiplash* (Chazelle, 2014), where music is not just a mere development in the picture but profoundly felt, intertwining with each frame to tell a story within a story. In *Green Book* the symphonic tale unfolds against the backdrop of a segregated America, where the syncopated rhythms of jazz and improvised riffs not only highlight cultural exchanges but also serve as a symbol for a blossoming relationship between the characters that overcomes societal barriers. Music goes beyond its function as a cultural artefact to become its own story that shapes and echoes the film's narrative journey. On the other hand, *Whiplash* paints a rhythmic landscape in which music is both the battlefield and the prize, the tool of torment and triumph. The protagonist's pursuit of musical excellence as a percussionist is an audible depiction of his inner struggle and unwavering determination, serving as a commentary on the vulnerabilities of perfectionism and the sacrifices made in the pursuit of greatness.

The core of this thesis orbits around the concept of music as a storytelling device and explores how it shapes character development, thematic exploration and narrative structure. By threading this main research question throughout the study, this thesis argues that musical scores create their own narratives by using recurring elements to represent character arcs, employing rhythm and harmony to evoke emotions and convey themes, and integrating diegetic and non-diegetic music to advance the plot and enhance storytelling. Through detailed analysis, this thesis aims to demonstrate that music is as integral to the film's narrative as the visual elements, providing a parallel yet interconnected storyline that enriches the overall cinematic experience.

Primarily, Copland's comprehensive four-part framework discussed in his book (originally published in 1939) *What to Listen for in Music* (2002) consisting of melody, harmony, rhythm,

and timbre (tone color), serves as the foundation for this analysis. This thesis aims to distil the essence of these components by examining how the filmmakers of *Green Book* and *Whiplash* use these musical elements not only to complement but also to enhance the visual experience, using melody to trace emotional arcs, harmony to paint the tonal landscape, rhythm to drive the narrative pulse, and tone color to add depth and layering to the cinematic atmosphere. The careful balance between music from the film's universe and music created specifically for the audience's ears is critical to the design and delivery of the narrative's underlying themes and ideas. Furthermore, the analysis will delve into the precise choreography of mise-en-scène, in which each element, from the strategic positioning of a figure within the frame to the slightest alteration in lighting, acts as a visual counterpart to the film's music. Finding a connection between these audio and visual elements could promote a greater knowledge of how filmmakers create an experience that appeals to the audience's mind as well as its emotions.

As we peel back the layers of melody and shadow, harmony and light, music and cinema unveil themselves as more than just partners in the delicate art of storytelling. Recognizing this link provides insight into music's potential to mirror the human condition and connect with our shared stories. As a result, this thesis develops into an ode to the silent symphony that serves as the foundation of cinema, an examination into how, when employed correctly, music becomes a narrative force, powerful and crucial in the realm of film.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

Music in film serves not merely as an auditory backdrop but as a pivotal narrative tool that significantly contributes to the storytelling process. The ongoing discourse about music in film revolves around its capacity to enhance narrative through various musical pillars such as melody, rhythm, harmony, and timbre. This theoretical framework investigates these elements by drawing on the insights of influential figures such as Aaron Copland, Ingrid Monson, Paul Berliner, Sergei Eisenstein, Michel Chion, John A. Sloboda, Tan et al., as well as specific musical pieces used in films, emphasizing their relevance to understanding how music shapes film narratives.

Aaron Copland, a seminal figure in 20th-century music, emphasized the simplicity and emotional connectivity of melody in his book *What to Listen for in Music* (2002). His assertion that melody serves as a natural and spontaneous musical language underscores its importance

in evoking deep emotional responses directly from the audience. This concept is fundamental to understanding how melodies in music are able to bridge the gap to cinema and how it may function as a narrative element, establishing a direct emotional connection between the film and its viewer. Throughout the analysis of this thesis, Copland's work serves as a key foundation for understanding how composers employ melody to elicit various emotions and ultimately, use it as a tool to develop new cinematic narratives. Copland's insights into melody are particularly pertinent as he argued that melody's "simplicity and capacity to connect with the listener" taps into "mental emotion" (2002, 41). In *What to Listen for in Music*, Copland elaborates that melody's power lies in its "expressive quality," which can convey emotions without the need for words (2002, 42). This idea is crucial for film music, where the melody often serves as the primary conduit for emotional expression. For example, Irving Berlin's *Blue Skies* (1926) and Duke Ellington's *Caravan* (1936) are musical works that reflect Copland's concepts. The dynamic tempos and different melodies in these compositions provide musical conversations that generate strong emotional responses. This is consistent with Copland's argument that melody may engage listeners in intense, almost visceral interactions in the absence of words (2002, 42-43). These examples illustrate how melody can serve as a narrative device, enhancing the emotional and psychological dimensions of a film.

Rhythm, described by Copland as the "heartbeat of music," provides life and momentum to a score (2002, 28-30). Rhythm's role in film is multifaceted, revealing changes, signifying tension, and underpinning the narrative flow. This perspective aligns with the scholarly work of Ingrid Monson and Paul Berliner, who have extensively explored the social and cultural dimensions of rhythm, particularly in jazz music. Monson, in her work *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction* (1996), emphasizes that jazz is not merely a musical form but a means of cultural expression and social interaction. Monson argues that "jazz performance involves a complex interplay of individual creativity and group dynamics" (1996, 73), highlighting how improvisational elements in jazz can mirror the cultural and social contexts in which they are performed. This analysis highlights the improvisational nature of jazz, which allows musicians to communicate personal and collective experiences, a concept that can be extended to understanding how rhythm in film music can reflect and shape cultural narratives.

Paul Berliner, in *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (1994), explores the rhythmic complexities of jazz, such as syncopation, swing, and polyrhythms, and their role in creating a dynamic and tension-filled character. Berliner asserts that "syncopation disrupts the

regularity of the beat, creating a feeling of forward motion and excitement" (1994, 156). This insight is crucial for understanding how film scores use rhythmic elements to enhance narrative tension and drive the emotional cadence of the story. Berliner further explains that "the discipline required in jazz performance is a metaphor for the broader human struggle for excellence and self-actualization" (1994, 210), emphasizing the intense emotional and psychological effort involved in mastering complex rhythms. The song *Whiplash* (1973), composed by Hank Levy and featured in the film of the same name, exemplifies how rhythm can be used to convey narrative tension. The piece's 7/4-time signature creates an irregular, unsettling feeling that mirrors psychological stress and high-pressure environments. This rhythmic complexity reflects the broader human struggle for excellence and self-actualization that Berliner discusses. Moreover, the manipulation of rhythm as a narrative device is further illuminated by John A. Sloboda's exploration of music's psychological impact.

John A. Sloboda's work in *Exploring the Musical Mind* (2005) delves into how music manipulates emotional responses through expectations and timing. Sloboda describes how "the disruption of rhythmic patterns can create a sense of unpredictability and stress" (2005, 89). This notion becomes apparent in how rhythmic pauses and demands produce a sense of instability and anxiousness, which drives emotional intensity in film. Sloboda's study provides a scientific perspective to understanding the psychological mechanisms by which music affects listeners, delivering insights into how cinema soundtracks may be tailored to elicit certain emotional reactions.

Harmony, another vital element discussed by Copland, adds depth and richness to musical works, enhancing the narrative by providing emotional color and textural contrast. Copland's understanding of harmony as an intellectual conception that evolved gradually (2002, p. 52) is essential for analyzing how film composers use harmonic structures to evoke specific emotions and support the narrative flow. Harmony in music can create a profound emotional impact, as discussed by Kuchinke et al. in their work *Emotion and Music in Narrative Films: A Neuroscientific Perspective* (2013). Their study explores how the combination of visual aspects and sound leads to a unified perception that modulates the audience's feelings, enhancing the emotional impact of the narrative.

Moreover, Kuchinke et al. argue that "the synchronization of visual and auditory stimuli in films can enhance the emotional and cognitive engagement of the audience" (2013, 2). This

view is reinforced by the concept of "dramatic function," which states that music heightens emotions and increases the artistic representation of a scene. Within the study, the authors refer to this as "emotive mapping," in which the harmony reflects and enhances the emotional state of the characters and the story, resulting in a shared experience with the audience.

Sergei Eisenstein's montage theory, particularly his ideas on rhythmic and tonal montage, also provides valuable insights into the role of harmony in film music. Eisenstein stated in *Film Form* (1977) that sensory synchronization results in a more intense and meaningful experience. He elaborates that rhythmic montage, where the lengths of pieces are determined by the content within the frame, creates a flexible relationship that responds to the specifics of the sequence. Eisenstein's theory proposes that the careful arrangement of rhythmic and harmonic components inside a montage may considerably improve the emotional and intellectual effect of a film, which is consistent with his belief that sensory synchronization generates deeper experience. This approach to cinema scoring may be found in the employment of specific harmonic structures to highlight cultural and personal dichotomies within a story, expressing the complexities of characters' lives and relationships.

Diegetic sound, or sound whose source is visible on the screen or implied to be present by the action of the film, is another crucial aspect of film music. Tan et al. discuss the concept of diegetic sound in their study *The Effects of Diegetic and Nondiegetic Music on Viewers* (2017), emphasizing its role in complementing a scene's mood (p. 608). They describe how viewers tend to "interpret and remember" scenes in ways that are congruent with the "emotion conveyed by the music" (2017, p. 608). This phenomenon of heightening emotions and strengthening the aesthetic expression of a scene is referred to as the "dramatic function" of film music by Kuchinke et al. (2013, p. 8). The use of diegetic sound to reflect emotional and narrative turning points illustrates the interplay between diegetic sound and narrative. The sudden stoppage of diegetic music in reaction to narrative events heightens tension and accentuates emotional impact, which is consistent with theoretical insights offered by Tan et al. and Kuchinke et al. The current scholarly discourse highlights the importance of diegetic sound in creating a more immersive and emotionally resonant film experience. Filmmakers can increase the audience's emotional connection and overall storytelling effect by smoothly incorporating diegetic sounds into the visual narrative.



Timbre, or tone color, is another critical aspect of film music, defined by Copland as the characteristic of sound that distinguishes different instruments and gives each note its identity (2002, p. 66). Timbre plays an important function in coloring a scene with layers of narrative significance, increasing the audience's emotional and cognitive involvement. Michel Chion explains in his book *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* (1994), his theory of the audiovisual scene and discusses how sound in cinema carries a form of meaning within the image (1994, p. 67). Chion's idea of "added value" proposes that music may add levels of meaning to a visual narrative, increasing the audience's emotional and cognitive involvement. This idea is evident in the use of specific musical pieces to highlight timbre, such as *Go to the Mardi Gras* (1959) by Professor Longhair. The vibrant tonal qualities of this piece contrast with scene dynamics, reflecting evolving relationships and narrative tension. The various timbres of jazz instruments in practice sessions may emphasize high stakes and pressure, heightening the narrative's emotional intensity. These examples show how timbre may be employed to communicate emotional depth and increase audience connection with the film's story.

### **3. Methodology**

The methodological approach of this thesis is designed to illuminate the intricate ways in which music functions as a narrative device within the films *Green Book* and *Whiplash*. It is based on a qualitative analysis that meticulously examines how musical elements (melody, rhythm, harmony and timbre) interact with each other and enhance the storytelling process. Initiating with a descriptive exploration, this thesis will dissect the narrative structures of both films, homing in on the musical components integral to character development, thematic depth, and stylistic components. This initial stage strives to lay the groundwork for a final and thorough comparative analysis by considering each film's unique musical tactics within their respective cinematic setting.

This thesis takes a sequential approach, with each chapter focusing on one of the four foundations of music as they progress throughout both films. The investigation focuses on melody and its thematic elements, rhythm and narrative pace, harmony and its emotional foundations and timbre or "tone color" and its contribution to the films' auditory textures (Copland, 2002, p. 66). In advancing through this thesis, each subsequent chapter will tackle one of Copland's pillars: melody, rhythm, harmony and tone control in ascending order of intricacy. This arrangement reflects the organic nature of musical creation, in which the

simplicity of melody leads to the deeper complexity of rhythm, harmony and timbre. The research dives further into these characteristics, revealing their increasing sophistication and entangled interactions within the context of cinema story. These musical components are extensively examined with the mise-en-scene elements that they complement, offering a comprehensive understanding of how sound and visual combine to build a captivating narrative thread. By incorporating theoretical approaches from film studies and musicology, this thesis aims to venture beyond just describing auditory features and instead interpret the subtle significance that these components have in the evolving story. This analytical journey is guided by a hermeneutic lens, which engages with the content to uncover deeper meanings and connections between the musical and visual elements.

### **3.1 Melody**

The distinct and forceful voice of cinematic scores is shaped by the principles established by numerous composers, including Aaron Copland, one of the twentieth century's most influential musicians. Copland's musical worldview extends beyond concert halls and permeates the world of movies. His theories are built on his theoretical knowledge of musical components, which are distinguished by their intrinsic communication capacity. Copland not only produced pieces that reflect the American spirit, but he also explained the simplicity and profundity of music's essential components. This thesis begins its exploration with Copland's most accessible musical pillar, melody. In his highly acclaimed book *What to Listen for in Music* (2002) Copland praised melody for its "simplicity and capacity to connect with the listener", tapping into "mental emotion" (Copland, 2002, p. 41). As the initial touchpoint in this thesis, melody serves as both an entry point and the basis of the film's musical story, conveying an innate comprehension that requires no middleman for interpretation.

#### Green Book

*Green Book*, directed by Peter Farrelly (2018), is an enthralling story set against the turbulent background of America's Deep South in the 1960s, a time marked by racial segregation and social turmoil. The film is named after *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, a travel guide that recommended safe venues for African Americans during the segregated Jim Crow era. The plot revolves around a peculiar friendship between Dr. Don Shirley, an African American classical and jazz pianist played by Mahershala Ali, and Tony Vallelonga, an Italian American bouncer

from the Bronx played by Viggo Mortensen. Hired as Shirley's chauffeur and bodyguard for a concert tour, Vallelonga, who throughout is referred to usually as Tony Lip, is plunged into a world unlike his own, challenging his preconceived assumptions and biases. As they travel from venue to venue, the two men's dissimilar lives and worlds collide via music and shared experiences, creating a story that is as much about their developing relationship as it is about the music that serves as the film's aural center.

In the scene where Dr. Don Shirley performs *Blue Skies*, composed by Irving Berlin (1960), the melody demonstrates and exemplifies how Aaron Copland's insights into the emotive power of musical structures. The composition is distinguished by its dynamic tempo, intentional pauses, and a wide range of notes that operate almost like phrases in a musical dialogue. According to Copland, such a tune is intended to elicit a powerful “emotional reaction”, involving the listener in a profound, almost “visceral interaction without words” (2002, p. 42-43). The performance of *Blue Skies* in *Green Book* employs these melodic phrases to create a multifaceted emotional setting. For the primarily white audience, the pauses and abrupt variations in the melody create tension that reflects their unease about listening to an African American man perform music that during that era was stereotypically white. The notes resound throughout the auditorium, reflecting once more the era's cultural conflicts as well as the audience's own deeply established preconceptions. These musical selections not only emphasize Shirley's expertise and resistance, but also discreetly confront the listener with their own biases, use melody to challenge and provoke. Copland argues that the most “unpredictable attribute” of a melody, is precisely this notion and ability of inducing an emotional charge that is led by its “expressive quality” (2002, p. 42).

The note variation, which ranges from energetic, light moments to more profound, slower periods, acoustically represents new experiences and emotions. Tony's journey of cultural and personal growth begins with his observation of Shirley's performance. The melody therefore inevitably opens the door to empathy and understanding, with each note drawing him further into a greater respect for both the music and the man who created it.

In this key frame (fig. 1) from *Green Book*, the characters' deliberate positioning goes beyond simple compositional design to create a moving statement about the conflicting social realities of the 1960s. Perrson (2003, p. 64) argues that “POV editing” inflicts a “spatial bond” between characters and determines important functions in the narrative. In this POV (fig 1.), the middle area of the frame is occupied by Dr. Don Shirley, who is seated at the grand piano. Tony Lip,

the white bouncer who is now a chauffeur, is on one side of him and the black kitchen crew is on the other. Shirley is both a member of and distinct from both groups in this remarkable visual arrangement, his physical and metaphorical placement serving as a cultural bridge in a society that is divided along racial lines.



Fig 1.

(Dr. Shirley performing in between Tony Lip and kitchen staff)

As Shirley performs, the melody's distinct expressive quality, highlighted by the varied tonal dynamics and pacing. For a lack of spoken words, this becomes a dialogue in itself. A melodic speech with the power to unite an emotionally charged room. To the kitchen staff, it communicates a moment of pride and connection to greatness. For Tony Lip, however, the melody speaks to the bond between him and a world of musical expression, previously unknown to him. Copland contends that a melodic construction has an "inevitable power" and gives one "a sense of completion" (2002, p. 42), something that could hint to Tony's shifting persona throughout the film.

### Whiplash

The gripping drama *Whiplash* directed by Damien Chazelle (2014), is set in the obsessive atmosphere of an elite New York music academy, Schaffer. Here, Andrew Nieman who is portrayed by Miles Teller, plays a young ambitious teenage drummer, trying to work his way up in the academy. His determination for greatness is quickly intercepted by J.K. Simmons' barbaric portrayal of Terence Fletcher, a chilling music instructor and conductor of the school

ensemble. Their complex dynamic drives the film, creating a tense atmosphere that questions the cost of excellence. The plot revolves around Andrew's struggle to meet Fletcher's impossible standards, propelling him into a downward spiral of obsession and relentlessness. The film showcases the highs and lows of pursuing any artistic endeavor to an obsessive degree, accompanied by a soundtrack that is both captivating and nerve-racking. If Aaron Copland were to speak about the melodies that drive *Whiplash*, he might point out that they do more than just thread between the scenes; they serve as both a spark for conflict and a means of healing in the tumultuous push-pull between instructor and student.

In the final performance scene of *Whiplash*, Andrew Neiman performs *Caravan* (1936), a jazz standard composed by Duke Ellington and Juan Tizol that serves as a leitmotif throughout the film. This scene encapsulates Aaron Copland's insights into the emotive power of melody and its performative role in storytelling. As Fletcher humiliates Andrew off stage by feeding him false charts in front of a live audience, Andrew bursts back on and starts playing. Before one song can end, a new melody takes over as Andrew persists with his drum kit and transitions harshly into *Caravan*, warning the ensemble. This spontaneity from Andrew, solidifies his confidence and power over Fletcher after a harsh and painful journey, leading to a satisfying and emotional end. Appropriately, according to Copland, melody is "the most natural and spontaneous musical language," capable of conveying deep emotions directly to the listener (2002, p. 35).

The melody of *Caravan* is characterized by its intricate rhythms, dynamic tempo changes, and expressive phrasing. According to a metric from Hooktheory (2012), a musical analysis tool designed by Anderson et al., *Caravan* "is significantly more complex than the typical song". From a musicological perspective, *Caravan* employs a mixture of Afro-Cuban rhythms and American jazz idioms, creating a unique musical texture that drives the scene's intensity. Composer and musicologist K.J McElrath writing for *Jazz Standards*, contends the piece is written in a fast 4/4 tempo, which allows for rapid tempo changes that challenge the performer's technical skills while a "mysterious, quasi-Oriental sound" is created by the melody's chords.

These musical elements in melody create a sense of urgency and intensity that mirrors Andrew's internal struggle and determination throughout the film. This mysterious and elusive melody of *Caravan* reflects the chaotic yet focused state of Andrew's mind as he strives to

achieve perfection. The melody's complexity requires technical precision and emotional intensity, both of which are evident in Andrew's performance. Furthermore, the melody in this piece acts as a metaphor for Andrew's musical journey and career. In *Caravan*, the instruments, after their first battle to identify themselves, learn to connect with one another and acquire their own voice and collective melody. The early exchanges between the instruments can be perceived as a fight for attention, similar to Andrew's own struggle to discover his position and voice as a drummer.

The mise-en-scene in this scene adds to the dramatic impact of the music. The scene opens with a close-up of Andrew's sweat-soaked face, stressing his physical and mental exertion. The camera then changes to his hands, which move quickly and accurately across the drum set. The lighting is strong, with sharp contrasts that cast dramatic shadows, emphasizing the intensity of the scene. As the performance progresses, the camera alternates between close-ups of Andrew's drumming, shots of the band, and the reactions of the audience and Fletcher. The editing is rapid, matching the tempo of the music, creating a seamless integration of visual and auditory elements. This synchronization between the music and the visual cuts creates a unified, immersive experience for the viewer.

The combination of mise-en-scene and Copland's concept of melody creates a striking portrayal of a young man on the verge of victory or collapse. The final performance of *Caravan* in *Whiplash* best demonstrates how melody can create its own narrative. The music's rhythm and phrasing provide a temporal framework that guides the visual storytelling. The emotional depth of the song heightens the scene's dramatic effect, transporting the audience into Andrew's experience. The mise-en-scene components, such as lighting, camera angles, and editing, work in tandem with the music to produce a strong, coherent narrative.

### **3.2 Rhythm**

Rhythm, as articulated by Aaron Copland, is the “heartbeat of music”, infusing a score with life and momentum with its “primal instinct” (2002, p. 28-30). It's this principle that anchors the next segment of this thesis, following the exploration of melody. Rhythm is the structure for melodies and the pulse to which listeners “instinctively respond” (Copland, 2002 p. 28). This chapter will look at the importance of rhythm in film, with a focus on its ability to reveal change, signify tension, and underline the course of the narrative

## Green Book

One of the final performances from Dr. Shirley in *Green Book* is a profound turning point for both his character development and his artistic expression. When Dr. Shirley is not permitted to dine at the Rocky Creek Country Club in Alabama where he is expected to perform, he and Tony retreat to a bar and grill restaurant called Orange Bird. In this predominantly African American restaurant, jazz and blues music can be heard playing live on a stage. Throughout the film, Shirley struggles with his identity, torn between classical music, which earns him respect from white audiences but also alienates him, and jazz, which reconnects him with his African American roots. He often remarks on his disdain for the aura of African American Jazz and Blues music, claiming it lacks professionalism and elegance. As Shirley and Tony are eating their controversial chicken wings (controversial because Tony called him out for never having eaten them as a black man), the bartender asks Shirley to prove he is a pianist. As Dr. Shirley sits behind his piano and removes the glass of whiskey that lay on it from the previous act, he eliminates the African American musical stereotype that he previously described as unprofessional.

This climactic scene commences with Dr. Shirley playing classical music, more specifically, Chopin's *Étude Op. 25, No. 11* (1837). A complex rhythm where the left hand plays a 6-note pattern and the right hand a 4-note pattern. Copland describes this as a "polyrhythm" (2002, p. 36). A complicated rhythmic phenomenon that occurs from the mixture of two or more independent rhythms. Classical music throughout the film serves as both a protection and burden for Dr. Shirley. His demeanor during this scene is strict, organized and tight. A powerful juxtaposition to the more loose and free music of his fellow African American musicians of that time, while Dr. Shirley has led a structured and restrained life until this point. After a standing ovation for his classical performance, Dr. Shirley is accompanied by the previous act, a jazz ensemble.

As Dr. Shirley transitions into playing jazz with the ensemble, so does the rhythm and entire tone of his character. Ironically, the rhythm now played by the swing jazz ensemble is dictating the rhythm that Dr. Shirley has to follow. By changing the accent on the first beat to the second, a swing rhythm becomes "one-TWO-three-FOUR" (Copland, 2002, p. 38). Scholars like Ingrid Monson and Paul Berliner have extensively explored the social and cultural dimensions of jazz improvisation and performance. Ingrid Monson highlights in her work *Saying Something*

(1996), that jazz is not merely a musical form but a means of cultural expression and social interaction, stating that "Jazz performance involves a complex interplay of individual creativity and group dynamics" (p. 73). The improvisational nature of jazz allows musicians to communicate personal and collective experiences. When Dr. Shirley performs in the black bar, the jazz rhythms he plays resonate with the cultural history of his fellow improvisors, creating an immediate and profound connection. Paul Berliner examines the rhythmic complexities of jazz in his book *Thinking in Jazz* (1994), pointing out how syncopation, swing, and polyrhythms contribute to the genre's dynamic and tension-filled character. Berliner asserts that "the syncopation in jazz not only disrupts the regularity of the beat but also creates a feeling of forward motion and excitement" (1994, p. 156). The use of syncopation and swing rhythms creates a sense of movement and unpredictability, mirroring Dr. Shirley's journey towards self-discovery and acceptance. To cite Copland, "All jazz is founded on a rock of steady unchanging rhythm is the bass" (2002, p. 38) which describes that over the foundational layer of jazz rhythm, different rhythms have more freedom and vitality. This is precisely what happens to Dr. Shirley. The primal side of the swing rhythm has emerged to conform to what his audience wanted to hear. His hands, now free from the intricacy of classical music, his posture and overall appearance shift into a liberating and freeing performance, in which he is even able to muster a smile after a lifetime of seriousness. Improvisation is a hallmark of jazz, allowing musicians to express their individuality and react to their surroundings in real-time. Berliner describes improvisation as "the practice of creating new melodies spontaneously, often in response to the music and the environment" (1994, p. 192). During the performance, Dr. Shirley's improvisations become a means of personal expression, breaking free from the rigid confines of classical music. This spontaneity in rhythm and melody not only showcases his versatility but also symbolizes his reconnection with his cultural roots. It's as if an alteration in musical tempo and pace allows him to explore a side of himself that he's kept hidden, embodying the duality of his cultural identity. It's a dramatic instance of Copland's idea that rhythm has a profound impact on the primal allure of music; in this sequence rhythm serves up the film's emotional peak.

### Whiplash

In the film *Whiplash*, the scene in which Andrew Neiman first joins Fletcher's band is an essential moment that employs the music of the film's title song *Whiplash* to highlight the film's several themes in the narrative like control, power, and psychological manipulation. Aaron



Copland's concept of rhythm as the "heartbeat of music" (2002, p. 28-30) is central to understanding this scene. In this scenario, the protagonist, Andrew Neiman, is put to the test by his conductor and mentor, Terence Fletcher. The scene begins with Fletcher telling the band to get ready for a performance of *Whiplash* (1973), conducted by Hank Levy, a song known for its fast tempo and intricate rhythms. *Whiplash* (1973) is composed in 7/4 time, a highly unusual and complex time signature. This 7/4-time signature may be broken into several groups, but "Levy frequently arranges it as 3+3+2+2+2+2, resulting in an asymmetrical arrangement that tests both performers and listeners" (Morales, 2014). The separation into smaller groups helps musicians manage the uneven meter, but the frequent variations in accents need exact rhythmic control and awareness. Syncopation is also a significant component in *Whiplash*. Syncopation, according to Paul Berliner (1994), is the practice of adding rhythmic accents on weak or off-beats in order to create tension and forward propulsion. In the song *Whiplash*, Levy uses the same concept of syncopation to disrupt the regularity of the beat, creating a sense of unpredictability. For example, accents may fall on the second and fourth beats of a 2/2 grouping, or on the third beat of a 3/3 grouping, catching the listener off guard and adding to the piece's dynamic complexity.

After pleasing Fletcher in the first minute of the song, he abruptly interrupts Andrew for being off tempo. As the musical piece progresses, the interruptions from Fletcher become more and more frequent. Fletcher's repeated stoppages disrupt the rhythmic flow, creating a sense of instability and anxiety that mirrors Andrew's psychological state. These interruptions are more than just instructive, they allow Fletcher to assert power and control by employing rhythmic disruption as a psychological tactic. Sloboda explains that "the disruption of rhythmic patterns can create a sense of unpredictability and stress" (2005, p. 89). Monson notes that "the interplay of individual creativity and group dynamics in jazz can reflect underlying social hierarchies and power struggles" (1996, p. 73). Fletcher's interruptions serve to establish his dominance over Andrew, using the challenging rhythm of *Whiplash* to test and control him.

Thus, in this scene, Fletcher's unpredictable interruptions, set against the backdrop of the musical piece *Whiplash*, heighten the emotional tension between the two characters, reflecting Andrew's inner turmoil and escalating stress. The manipulation of rhythm here functions as a hidden narrative, driving the psychological and emotional stakes of the scene. Berliner's emphasis on the discipline and precision required in jazz performance is also relevant here. Berliner notes that "the discipline required in jazz performance is a metaphor for the broader

human struggle for excellence and self-actualization" (1994, p. 210). The song *Whiplash* is a technical masterpiece requiring precise timing and execution. Fletcher's insistence on perfect rhythm and tempo reflects this metaphor, illustrating the extreme demands placed on Andrew. The rhythmic difficulties offered by the composition serve as a narrative device, representing the never-ending quest of greatness and the psychological sacrifices that come with it.

Following an in-depth rhythmic examination of Hank Levy's *Whiplash*, it is critical to evaluate how these musical aspects are visually reflected and enhanced in the film's mise-en-scène. The visual and audio elements of the film are deliberately created to heighten the intensity of the story and highlight Andrew and Fletcher's psychological stress.

As Fletcher counts in, the rhythm surges into action, dominating the scene's energy with its rapid-fire tempo. The camera work is dynamic, alternating between Andrew's drumming and Fletcher's conducting. The editing follows the rhythm of the music, with each cut punctuating the beat and generating a visual rhythm that mirrors the auditory. This synchronization increases the immersive intensity of the moment, drawing the audience into the sensory experience of the performance. Fletcher stalks the room, his motions abrupt and pointed, each step adding to the scene's pace. He abruptly ends and resumes the performance, putting Andrew off balance and upsetting the rhythm he works so hard to keep. These abrupt changes act as startling pauses in the rhythmic movement, utilizing Copland's concept of rhythm as a primal tool that highlights the interplay of power dynamics between teacher and student. When Fletcher tosses a chair at Andrew, the tension reaches a breaking point as the rhythmic continuity is broken visually and audibly. The ensuing quiet is deafening, the lack of rhythm highlighting the tension and astonishment. The climax of this scene is the ideal example of how rhythm can profoundly impact a film's narrative structure. Not only is there a rhythmic tension between the songs' time signatures, but also between the instructor and the learner, chaos and order, and expectation and reality. Every beat that Andrew plays turns into a forceful declaration of his identity and a protest against the mental abuse that Fletcher is causing him.

### 3.3 Harmony

Aaron Copland's concept of harmony adds depth and richness to the tapestry of a musical work. It enhances the narrative by adding emotional color and textural contrast. As this thesis moves on from the readily perceived melody and natural reactions to rhythm, it enters the world of harmony. To this concept, Copland argues that "Rhythm and Melody came naturally to man, but harmony gradually evolved from what was partly an intellectual conception" (2002, p. 52).

Copland recognizes harmony as the element that lends music its richness and emotional nuance, allowing chords, dissonance, and resolution to complement and enrich the melody line (2022, p. 55). In their work *Emotion and Music in Narrative Films: A Neuroscientific Perspective* (2013), Kuchinke et al. discuss the emotional effects of music in film. Harmony in music has the ability to elicit emotions in the audience, hence increasing the impact of the story. According to Kuchinke et al., Eisenstein (1947) contends that combining visual aspects and sound should "lead to a common examination of audio-visual montages as unified entities" that together modulate the perception and the feelings of the spectators (2013, p. 2). Delving further into Sergei Eisenstein's montage theory, particularly his ideas on rhythmic and tonal montage, can be particularly enlightening when exploring the role of harmony in film music. Eisenstein in his work *Film Form* (1977) argued that "the synchronization of senses produces an intensified and more profound experience" (1977, p. 72). He elaborates that the careful arrangement of rhythmic elements within a montage can significantly enhance the emotional and intellectual impact of a film. Eisenstein describes how rhythmic montage, where the lengths of the pieces are determined by the content within the frame, creates a flexible relationship that responds to the specifics of the sequence (1977, p. 74). This principle extends beyond visual elements to include the synergy between sound and image.

#### Green Book

A particular scene in *Green Book* which portrays the complexity of harmony both musically and visually for the narrative and character development is where Dr. Shirley and Tony Lip arrive in Hanover, Indiana. As per his contract, Dr. Shirley required every venue to provide him with a grand Steinway & Sons piano to perform on. When Tony discovers an old rusty piano filled with wrappers and trash, he confronts the venue manager. As Tony walks to center stage we hear the two other members of the Don Shirley trio, tuning and practicing their

instruments. Tan et al. refer to diegetic sound to complement a scene's mood as "mood-congruent" diegetic sound (2017, p. 608). When pressed by Tony Lip about the subpar piano, the venue manager makes a racist remark, "These coons will play on anything you put in front of them" (*Green Book*, Farrelly, 2018). We hear the diegetic music of the musician's abruptly stop, shifting their focus from the harmony of their music to the confrontation.

In a previous study, Tan et al. describes how viewers tend to "interpret and remember" scenes in ways that are congruent with the "emotion conveyed by the music" (2017, p. 608). This phenomenon of heightening emotions and strengthening the aesthetic expression of a scene is referred to by Kuchinke as "dramatic function" (2013, p. 8). Kuchinke's concept of the dramatic function of film music addresses this "emotive mapping", in which the harmony not only reflects but also accentuates Tony Lip's emotional state, resulting in a shared experience with the audience. In terms of structural function, the film's music supports key transitions and movements within the scene. The audience feels his resolve and tolerance for racism and prejudice diminishing, as the harmony and diegetic sound is removed entirely from the scene. This one of the major turning points in the film, where the bond between Dr. Shirley and Tony grows closer.

Additionally, Eisenstein's montage theory may serve to convey this scenario. The scholar believes that synchronizing visual and aural senses increases the audience's experience (1977, p. 72). The abrupt pause in diegetic music when the manager makes a racist comment is an instance of rhythmic montage. Eisenstein states that in rhythmic montage, "the content within the frame is a factor possessing equal rights to consideration" (1977, p. 74). The abrupt halt of music and the subsequent quiet heightens the tension and highlights the emotional effect of the interaction.

When yet another racist remark emanates from the venue manager, Tony Lip punches him. Almost immediately, the score picks up and cuts to a close up of Dr. Shirley's hands performing on a clean Steinway. He performs a cover of *Happy Talk* (Rodgers & Hammerstein, 1949) and with this, uplifts the mood almost instantaneously. This music guides the audience's attention through the narrative, action defined by Kuchinke as an "auditory dominance" (2013, p. 8). This phenomenon, supported by media psychologists Unz, Schwab, and Mönch (2008), recapitulate auditory dominance as "the perceived emotion of a film being influenced more by music than by the behavior of the protagonists". The sympathetic response created by the

harmonies makes the audience recognize a connection with Shirley. Kuchinke, in his writings, draws from Bullerjahn's analysis that explains how the narrative function refers to "the supporting of the narrative course by film music, when composers interpret and enhance the intention of the film maker" (2013, p. 8).

The harmonic structure of *Happy Talk* is primarily built on a series of major chords, which are known for their bright and uplifting qualities. The interplay between melody and harmony in this song is crucial in creating its cheerful and uplifting character. The typical progression in the song follows a I-IV-V-I pattern, a common structure in Western music that creates a sense of resolve and wholesomeness. The harmonious performance of *Happy Talk* following the confrontation aligns with Eisenstein's idea of tonal montage, where the emotional "sound" of a piece guides the montage (1977, p. 76). The cheerful harmony of the song juxtaposed with the earlier discordance in the scene creates a compelling emotional arc that enhances the narrative impact.

In this scene, the viewer is lured into his experience, forming an emotional connection that extends beyond the screen. The spectator's identification with Shirley is reinforced not just by the visual storytelling, but also by the harmonic language spoken by the score, which adds to the film's overall effect. The relationship between all these contrasting elements, serve as a metaphor to the description and the science behind harmony, as Copland describes harmony as the "study of chords and their relationship with each other" (2002, p. 55).

### Whiplash

In *Whiplash*, Andrew Neiman's decision to leave Shaffer Conservatory is a pivotal moment that eloquently demonstrates Aaron Copland's thoughts regarding harmony. The dissonance created by the notable absence of the frenetic rush of drumbeats, reflects the inner agony that Andrew feels as he walks away from his dream. The precise, controlled rhythms of Shaffer's practice rooms give way to the diegetic sound of busy city life as Andrew leaves the conservatory. Distant chats and the hum of traffic eventually take over. In both the diegetic and non-diegetic soundscapes, the absence of drums emphasizes how deeply discordant Andrew's life is. Copland noted that harmony adds emotional depth and color, usually by combining sounds in a coherent way to enhance the emotional landscape of a scene. Here, though, the

filmmakers flip this idea on its head by highlighting Andrew's sense of loss and confusion through discord.

The transition from the intense, diegetic drumming within the conservatory to the diegetic sounds of the outside world such as city traffic and distant chatter, underscores Andrew's departure from his structured, passion-driven life. As Tan et al. argue, diegetic sound can complement a scene's mood by aligning the auditory elements with the visual context, enhancing the audience's emotional response (2017, p. 608). Eisenstein's montage theory provides further understanding into the impact of this scene. Eisenstein emphasized the use of montage to create a new meaning through the collision of different images and sounds (1977, p. 72). In this scene, the juxtaposition of the disciplined, rhythmic world of the conservatory with the chaotic, unstructured sounds of the city creates a powerful contrast that underscores Andrew's internal conflict. Eisenstein's concept of rhythmic montage, where the measure of editing aligns with the content within the frame, is evident here (1977, p. 74). The transition from the rapid, precise cuts of Andrew's drumming to the slower, more contemplative shots of his walk away from his previous life at the conservatory enhances the narrative tension and reflects the shift in Andrew's emotional state. The scene's aesthetic components emphasize the conflict even more. The somber hues of the cityscape represent Andrew's current mental difficulty, a world lacking the enthusiasm that once infused it. Wide images of Andrew show his loneliness, with him frequently on the periphery of the frame, symbolizing his exclusion from the society he previously tried to dominate (Fig 2).



Fig 2.

(Wide shot of Andrew walking through the city)

In a similar scene after having left the Schaffer Conservatory, Justin Hurwitz's work *Dismissed* (2014) plays during the scene in which Andrew Neiman removes his drum gear from his room. Similarly, to the previously discussed scene, this is a very noticeable emotional and narrative turning point, highlighted by the music's melancholic harmony. The absence of frenzied drumbeats, replaced with a somber piano music, correspondingly portrays Andrew's inner anguish and sense of loss. The song *Dismissed* is characterized by its slow tempo and melancholic harmony, which align with Andrew's emotional state. The piece primarily uses minor chords, which are typically associated with “sadness and solipsism in Western music theory” (Loveday, 2022). The harmonic progression in *Dismissed* often moves through minor thirds and diminished intervals, creating a sense of unresolved tension and melancholy. The sparse arrangement, focusing on piano with minimal accompaniment and the complete absence of drums, highlights this isolation and the emptiness Andrew feels after leaving Shaffer. The filmmakers' strategic use of diegetic and non-diegetic sound, musical selection, combined with Eisenstein's montage principles, creates a compelling and immersive experience that can deeply resonate with the audience and speak to the implicit narrative of the film.

### **3.4 Tone Color (Timbre)**

In the world of film music, tone color, or timbre, as defined by Aaron Copland (2002, p. 66), is critical in coloring a scene with layers of narrative meaning. Timbre is the characteristic of sound that helps us to distinguish across instruments, giving each note its own identity and eliciting a distinct response from the listener.

“The intelligent listener should have two main objectives in relation to tone control: (a) sharpen his awareness of different instruments and their separate tonal characteristics and (b) to gain a better appreciation of the composers' expressive purpose in using any instrument” (Copland, 2002, p. 67).

This subchapter will dissect the deliberate manipulation of timbre in these films, demonstrating how it extends beyond the realm of background music to become a potent narrative force.

#### Green Book

In *Green Book*, the scene in which Tony and Dr. Shirley eat chicken wings in the car exemplifies how tone control and timbre improve the narrative and add to cognitive

engagement. This moment is both amusing and profound, emphasizing the two characters' growing relationship as well as their cultural contrasts.

The scene begins with Tony introducing Dr. Shirley to the quintessentially Southern and stereotypically African American dish of fried chicken. Dr. Shirley's initial discomfort with eating chicken wings with his hands demonstrates a cultural disparity. Despite being an African American man, Dr. Shirley's background and lifestyle have isolated him from many aspects of African American culture. His nuanced, classical upbringing and sophisticated preferences contrast with Tony's more grounded, streetwise grasp of black culture. This moment speaks volumes about Dr. Shirley's cultural identity crisis. His hesitancy and awkwardness while eating the chicken wings demonstrates his disconnect from the everyday reality of many black Americans. This alienation is more than just about food, it represents a larger detachment from his cultural heritage. In contrast, Tony, an Italian American, displays a surprising familiarity and comfort with what he perceives as black culture, which he explains to Dr. Shirley with a certain degree of authority and confidence.

The background music playing during this scene is *Go to the Mardi Gras* by Professor Longhair (1959). This lively and rhythmically complex piece serves as a perfect example of how tone control and timbre can be used to mirror and enhance the narrative's multi-layered nature. Aaron Copland discusses the instinctive attributes of tone color in music, stating, "recognition of differences in tone color is an innate sense with which most of us are born" (2002, p. 45). The song's cheerful, happy character contrasts with the early tension and discomfort, resulting in a rich aural experience. This composition is distinguished by its lively piano riffs, syncopated rhythms, and colorful brass parts, which create a joyful and engaging backdrop for the unfolding story. The layered timbres of *Go to the Mardi Gras* reflect the scene's layered emotions, from Tony's initial attempts to lighten the mood to Dr. Shirley's gradual relaxation and acceptance of the moment.

Chion discusses the concept of "on-the-air" sounds, noting that the electronically transmitted sounds in a scene "are not subject to 'natural' mechanical laws of sound propagation and can thus freely travel through space even while remaining in the real time of a scene" (1994, p. 76). The music in this scene blurs the lines between diegetic and non-diegetic, allowing it to transcend traditional boundaries and enrich the narrative. This effect creates a fluid auditory experience that mirrors the fluidity of the characters' evolving relationship.



## Whiplash

In the scene in which the band rehearse the song *Whiplash* and one of the players is out of tune is a powerful example of the relationship between music and narrative through the use on of tone color. This scene highlights the heated interplay between Fletcher and his students, demonstrating how Fletcher maintains high standards with his commanding demeanor and sharp musical ear. The practice session is tense, with every musician striving to meet Fletcher's exacting standards. The music itself serves as a backdrop to the unfolding drama, its intricate layers reflecting the high stakes and pressure within the rehearsal room.

Michel Chion's theory of the audiovisual scene is particularly relevant here. Chion explains that "sound in cinema carries on within the image a form of meaning" (1994, p. 67). In this scene, the sounds of the instruments blend with the visual intensity of Fletcher's scrutiny, creating an immersive experience. The auditory elements are not confined but instead interact dynamically with the visual tension, amplifying the drama. Fletcher's acute sense of hearing and expertise in tone control is central to this scene. He stops the band abruptly; his ears having detected a player out of tune. Chion's concept of "added value" helps explain how Fletcher's auditory perception transcends the immediate mechanical sounds of the instruments. According to Chion, "added value is the expressive and informative value with which a sound enriches a given image so as to create the definite impression". He goes on to mention that this information or expression "naturally comes from what is seen, and is already contained in the image itself" (1994, p. 5). Fletcher's ability to pinpoint the source of the false tune among the harshness of the band mirrors this idea, highlighting his almost superhuman sensitivity of tone control. Finally, when Fletcher identifies the out-of-tune player, he expels him from the band with brutal decisiveness. This behavior clearly demonstrates his zero-tolerance approach towards imperfection.

## **4. Conclusion**

In exploring the intricate relationship between music and narrative in film, this thesis has sought to unravel how melody, rhythm, harmony, and timbre function not merely as auditory backdrops but as potent storytelling tools. By drawing on Aaron Copland's foundational concepts outlined in *What to Listen for in Music* (2002), alongside insights from scholars such as Ingrid Monson, Paul Berliner, Sergei Eisenstein, Michel Chion, John A. Sloboda, Tan et al.,

the research has delved into the films *Green Book* (Farrelly, 2018) and *Whiplash* (Chazelle, 2014). The analysis demonstrates that music in film weaves its own narrative, enhancing character development, emotional resonance, and thematic depth. However, this examination also highlights inherent limitations and the subjective nature of interpreting musical narratives. At the core of this thesis is Copland's assertion that melody, with its simplicity and capacity to evoke deep emotional responses, serves as a direct link between the film and its audience. His perspective that melody's "expressive quality" (2002, p. 42) can convey emotions without words is particularly illuminating. The analysis of Irving Berlin's *Blue Skies* and Duke Ellington's *Caravan* supports Copland's theory, showing how melodies can create powerful, wordless dialogues within a film. Yet, the subjective nature of music means that these interpretations can vary widely among different viewers. While some may find a melody deeply moving, for others it might not resonate as strongly, highlighting a fundamental challenge in using music as a universal narrative device.

The thesis has analyzed rhythm, the "heartbeat of music" (Copland, 2002, p.28-30), justifying how its use in the film, particularly through the composition of Hank Levy that holds the same name, aided the narrative tension and character development. Both case studies testify to Monson's exploration of jazz as a cultural expression, seeing how rhythmic complexity can shape cultural narratives.

Another relevant pillar that stands at the basis of this argumentation is harmony which contributes to the narrative by adding emotional color and textual contrast (Copland, 2002, p. 55), reshaping the narrative into an emotional landscape. In understanding the neuroscientific effects of harmony on the human emotion, it is important to acknowledge the combining efforts of both visual and auditory stimuli in engaging the audience. However, the interpretation of harmony is inherently subjective. Different cultural backgrounds and personal experiences can influence how harmony is perceived, leading to varied emotional responses that may not always align with the filmmaker's intentions. This variability underscores the challenge of using harmony as a consistent narrative tool.

Timbre, or tone color, as Copland describes, distinguishes different instruments and adds layers of meaning to the narrative (2002, p. 66). Michel Chion's theory of the audiovisual scene and his concept of "added value" illustrate how timbre can enrich the visual narrative by adding expressive and informative layers (Chion, 1994, p. 67). The manipulation of timbre in films

like *Green Book*, where specific musical pieces reflect character development and thematic transitions, demonstrates its narrative potential. Yet, the appreciation of timbre is also highly individual. The same musical texture may evoke different emotions and meanings for different viewers, highlighting the subjective nature of this auditory element.

The methodological approach of this thesis, while comprehensive, also reveals certain limitations. The qualitative analysis focuses heavily on the interaction between musical elements and visual storytelling, yet it inherently lacks quantifiable metrics to measure the exact impact of music on narrative perception. While theoretical insights provide a robust framework for understanding this interaction, empirical studies involving audience responses could offer a more quantifiable approach to assess the effectiveness of music as a narrative tool. This gap suggests an area for future research, where combining qualitative and quantitative methods could yield more holistic insights. Furthermore, the analysis primarily draws on Western musical theories and cinematic examples, potentially limiting its applicability to non-Western films and music traditions. The diverse ways in which different cultures interpret and integrate music into storytelling warrant further exploration. A broader cultural perspective could enrich the understanding of music's narrative function across different cinematic contexts, addressing a current gap in the research. Ultimately, this thesis underscores that music in film is a deeply individual experience. While it can significantly enhance narrative depth and emotional engagement, its interpretation varies widely among audiences. This variability poses both a strength and a weakness. On one hand, the subjective nature of music allows for rich, personal connections to the narrative, making the cinematic experience uniquely resonant for each viewer. On the other hand, this subjectivity can lead to disparate interpretations that may not always align with the filmmaker's intended message, potentially diluting the narrative's impact.

In conclusion, the exploration of melody, rhythm, harmony, and timbre within *Green Book* and *Whiplash* reveals the multifaceted role of music in cinematic storytelling. By integrating the theoretical frameworks of renowned scholars, this thesis highlights music's capacity to elicit profound emotional responses, enrich character development, and enhance thematic resonance. As we continue to explore the interplay between music and film, it becomes clear that music is an essential, dynamic, and transformative force in storytelling, capable of creating an experience that deeply resonates with audiences while also presenting unique challenges in achieving a universal narrative impact.

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### **Music:**

*Blue Skies* (Irving Berlin, 1926)

*Caravan* (Duke Ellington, 1936)

*Dismissed* (Justin Hurwitz, 2014)

*Étude Op. 25, No. 11* (Frédéric Chopin, 1837).

*Go to the Mardi Gras* (Professor Longhair, 1959)

*Happy Talk* (Rodgers & Hammerstein, 1949)

*Whiplash* (Hank Levy, 1973)

### **6. Filmography**

*Green Book* (Farrelly, 2018)

*Whiplash* (Chazelle, 2014)