

NAXOS

8.556812

The Classics at the Movies

Trading Places

Brassed Off

Love and Death

The Big Lebowski

Moonstruck

Pretty Woman

A Night at the Opera

A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy

Comedy 2



The Classics at the Movies

Ever since the advent of talkies there has been a continuing debate on the nature and function of film music. For many it should be heard but not noticed. It should induce certain emotions but not obtrude on the consciousness of the audience. Yet it should be able to invest a scene with a variety of feelings, terror, grandeur, misery or gaiety. To understand what good film music can do for a film there is a simple test. If scenes from a film are shown with and without music, it will immediately be clear that good music can affect the feelings of an audience, without their being conscious of it.

*If the function of film music has been the subject of debate, there can, nevertheless, be no doubt that the nature of this music has changed very considerably over the years. Before the advent of talkies all cinemas had their own house pianists to provide music at every performance, illustrating the action on the screen. In the heyday of Hollywood film music was big business, with major studios turning out hundreds of films a year and having under full-time contract large orchestras. There were also many composers, orchestrators and song-writers attached to each studio. These were the golden thirties, forties and, to an extent, the fifties, with names like Max Steiner, Erich Wolfgang Korngold and Alfred Newman, all with a European background, writing big scores for a string of Errol Flynn pictures and for films like *The Mark of Zorro* and *The Prisoner of Zenda*.*

*Steiner, Korngold and Newman were followed by a succession of American composers like Henry Mancini, the composer of the *Pink Panther* music, Elmer Bernstein, Jerry Goldsmith and John Williams. Gradually, however, the really ambitious scores vanished or were reserved for multi-million-dollar projects. More and more films had to make do with loosely strung together pop tunes, or, in an increasing number of cases, more or less well chosen themes from classical music. In some cases the use of a piece of music in a film had a very considerable effect, as, for example, the use of Mozart's *Piano Concerto No. 21*, now popularly known as the *Elvira Madigan Concerto*.*

*In the *Naxos Classics at the Movies* series we have gathered together many classical themes used in popular films. All of these well deserve a hearing in their own right, but they may also remind the listener of a favourite film or two.*

TRADING PLACES 1983

Director: **John Landis**

Cast: **Dan Aykroyd** (Louis Winthorpe III), **Eddie Murphy** (Billy Ray Valentine), **Ralph Bellamy** (Randolph Duke), **Don Ameche** (Mortimer Duke), **Denholm Elliott** (Coleman), **Jamie Lee Curtis** (Ophelia)

Mozart's exhilarating Overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* is exactly the right opener for this comedy about rags to riches and vice versa. The two wealthy brothers Mortimer and Randolph Duke lay a wager on the effects of heritage versus environment. In order to carry out their experiment, they promote street hustler Billy Ray Valentine and at the same time strip their protégé Louis Winthorpe III of all he has got and leave him to fend for himself. Billy Ray is a great success as a businessman, but after a while he gets wise to the bet and teams up with Louis and his former valet Coleman to defeat the brothers.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S SEX COMEDY 1982

Director: **Woody Allen**

Cast: **Woody Allen** (Andrew), **Mia Farrow** (Ariel), **José Ferrer** (Leopold), **Julie Hagerty** (Dulcie), **Tony Roberts** (Maxwell), **Mary Steenburgen** (Adrian)

It is a well-known fact that Woody Allen is a great admirer of Ingmar Bergman (though not everybody may know that the reverse is also true), and in *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy* he takes his cue from *Smiles of a Summer Night*. Andrew and Adrian, a married couple, have invited two male friends and their girls to their home in the country. Trouble starts for Andrew when one of the women turns out to be a childhood sweetheart of his.

For this movie Woody Allen chose music by Mendelssohn. The excerpts from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (among them the *Scherzo*) are used mainly to evoke the idyllic character of the countryside, and the second movement from his *Second Piano Concerto* is an ideal accompaniment to Andrew's and Ariel's nocturnal stroll through the woods, recalling the places where they used to play as children.

PRETTY WOMAN 1990

Director: **Garry Marshall**

Cast: **Richard Gere** (Edward Lewis), **Julia Roberts** (Vivian Ward), **Ralph Bellamy** (James Morse), **Jason Alexander** (Philip Stuckey), **Laura San Giacomo** (Kit de Luca), **Alex Hyde-White** (David Morse)

A modern version of the Cinderella story with Edward Lewis, a very rich, very serious businessman, and Vivian Ward, a rather high-class prostitute, in the main parts. He gets to know her by chance, but decides to hire her as his companion during his week's stay in Los Angeles. After a crash course in table manners and dressed in very stylish clothes, she manages to behave almost perfectly and even learns to enjoy opera, one of Edward's few emotional outlets. The duet between Violetta and Alfredo from the second act of *La Traviata* recurs at the end, when she has decided to start a new life, and he has found out that he can't live without her. So it all ends happily, the way a fairy-tale should.

THE BIG LEBOWSKI 1998

Director: **Joel Cohen**

The Cast: **Jeff Bridges** (The Dude), **John Goodman** (Walter Sobchak), **Julianne Moore** (Maude Lebowski), **Steve Buscemi** (Donny), **David Huddleston** (The Big Lebowski), **John Turturro** (Jesus Quintana), **Peter Stormare** (Dieter Hauff), **Sam Elliott** (The Stranger)

Jeffrey "The Dude" Lebowski, an archetypal Los Angeles slacker, is mistaken for a millionaire, Jeffrey Lebowski. This leads to him having his house broken into and being threatened by two mobsters who want repayment of a loan he knows nothing about. He enlists the help of his bowling buddies Donny and Walter to get restitution for a ruined rug, but in the process gets entangled in a complicated plot which includes the millionaire's daughter being kidnapped.

The film includes music from Mozart's *Requiem* (Naxos 8.550235) and *Pictures at an Exhibition* by Mussorgsky (Naxos 8.550051) but the loveliest music on the soundtrack comes from a man who knew a thing or two about film music himself. It

is Marie's glorious first act aria from Erich Wolfgang Korngold's opera *Die tote Stadt* (The Dead City). Korngold penned several famous Hollywood scores, including those for *The Adventures of Robin Hood* and *Anthony Adverse*, both of which earned him Academy Awards ('Oscars'), also *Captain Blood*, *The Sea Hawk*, *Kings Row* and *Of Human Bondage*.

LOVE AND DEATH 1975

Director: Woody Allen

Cast: Woody Allen (Boris Dimitrovich Grushenko), **Diane Keaton** (Sonja), **Olga Georges-Picot** (Countess Alexandrovna), **Harold Gould** (Anton), **Alfred Lutter III** (Young Boris), **Zvee Scooler** (Father)

Somebody characterized *Love and Death* as Tolstoy's *War and Peace* rewritten by the Marx Brothers, with a few bits and pieces from *Dr. Zhivago* thrown in. Boris Dimitrovich Grushenko is an aristocrat but still a nerd and unsuccessful in pretty well everything, from military training to plotting the murder of Napoleon. He loves his fair and determined cousin Sonja but is deceived both by love and by death. At the end, though, he dances away quite merrily with the Grim Reaper, free at last from his fear of death.

Music by Prokofiev, especially the *Troika* from *Lieutenant Kijé*, adds to the Russian atmosphere.

MOONSTRUCK 1987

Director: Norman Jewison

Cast: Cher (Loretta Castorini), **Nicolas Cage** (Ronny Cammareri), **Vincent Gardenia** (Cosmo Castorino), **Olympia Dukakis** (Rose Castorini), **Danny Aiello** (Johnny Cammareri) **Julia Bovasso** (Rita Capomaggi)

Loretta Castorini, a young Italian-American widow, settles for security when she gets engaged to Johnny Cammareri. He has to leave New York for Palermo almost immediately to be present at the death bed of his mother. In the meantime Loretta meets Ronny, Johnny's estranged younger brother, and realises that they are both

cut out for living dangerously and passionately.

The background is the loves and trials of the older generation and with it all the lovely music of Puccini's *La Bohème* is interwoven, alternating with popular Italian songs.

BRASSED OFF 1997

Director: Mark Herman

Cast: **Pete Postlethwaite** (Danny), **Tara Fitzgerald** (Gloria), **Ewan McGregor** (Andy), **Jim Carter** (Harry), **Kenneth Colley** (Greasley), **Stephen Tompkinson** (Phil), **Peter Gunn** (Simmo), **Mary Healey** (Ida)

The coal mine in a small Yorkshire community is threatened by close-down. But for Danny, a retired miner and the leader of the band, the Colliery Band is all that matters. With all the members feeling dejected, it gets a welcome boost with the arrival of Gloria, the daughter of a former member and the childhood sweetheart of Andy. They enter the national championship for bands and finally arrive in London for the finals at the Royal Albert Hall. And there Danny, who had been taken seriously ill, appears ensuring victory for the band.

There is a great deal of music in the film, all arranged for brass band. When Gloria makes her first appearance at a band rehearsal, she plays the solo part in the slow movement of Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*, turning the members' disbelief into unqualified admiration. At the Royal Albert Hall their performance of Rossini's *William Tell Overture* makes the audience go wild and tips the scales in their favour with the judges. The music heard when they are returning home after the concert is Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance No. 1*.

The Classics at the Movies

Sci-Fi 2001: A Space Odyssey • Somewhere in Time • Return of the Jedi
8.556801 Rollerball • Star Wars Episode 4: A New Hope • The Fifth Element
Alien • The Lost World: Jurassic Park • Star Trek: The Motion Picture
Star Trek: Insurrection • Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home

Adventure Raiders of the Lost Ark • The Spy Who Loved Me • Goldfinger
8.556802 The Living Daylights • True Lies • Die Hard 2 • Superman • Batman
Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade

Epics Barry Lyndon • Excalibur • Richard III • Elizabeth • Chariots of Fire
8.556803 Henry V • Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes

Romance Jean de Florette • A Room with a View • The Portrait of a Lady
8.556804 The French Lieutenant's Woman • Out of Africa • Doctor Zhivago
Heat and Dust

Love Titanic • Death in Venice • Mona Lisa • Gone With the Wind
8.556805 The English Patient • Dangerous Liaisons • Elvira Madigan
William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet • Breaking the Waves

Divas The Piano • Farinelli Il Castrato • Shine • Diva • Un cœur en hiver
8.556806 Amadeus • Hilary and Jackie

Drama Schindler's List • La vita è bella (Life is Beautiful) • The Truman Show
8.556807 Bulworth • Forbidden Games • Meeting Venus • Dead Poets Society
The Elephant Man • Au revoir les enfants

War Apocalypse Now • G. I. Jane • Platoon • The Thin Red Line
8.556808 The Deer Hunter • Gallipoli • The Devil's Own • The Peacemaker
Paradise Road

Thrillers Prizzi's Honor • Primal Fear • Sneakers • Donnie Brasco • Nikita
8.556809 Serpico • The Godfather Part III • The Untouchables • Casino
L. A. Confidential • Someone to Watch Over Me

Suspense Se7en • The Devil's Advocate • The Usual Suspects • Misery
8.556810 The Silence of the Lambs • Copycat • Sleeping with the Enemy
Face/Off • A Clockwork Orange

Comedy 1 Four Weddings and a Funeral • The Seven Year Itch • Manhattan
8.556811 Hannah and Her Sisters • Peter's Friends • 10

Comedy 2 Trading Places • A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy • Pretty Woman
8.556812 The Big Lebowski • A Night at the Opera • Love and Death
Brassed Off • Moonstruck

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DDD

The Classics at the Movies Comedy 2

Total Time
70:17

- Trading Places**
- 1** MOZART: Overture to The Marriage of Figaro **4:00**
Capella Istropolitana / Barry Wordsworth
(from Naxos 8.550185)
- A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy**
- 2** MENDELSSOHN: Adagio molto from Piano Concerto No. 2 **7:53**
Benjamin Frith *piano*, Slovak State PO / Robert Stankovsky (from Naxos 8.550681)
- 3** MENDELSSOHN: Scherzo from A Midsummer Night's Dream **4:49**
Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra / Anthony Bramall
(from Naxos 8.554433)
- Pretty Woman**
- 4** VERDI: Dammi tu forza from La Traviata **3:50**
Monika Krause (*Violetta*), Yordi Ramiro (*Alfredo*),
Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra /
Alexander Rahbari (from Naxos 8.553041)
- The Big Lebowski**
- 5** KORNGOLD: Glück, das mir verblieb from Die tote Stadt **5:10**
Katarina Dalayman (*Marietta*), Thomas Sunnegårdh
(*Paul*), Royal Swedish Opera Orchestra /
Leif Segerstam (from Naxos 8.660060-61)
- A Night at the Opera**
- 6** VERDI: Anvil Chorus from Il Trovatore **2:50**
Budapest Festival Chorus, Hungarian State Opera
Orchestra / Will Humburg (from Naxos 8.660023-24)
- 7** VERDI: Miserere d' un alma vicina from Il Trovatore **5:20**
Maurizio Frusoni (*Manrico*), Daniela Longhi
(*Leonora*), Hungarian State Opera Orchestra /
Will Humburg (from Naxos 8.660023-24)
- Love and Death**
- 8** PROKOFIEV: Troika from Lieutenant Kijé **2:58**
Slovak State Philharmonic Orchestra /
Andrew Mogrelia (from Naxos 8.550381)
- Moonstruck**
- 9** PUCCINI: Che gelida manina from La Bohème **4:24**
Jonathan Welch (*Rodolfo*), Slovak Radio SO /
Will Humburg (from Naxos 8.553151)
- 10** PUCCINI: O soave fanciulla from La Bohème **3:38**
Luba Orgonasova (*Mimi*), Jonathan Welch
(*Rodolfo*), Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra /
Will Humburg (from Naxos 8.553151)
- Brassed Off**
- 11** RODRIGO: Adagio from Concierto de Aranjuez **10:28**
Norbert Kraft *guitar*, Northern Chamber Orchestra /
Nicholas Ward (from Naxos 8.550729)
- 12** ROSSINI: Overture to William Tell **12:10**
Zagreb Festival Orchestra / Michael Halász
(from Naxos 8.550236)