

Music Cookbook

(There is more information in the Music Design PowerPoint link)

Preproduction

Before you start designing music
It is always a better plan to **plan**.

Create a "**Sound Map**", starting with adjectives that describe the feeling to be communicated. Then add a list of environments, actions, objects, adjectives, emotions, and physical or dramatic transition that should happen in the sound track at certain times. For music, these times are called **cues**. DAWs have a tool for adding markers along the basic track you are given or are starting with.

Your Starting Options

- 1) Find prerecorded music to add. You must have the rights to use them.
- 2) Use loops
- 3) Use MIDI building blocks and assign instruments that support the *goals*:
 - Communicate emotions
 - Energetic or languid
 - notes hold long enough, etc.
- 4) Record your own track

Loop Strategies for Story Backgrounds

Transpose your loop

1 to 4 or 5 changes always work but might be too active for simple "padding"

- | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 1 to 2 | C to D or to Dm |
| 2 to 3 | Dm to Em |
| 5ths | C to G (and on to D to A etc) |
| Chromatic | Step by step at ½ steps |

Semiotics (Creating sound "signs")

Meaningful Intervals - Play Two Notes

Consonance versus Dissonance

(left column represents ½ steps)

- | | | |
|----|----------------|---|
| 12 | Octave | Purity, peace, unity |
| 7 | Fifth | Harmony, working together |
| 5 | Fourth | Harmony, alternate to 5th, something going on |
| 4 | Third | Harmony + interest |
| 3 | Flatted Third | Darker, sad, troubled |
| 2 | Second | Tension, problem identified |
| 1 | Flatted Second | Discord, urgent problem |

More Semiotics (things that are "signs")

- Low tones Heavier, more important
- ¾ timing Graceful
- Major scale = solid and positive.
- Minor scale = bluesy, complex, countercultural.
- **Leitmotif** - Little musical theme worked in whenever a certain character makes an appearance.
 - Jaws theme flatted second
 - Done a lot in many films, as in *Rings*
- Rising tones something is about to happen
 - Notes or loops rising in ½ steps

To Resolve or Not To Resolve?

In music, resolving usually means moving from an interval or chord with tension, to the fundamental major chord. (also called the "tonic")

Resolving is customary. So if we don't resolve we are sending a message.

You leaving the audience hanging
Is it done or is more-to-come?

Ways to Resolve

- Back to tonic (back to the C chord in C key)
Resolves tension, relaxes
- Suspended Keynote + 4 + 5
to K + 3 + 5 resolves tension
- Augmented C E G# to C E G

Tips

1• Don't have notes that sit in the same frequency range as the speaker/singer or as an important sound effect (unless they are relatively quiet). Option: change and/or at least change EQ to emphasize different frequencies.

2• Avoiding boredom – Even if the emotion is not supposed to change, music needs to change a little every 5 to 10 seconds.

Remember, you can treat any recorded bits as loops.

Trim them to a measure line.
Then copy them over and over in tempo.
Transposing to other keys is a snap.

3• And it is often good to finally resolve –
Put the last musical phrase **back to C**.