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Corpse Bride: Score Analysis.

Leitmotif of the Main Theme throughout the Movie.



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Introduction: Production of the *Corpse Bride*.

Tim Burton's *Corpse Bride* is a 2005 release by Warner Bros. It was released in the US in September 23, 2005 and in Europe on October 13. The budget of this movie was 40 million dollars, but it grossed for a worldwide total of \$117,195,061, which means it is a popular movie. To mention some of the feedback Metacritic and Rotten Tomatoes gave it universal acclaim, saying, "as can be expected from a Tim Burton movie, *Corpse Bride* is whimsically macabre, visually imaginative, and emotionally bittersweet. The complicated feeling of this movie to decide it is not a simple animation film."¹

The film is an animation black comedy. It is based on a Russian folktale.² The plot is set in a fictional Victorian era village in Europe. *Corpse Bride* is the third stop-motion feature film produced by Burton and the first directed by him (the previous two films, *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and *James and the Giant Peach*, were directed by Henry Selick)³. This is also the first stop-motion feature from Burton that was distributed by Warner Bros. Pictures. It was dedicated to Joe Ranft who died during production. The film was nominated for the 78th Academy Awards for Best Animated Feature.⁴

About the Director

The director Tim Burton was born on August 25, 1958. He is from California. He is a producer, artist, writer, and animator. His main characteristics are his dark, gothic character: "the main characteristics are sadness, depression, deep and how he touches people's hearts.

¹ Rotten Tomatoes.

² Wikipedia.

³ Wikipedia.

⁴ Wikipedia.

He is a part of the Romantic movement, is considered Gothic and dark, ghosts, bizarre connected obsessed with the dark side of the human performance creating, the macabre, and the quirky horror and fantasy films”⁵

He has several very well recognized films. His first success was the dark comedy *Beetlejuice* from 1988, followed by *Edward Scissorhands* in 1990. Especially the film *Edward Scissorhands*, which is the first movie through which I knew about this famous director, is one of his most emotional and reflects his style of work. It must be said that this is the first movie in which he worked with Johnny Depp.⁶ Although this movie is not the first the film the director worked with Danny Elfman, it was the most successful work in their career life together. In my opinion, the composer and actor congenial personalities work well combined and helped Tim Burton make a lot of popular films together and establish a strong reputation in Hollywood. In 1999, Burton returned to his style to make the film *Sleepy Hollow*, which included almost every one of his classical elements, with a gloomier and deeper style. But the end of this movie still gave the audience a warm and tender feeling. It had a successful result artistically and commercially, and is also the third time he worked with Depp.

This film not only won the 2000 Oscar for Best Art Direction, it was also awarded the American Science Fiction Fantasy Horror Movie prize and received 11 Saturn Award nominations, winning two of them eventually.

Another relevant parts of this director’s work is his animated films. Even though his *Nightmare before Christmas* or *Corpse Bride* are full of sadness feelings, they also have fairytale endings. The contrast of color and bleakness is also a typical characteristic of his

⁵ Baidu.

⁶ imdb, *Edward Scissorhands*.

work. In the movie *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, he used the actor Depp who appears as neurotic, delicate and weirdly pale. In the Factory everything is colorful and fantastic, but out of the factory the real world is so grey and has no sense of life. This contrast of dark and light is part of the classical style of this director. In his animation, light comes from a different side to give the impression of melancholy and sadness. He uses the story to scare the viewer, but will give the audience a happy feeling. It looks like a ghost costume in Halloween; deep in the bottom it always has a kind and good heart.

Corpse Bride: Background and Storyline

Actually, *Corpse Bride* portrays innocence wrapped in a poignant romance fairy tale story. The underlying plot of this film comes from an academic background in Eastern Europe, when the radical anti-Judaism movement attacked and killed the brides who married Jews. Many brides were killed and buried wearing their wedding dress, which is a traditional sad story.⁷

At the beginning of the film the actor Victor is painting butterflies, and then they are released, which seems to lay the metaphor of the outcome. It is the late 19th century and Victor belongs to a family of a fishing tycoon. He has to marry with Victoria who comes from an aristocratic family in decline. Neither of them wants to marry the other, but they can not resist their family. Fortunately, on the rehearsal day, these two characters fall in love. But Victor is very nervous, makes a lot of mistakes, and almost destroys the rehearsal. He feels sorrow and is disappointed with himself. He runs into an eerie wood, practicing the wedding ceremony and unknowingly putting the ring on the shape of the branches of the skeleton fingers. Subsequently, a dead girl appears: Emily.

⁷ Warnes Bros.

She is touched by Victor's emotional wedding vows, and she resolves to follow him. She catches up with Victor on the bridge, to take him to Hell and marry him. When he goes to Hell, he discovers that he has summoned a dead girl who was killed by her lover. He had killed her because of greed. Victor is scared and shocked, in order to save himself, he tells Emily that he needs to let his parents know he will marry her. So, with the help from Elder Gutknecht, the lord of the underworld, he goes back to the real world. And then he tries to find Victoria. Emily feels very sad. At the same time Victoria's parents take the opportunity to propose their daughter to marry Lord Barchis Bittern who has enough money to do anything, since her parents just care about the money instead of their daughter's happy life. What they don't know is that Lord Barchis Bittern is actually secretly poor.

Victor's servant dies and goes to hell to tell Victor that Victoria will marry. Frustrated, Victor overhears Elder Gutknecht telling Emily that he must give up his own life and drink poison to be able to marry. Emily cries and refuses. Victor is moved and agrees with it. All the other ghosts go with him back to the real world, where all the ghosts can meet their family again, which is exciting and happy. Lord Barchis Bittern is afraid to die. When he asks Victoria to take all the money and run away, he realizes the fact that the family of Victoria does not have anything. During the wedding Emily sees Victor is very sad, she decides to make him happy, letting him marry who he really wants. She prevents him from drinking the poison. During the wedding, Emily identifies Lord Barchis Bittern as the man who cheated on her and killed her. Victor gets the courage to fight against Lord Barchis Bittern. When they are in the most dangerous situation, Emily blocks a sharp blade. Lord Barchis Bittern makes a mistake and drinks the poison that kills him. Finally, Emily throws the bouquet to the two people who love each other. And then she turns into a million butterflies and flies away beyond the pale moonlight.

The cast of voice-over characters is Johnny Depp as Victor Van Dort as the shy and gawky young man who is engaged to Victoria Everglot for social and financial reasons. At the beginning he does not have enough courage to confront his parents, but in his personal opinion he looks forward to being free, which can be heard from his music and his paintings.

Helena Bonham Carter appears as Emily, the Corpse Bride, a beautiful and charismatic young woman with a passion for music and dance. Although she experienced the most evil betrayal by her lover, death hasn't taken away her good and kind heart. I think she is the bright character and the main mood in this movie, which is what the director wants to show the audience.

Emily Watson stars as Victoria Everglot, Victor Van Dort's pretty, sweet-natured, yet timid fiancée. She is kind and shy, yet determined when she puts her mind to it. Initially she does not have the bravery to face her feelings, but when she falls in love with Victor she is full of the courage to chase her own future.⁸

In the film, the main colors are grey and vibrant warm colors. Interestingly, the film chooses to show grey or very dark colors in the real life, but the dead world is very colorful. *Corpse Bride* is not a classical terror movie, but more of a black comedy that tries to give warm feelings to the audience. In the animation, there are many lovely original elements. The film talks about terror and ghosts, but it is unlike the traditional sense of the horror film. This is actually an intimate movie including optimism, lively colors and a lot of flavor. It achieves a breakthrough, although it still includes all the elements of Tim Burton's dark style. The director uses animation to represent an unusual world, creating a very interesting combination of horror topics with funny points: a culmination of gorgeous colors where the live world looks like a dead society, but the zombie world scenes are colorful. This way he gives the

⁸ Wikipedia.

audience feelings of a strange, dark, beautiful, romantic and witty work. The film music matches the color use of the movie. In the real world, the music is deep and dark, even a little strange. But the more passionate music is used in the underground world, especially, the warmest song that is performed by the Corpse Bride.

The combination of musical film characteristics and normal scoring make it a very interesting film to analyze.

THE FILM SCORE

The Background of the Composer

This film's composer is Danny Elfman, who is an American composer, record producer, and actor. He is known as the lead singer and songwriter for the rock band Oingo Boingo, which was active from 1976 to 1995. He is also famous for his dark style, especially since he has written a lot of famous and successful pieces for director Tim Burton's films. Although he was born in Texas State, Danny Elfman spent his whole childhood in Los Angeles. When he was 18 years old, he moved to France and joined a local performing arts troupe. In this way he had more opportunities to contact with more kinds of musical elements. During these years Elfman's musical career was also self-exploration. He lived in Africa a while, but he got sick, so finally he had to go back to America. There he organized his first group called The Mystic Knights of Oingo Boingo. This band was later renamed Oingo Boingo. This band's experience gave him many influences in his music writing: to be honest his music style is full of rock and pop music elements. *Forbidden Zone* was the first film score he wrote. At the beginning he didn't think that he would become a film composer, but his music got the attention of young director Tim Burton. He was directing his first

film *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure*. He invited Danny Elfman to write music for his film. In retrospect, Danny Elfman says he is still puzzled. He collaborated with another member of the band Oingo Boingo, Steve Bartek, who made the orchestration. Steve still works with him currently. The result was an accomplished style and unique work. This movie began many years of great work between Danny Elfman and Tim Burton. I think as a film composer that a meeting between a good company, a good film scorer and a good director is necessary, and is the key to create a perfect piece. This is first experience let the audience know his music is special, quirky and frenetic - combined with a number of Harry Belafonte songs, he proved to be an enormous cult success.

As previously mentioned, from 1976 to 1995, he was the leader of the band Oingo Boingo. At the beginning it was a semi-theatrical music and comedy troupe. But towards the 1980s, this band's style changed again to a more guitar-oriented rock sound. I think that during this time he got a vast experience in writing rock music and this absolutely influences his variety of composition in his film music. His first film creation was in 1985. He was worried about whether he could compose all of the film's music, because he didn't have formal training. But his guitar player and orchestrational assistant gave him a lot of help, which became an important support. In this way, he began his film music career, which includes both elements of rock music and orchestration music.

In 1997 Danny Elfman was nominated for his first Academy Award and it was with a double nominations. Respectively, with *Good Will Hunting* nominated for best dramatic film music and *Men in Black (MIB)* nominated for best comedy and musical film music. Although James Horner won the award, when Danny Elfman's name was reported, the audience broke into a thunderous applause. Danny Elfman's film scores are regarded as popular and successful. Elfman created an unprecedented music style during his self-exploration. His

music seems to have a black and dark background, but his dark music still shines with blurred and uncertain bright, playful surprises, full of strange and crazy, heartbreaking pathos. It is always very unexpected, unimaginable. Although there are many classical elements, as a composer he tries to put a variety of modern fusion musical elements to the film music. Danny Elfman is probably the only composer that makes a combination of symphony and elusive psychedelic rock. His music does not belong to any kind of specific style, because it has his own personal style, very Danny Elfman.

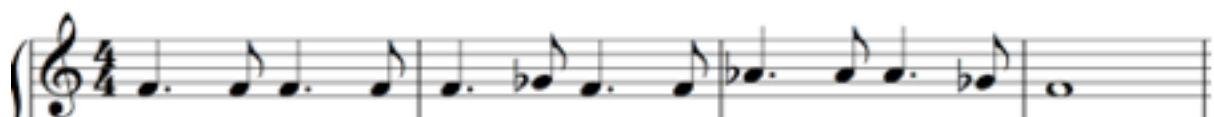
On the whole, the score combines songs that belong to the musical theatre heritage and pure scores. Both will be analyzed to better understand the film musical structure.

Musical Analysis

I intend to analyze the film's score according to the leitmotif of the main title music. Danny Elfman uses contrasting orchestration and tonality to vary the same leitmotif for various situations in the movie, which is a powerful compositional tool in the score. So, let us look through his compositional secret door.

Main Title Music

First, I will analyze the first appearance of the "Corpse Bride" leitmotif.

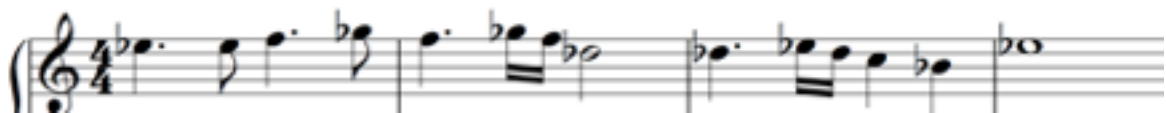


We can see the composer has used a very simple rhythm: dotted quarter note and eighth note, and this rhythmic figure is repeated identically three times. The tempo is 106 to

the quarter note and the key is B \flat minor, which gives the audience a first impression that feels a little sorrowful.

There is no denying the fact that the composer's choice of instrumentation for the main title music should match the story and screen. The first clarinet plays the first phrase of this cue, which conveys a grey and bleak quality to the audience. The flute and the second clarinet play separate harmonies in higher register while the harp and piano play eighth note harmonies in the mid and upper range, from the beginning of the cue. But in the low register, there is only Contrabass playing pizzicato. The composer keeps the bass and melody sparse, which gives a feeling of emptiness and sadness.

The second phrase of this main title music maintains the key elements of the leitmotif.



In this second phrase, we still find the same rhythmic figure in the first bar, but crucially the composer varies the material in the second bar. The dotted quarter note is still here but with two sixteenth notes instead of the one eighth note. This slight change helps to propel the piece forward. It is not a drastic change. Instead he keeps a similar rhythmic character to the original, with a subtle change to keep the music fresh. This melody appears at the end of the Subdominant in B \flat minor, which gives a sorrowful and unstable feeling. At this point, the film shifts to Victor's childhood picture, which shows a very unhappy face. At this time, the composer changes the instrument for the melody to the flute and strings. The melody shifts to a higher compass than the first phrase, meaning that a change in instruments is necessary. The choir, playing the harmony in the middle frequencies, replaces the piano. Using the choir here makes the music feel more flowing and empty, exactly matching the expression on Victor's face.

Interestingly, is at the third phrase of this main melody the tempo is changed from 106 to 85 bpm. This occurs at the point where Victor is beginning to paint the butterfly. If the music here is too fast it will not match the tempo of the painting, and will feel jarring to the audience. This time the whole melody moves from B \flat minor to F minor. This time, Danny Elfman adds one more bar to the theme, in a 2/4 meter. In this way he breaks the rhythmic balance from the beginning. It also follows the leitmotif, however, which prevents the audience from feeling an abrupt change.



Oboe, violin and cello present this melody. The oboe and violin provide the high frequencies while the cello plays in the low register. But beginning in the second bar of this melody the orchestration of the harmony part is enriched. In the string part, it is separated into three different parts. Every proposition has different works. Apart from the melody, the violin also plays a simple two-note harmony in the high and middle registers. It shares the same rhythm and range with the choir. In my opinion the composer strengthens this region and harmony to create a lyrical sensation. The second violin part also plays pizzicato in sixteenth notes in the middle register, which allows the music to be more dynamic and active. But in the very high and very low frequencies, the violin and contrabass play almost the same rhythm with the melody. Their pitches, however, harmonize with the melody, rather than following it exactly. The way the composer uses the dynamics and registers that are most suited to each instrument is very important.

The fourth phrase of the main melody is also end of the Subdominant in F minor. The same melody played by a different instrument will give the audience a totally different feeling. The three French horns play the middle harmony notes. At this time, the main actor

Victor finally shows his exiled face. In the orchestration, the French horn replaces a lot of middle harmony in the string. The third and fourth phrases are actually just changed in key from the first and second appearances of the leitmotif. But at the beginning of the third phrase, each statement of the main melody is played by a new instrument, ending at the fourth repetition with the same Oboe as the first time.

So the form of the first section can be represented as:

a	b	a'	b'
4	4	5	4
b \flat	b \flat	f	f
106bpm	95bpm	85bpm	85bpm

Throughout the music, the composer changes the tempo very slightly with almost every phrase. This allows the rhythm of the music to match the rhythm of the movie. Furthermore, every time the screen changes, the music must change to reflect that. Danny Elfman made sure that each of these changes lines up with the first bar of each new phrase. In order to perfectly match these changes, sometimes he has to vary the tempo of the every phrase of the melody slightly. By keeping these changes very slight, they remain imperceptible to the audience.

Secondly, every first phrase ends with the dominant of the main key, and the second phrase ends with the subdominant of the same key. So, the first sentence melody, in B \flat minor, ends with F, and the second ends with an Eb. In the second half, as the key moves to F, the ending notes are C and B \flat , respectively.

The Harmony of the Leitmotif

As described above, the first theme is divided into four phrases. The first two phrases are in the key of B \flat minor, and the last two phrases are in F minor. The composer uses identical harmonies during the first and second parts.

In the B \flat minor phrases, the first chord is the tonic in this key, played by piano and harp. In the second bar, the harmony passes through the dominant and tonic, each over two beats. These harmonies are most clearly observed in the bass line. Then in the third bar a special chord appears, which is built on A \flat , the subtonic. The final chord is the mediant. The second phrase begins with the subdominant in the same key. The second bar, as before, passes through two chords, this time the mediant and submediant. The choir, harp and strings intelligible show the changing of the chords. At the end of this phrase is a special point. The final chord is the dominant, F, with the melody ending on the fourth of the scale. The next phrase begins with an F minor chord, marking the shift into the new key of F minor.

As the music continues, a glockenspiel enters playing unison with the piano during the second statement of the main title. The composer marks this bar in the score “Butterfly,” which is an essential point in the movie. This scene is the first time the butterfly appears in the movie, which represents Victor’s dream of freedom. Moreover, it also represents the Corpse Bride’s desire for a beautiful love. This little blue butterfly will return again at the ending of the movie. When the Villain is defeated and Victor is married with his true love, the Corpse Bride becomes a million butterflies and takes flight into the open sky. This design of the story is echoed in the music. I will return to this analysis later.

So, when the butterfly appears in the glass, the main melody is played by solo cello. The screen here is a panoramic, showing both Victor and the butterfly, two imprisoned souls framed with grey. So, the composer’s use of the solo cello can be understood to convey a

feeling of sadness. It is worth noting that Danny Elfman did not repeat the whole main cue, only the second half of the main title, in minor.

The image shows three staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Fl' and has a tempo marking of '90 bpm'. The middle staff is labeled 'Flute in F in 2/4 30' and has a tempo marking of '90 bpm' and a dynamic marking of '(f) (ff) (f)'. The bottom staff is labeled 'Fl' and has a tempo marking of '90 bpm' and a dynamic marking of '(f) (ff) (f)'. The notation includes various notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

The use of the glockenspiel makes the music more active, representative of the butterfly in flight. The glockenspiel, playing in its middle range here, represents the butterfly, while the cello indicates Victor's song. The harmony is also shared by the choir. Then, as Victor frees the butterfly, the orchestration becomes richer. In the middle register, the French horns support the choir's part. The composer richer instrumentation, dynamics and harmonies in this section. First, the melody is played by flute, oboe, clarinets and strings in different registers. In the middle, flute, oboe and solo violin play the melody together. Then the melody shifts to the higher registers at the end of the phrase. The strings also become more active, playing denser triplet figures in this section.

This cue is a very good example of the orchestration. At the beginning of this "Butterfly" phrase the butterfly is trapped in the glass jar, so the music is similarly constrained to the middle registers, which sounds a little oppressive. Then, as the butterfly flies out the window, the music becomes more dynamic and melodic, before transitioning into another theme.

The second important cue is “Into the Forest”. In this cue, the main actor Victor is feeling upset at having spoiled his wedding rehearsal. He wants to give Victoria a good impression, but nonetheless his nerves cause him to make a lot of mistakes. The music begins as he goes to the forest. Because he feels so upset he does not notice the atmosphere becoming more and more strange and gloomy than before.

The flute and first violin together play a one bar prelude to the main leitmotif. This one bar acts like a bridge to connect the next screen and feeling. Victor runs out of the church after the destruction of the rehearsal, and then the screen shifts from the savage faces inside the room to Victor holding the flower outside. If the music begins when the scene shifts to Victor it would have been too sudden. The composer cleverly used a one bar segue to connect these scenes, while moreover clearly conveying the mood of the main protagonist. This time the leitmotif is played by piano and harp. The harp plays chord tones on the beat to contrast with the flute and first violin playing whole and half notes. At the same time, It’s worth noting that while the tempo is decreased to 62 bpm to the eighth note, the leitmotif is compressed to triplets. These changes convey a feeling of emptiness and distress to the audience.

The image displays a musical score for the 'Into the Forest' cue. It consists of several staves. The top two staves show a piano part with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) and a harp part with a dynamic marking of *pp* (pianissimo). The harp part features triplet markings. Below these are two more staves, likely for flute and first violin, which are mostly blank. The bottom section of the score shows a piano part with a dynamic marking of *pp* and a harp part with a dynamic marking of *p*. This section includes a large bracketed section labeled '2' and '3', indicating a specific musical phrase or measure. The tempo is marked as 62 bpm, and the time signature is 4/4.

And then the music changes, as someone rings out a loud bell to announce the news of the disastrous wedding rehearsal. The piano and harp that played a main leitmotif disappear and are replaced by English and French horn playing a funny melody. When this main leitmotif appears again, as Victor talks himself into going into the deep forest. This time, the leitmotif is cut to play just a little piece in the flutes. Firstly it is played by the second and third flutes in the middle register and then the last part of this main leitmotif passes to the first flute to play in the higher register. As Victor goes deeper into the forest the music becomes gloomier. The composer uses English horn to play the rhythm of the leitmotif., but in the strings part, the first and second violins play in a higher range and the viola and cello play ascending tremolos. Usually, this sort of thrill in the string will give people an inauspicious feeling. In an opera overture, such as “Carmen” (bars 121-131), the composer will often use this technique to convey a sense of foreboding.

When Victor stops walking the leitmotif appears again. He is trying to remember his wedding pledges, which reminds us that he really cares about his marriage, not just because of his parents’ desires but because he has actually fallen in love with Victoria This nagging awareness is symbolized by the persistent reappearance of the leitmotif. This time, the piano plays the motif, but unlike the last time it is now just half of the theme, and the piano plays the chord accompaniment by itself, without the harp. The second half of this theme is played by the oboe. This back and forth pattern continues until he take out the flower that he got for Victoria.



The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Flute 1 (Fl. 1), Flutes 2 & 3 (Fl. 2&3), and Oboe (Ob.). The time signature is 4/4. The flute parts are marked with a large '4' and 'fff' (fortissimo) and 'legato'. The oboe part is marked with 'p' (piano) and 'pp' (pianissimo). The score consists of two measures, with the first measure containing the main melodic phrase and the second measure continuing it.

There, the flute takes over from the earlier instruments and plays the whole theme.

The first flute plays the motif in the higher register, and the second and third flute play the same phrase the lower. The low range of the flute is usually used to give the audience the feeling of softness and grace. A lot of composers make great use of the flute's low range, with sparse accompaniment from the strings.⁹ Danny Elfman makes use of the same approach. But here, he places the main theme in the high register of the flute, where it is more clear and bright. Meanwhile the harp plays the harmony in eighth notes, which makes the music sound sweet and peaceful.

After this phrase the music becomes more optimistic. This marks a significant shift in the tone of the music as the story develops.

At the beginning of the next section the tempo increases to 96 bpm. Six French horns play a rhythmic harmony in the middle register, creating a very powerful mood. This aligns with Victor's gradual increase in confidence as he begins to repeat the vows more smoothly. His growing confidence is matched by the growing energy of the music. The main melody at this point is played by three flutes, in a tight voicing and high register, which gives the melody clarity and power. At the third phrase of the theme the instrumentation changes to just the English horn, one bassoon and harpsichord. The dynamic of the music follows the volume of Victor's dialogue. As his voice becomes more powerful, the instrumentation of the

⁹ Adler, p. 181.

theme changes, with French Horn and strings joining to match the change in tone. And then the music reaches the climax of the section. The B minor melody is played by three flutes, French horn and the first two violins. The melody is played in three parallel octaves. The first flute and the first violin play in the range of F#5, the second and third flutes and second violin play at F#4, and the French horn plays at F#3. The root notes in these chords are played by the timpani and cello, while two clarinets and piano provide a flowing harmony for phrase of the theme. Although this is climactic piece in the section, Danny Elfman does not use a lot of brass instruments. The volume of the piece is between pianissimo and mezzoforte, and played mostly in the treble area.

What is worth noting about this piece is that the instrumentation of this theme changes half way through, which have contrasting colors. He also makes great use of different registers of the same instrument to create different emotional passages in the theme, in order to follow the development of the film. Another feature of note is the careful balance between woodwinds and strings in the pianissimo passage. Finally, what is perhaps most ear catching is how the composer restates the leitmotif in the different keys and with different instrument in order to keep the material fresh and dynamic as the film develops.

Finale

In the Finale piece, the Corpse Bride's soul is set free and becomes a host of millions of butterflies that flies into the beautiful night sky. The music in this section is profoundly beautiful and holy. In this piece, the composer returns again to the main leitmotif. In this situation, although there is now a cloud of butterflies instead of just one the one shown in the beginning of the film, the director is clearly drawing a

parallel between the two scenes. The Corpse Bride is presented as like the butterfly, and like the butterfly her soul is set free. So, as the two scenes are so closely related, the composer naturally revisits the main theme to draw a musical parallel between the scenes as well.

I will compare the orchestration of the music between the Corpse Bride's transformation into the butterflies and the first appearance of the butterfly on scene, earlier in the film. Firstly, the music that plays at 1:12:40 in the movie, when the Corpse Bride throws the bouquet to Victoria. The chords played by the harp in the background. A children's choir plays the melody of the theme along with the flute. It's worth noting that in this theme the composer doesn't use any strings, which gives a feeling of tranquility and holiness. Because the harp is the only instrument carrying the harmony, and the melodic focus is on the sweet choir in a relatively high range, the passage is very effective at conveying a feeling of peace to the audience. This passage makes use of the characteristic sound of the children's choir, to convey the beautiful and lovely soul of the Corpse Bride.

The image shows a page of musical score for the Corpse Bride. The top staff is a vocal line with lyrics "I'm a butterfly" and "I'm a butterfly". Below it are several staves for instruments, including a harp and a flute. The harp part is marked "Harp" and the flute part is marked "Flute". The score is in 4/4 time and features a gentle, melodic line.

As the Corpse Bride exits the door, the orchestration becomes more complex. At the beginning of the film, at the first appearance of the butterfly, the main theme was played by solo cello. That slight tinge of sadness from the deep melody is the first impression of the butterfly on the audience. But at the Finale, the orchestration of the woodwinds is very thick. Three flutes play the melody in octaves, but much higher this time, with the first flute playing all the way up to B \flat 5, which makes the sound a little sharp and significantly brighter.¹⁰ But below this there is also in the sweet and expressive melody played by the other flutes. This is not the first time the composer uses this technique to present the main theme, with the same melody played in multiple octaves. Similarly the melody is accompanied by a flowing harmony part. But this time it is not only the flute, oboe and two clarinets playing the melody. This octave repetition makes the sound more clear and powerful, compared to a doubling in the same octave.¹¹ The first and second violin plays the theme together in this section to create a more ample coloring. In the beginning, the pizzicato contrabass provides an important expressive characteristic. But now, the contrabass plays a more flowing harmonic. The following chords are played by the viola and cello, which further adds to the power of the piece. Consider the romance and fantasy of the scene, as the beautiful girl becomes a million butterflies. To score such a scene, a powerful of colorful instrument is necessary. The harp plays the chords in glissandos from G1 all the way to G5 in sextuplet notes. In this situation the woodwinds and strings play fortissimo or louder. Therefore, the harp on its own is

¹⁰ Adler, p. 181.

¹¹ Adler, p. 238.

not strong enough to get balance its sound. The piano's rolled chords provide a strong harmonic support for the harp. Between the two, they create a much stronger color.

The image displays a musical score for measures 25 through 28. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes staves for Flute (Flu), Clarinet (Clar), Bassoon (Bsn), Trumpet (Tr), Trombone (Tbn), and Cymbal (Cym). The second system includes staves for Violin I (Vln I), Violin II (Vln II), Viola, Cello (Cello), and Double Bass (Cb). The music features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, and dynamic markings such as *mp* and *mf*. Measure 26 includes a 'dist' marking above the flute staff. The score is written in a key signature of one flat and a 2/4 time signature.

Afterwards the brass joins in with the leitmotif and the theme begins to change. At the beginning of this cue the key is B minor, and the first phrase ends with the fifth note in the scale.

Conclusion

In Danny Elfman's music, his musical phrases are often very consistent. Usually, the rhythmic and melodic contours follow similar developments across

phrases. The tonality is varied, but the harmony tends to follow the melody, which is itself largely unchanging. As a result, the development of the musical material can be seen most clearly in Elfman's adept manipulation of orchestration. In this way, the composer conveys his compositional skill and the power of the film's score.

The minor chord color is exploited a lot in his work making the attitude of his piece both more ferocious and more charming. On the other hand, because of the emotional character of the film, he uses many colorful percussion, woodwinds and strings, instead of relying heavily on a powerful brass sound. In this way his musical style is made to suit the development of the character through the film.

Many people criticize Danny Elfman for his lack of professional musical education, and claim that his music lacks the depth of a trained composer. However, films such as *Corpse Bride* demonstrate his compositional talent and skill at supporting the emotional achievement of the film.

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