

21M.284 Assignment 2
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Film Segmentation
The Bride of Frankenstein

Note: the segment titles are taken from the soundtrack CD (The Franz Waxman score: The Bride of Frankenstein played by The Westminster Philharmonic orchestra conducted by Kenneth Alwyn). I also would like to credit the liner notes of the CD for detailed information about the instruments and themes.

1. **Main Title** (0:00:00 – 0:01:17). Music starts on “CARL LAEMMLE presents KARLOFF in” and goes out after “THE PLAYERS” credits, with the first shot of the movie, a stormy night. The main title introduces 4 musical motives: the “Monster’s Theme”, “Pretorius Theme”, the “Bride Theme”, and the “vision music” later heard in the cue “A Strange Apparition”. The music opens with tremolo strings, with recurring cymbal crashes. The “Monster’s Theme” is repeated by flutter-tongue brass. The “Bride Theme” is played by strings and reeds, with harp glissandi. Waxman employs whole tone scales for the majority of the movie cues.
2. **Prologue – Menuetto and Storm** (0:01:38 – 0:05:18). The movie is framed by a scene at a castle, where Mary Shelley, Percy Shelley and Lord Byron discuss the tale Frankenstein, which prompts Mary Shelley to narrate its continuation. The camera first reveals a stormy night, with the castle in the background. It then approaches the castle, transitioning to an exterior shot of a window with Lord Byron looking out. As it transitions to the interior scene with the same window in view, the music starts. The music is a minuet in imitative form, opened by a string quartet. Each repetition uses different instruments (celesta and harp, bassoon and clarinet, etc.). As Lord Byron recounts the tale of Frankenstein with flashback images from the movie *Frankenstein*, the music shifts to a rococo agitato, played by clarinets, bassoon and strings, with muted trumpets playing a chromatic run. When the interior scene returns, the minuet returns too, subdued. As Mary starts her narration, the music ends, and a dissonant chord signals the transition from the frame to the story.
3. **Monster Entrance** (00:08:00 – 00:09:58). The music starts with a cut of two villagers wishing the monster dead and ends with a comical shot of Minnie screaming and running from the monster who just stands there. The “Monster Theme” is interspersed throughout the scene, especially on close-ups of the monster. A new theme, the “Agitato Theme”, is heard when the monster drowns the villager. The final scene with Minnie introduces her theme, played by piccolo and flute, then echoed by clarinet and bassoon. “Minnie’s Theme” reinforces the comical aspect of the final scene.
4. **Processional March** (00:09:59 – 00:12:00). A trumpet signals the transition to the processional march of the villagers to Frankenstein’s home, accompanied by an elegy. The elegy stops when the apparent dead body of Frankenstein is returned to his bride, who laments “Speak to me, Henry”, Minnie responding “Oh, my Lady, he’ll never speak again.” When Minnie announces that the monster is alive, the elegy gives way to the “Monster Theme”, with a new refrain.
5. **A Strange Apparition** (00:14:30 – 00:14:59). The music, already heard at the end in the main title, starts as Elizabeth speaks of “a strange apparition”, culminates as she screams hysterically, and ends as she falls into Frankenstein’s laps.

6. **Pretorius' Entrance** (00:15:30 – 00:17:00). The music starts as Minnie opens the entrance door revealing Pretorius and ends, on a dissonant chord, when Pretorius enters Frankenstein's bedroom. The most prominent instruments are woodwinds. The music primarily features "Pretorius Theme", and also "Minnie's Theme" when the focus is on her.
7. **You Will Need a Coat** (00:19:40 – 00:21:40). The music starts with the transition from Frankenstein's bedroom to the horse carriage and ends in Pretorius' apartment as Pretorius brings out the large wooden box containing his creation. Successively, clarinet, flute, and muted trumpet play "Pretorius Theme" while cello, bass, bass clarinet and bassoons play a chromatic line. Winds play a different variation of theme, rhythmically supported by strings, timpani and xylophone. The music also features a string misterioso, later associated with Frankenstein's assistant, Karl, before concluding with "Pretorius Theme" once more.
8. **Bottle Sequence** (00:22:05 – 00:24:15). The music starts as Pretorius reveals his first creation, the Queen, and ends as the focus shifts from the creatures back to Pretorius and Frankenstein exclaiming "But this not science". The music closely follows the creatures' movements ("Mickey Mousing"). The musical effects reinforce the illusion of miniaturization.
9. **Female Monster Music** (00:25:30 – 00:25:40). When Pretorius presents his plan of creating a mate for the monster, the "Bride Theme" is heard in an arrangement imitating prenuptial music.
10. **Pastorale** (00:25:43 – 00:27:40). The music starts with a cut of the monster in the countryside. The pastorale music and the heavenly scenery suggest the garden of paradise, and confer innocence to the monster. It is as if the monster and Frankenstein are re-enacting the story of the creation, with the monster as Adam, and Frankenstein, as the Creator. When the monster sees his face in the river, we hear the sound of an out-of-place trumpet. The monster tries to save a country girl that falls in the river out of panic from his presence. When two hunters see the monster and chase him, we hear the "Monster Theme" and the beginning of an agitato, the "Chase Theme". In contact with humans, the pastorale definitely vanishes.
11. **Village** (00:27:40 – 00:28:00). With a cut to the village, a horde of villagers fetches the chief police to announce the finding of the monster in the woods. As the villagers all gather, we hear a march.
12. **Chase** (00:28:00 – 00:29:00). With a cut back to the woods, the monster is now chased by the entire village. We hear the continuation and end of the "Chase Theme".
13. **Crucifixion** (00:29:30 – 00:31:30). As the villagers upheld the monster on a cross, we hear a fanfare-like variation of the monster theme. When the monster is put in the cart and carried to the dungeon, trombones play the march, first heard in the village, while the strings keep the rhythm. When the monster is chained in the dungeon, we hear the "Agitato Theme".
14. **Monster Breaks Out** (00:31:40 – 00:33:00). When the monster frees himself from his chain, violins play the "Agitato Theme". When the monster escapes, we hear the "Chase Theme" again, with brasses playing the monster theme. The scene focus is then on a little girl who has disappeared.
15. **Hermit's Music I** (00:35:10 – 00:36:30). First instance of diegetic music. A hermit in his hut is playing Schubert's "Ave Maria" on his violin. The monster, outside in woods, is attracted to the music, listening with an elated smile. The music is briefly interrupted when the hermit walks out because he hears someone there. The monster comes in and the hermit, blind, befriends him.

16. **Ave Maria** (00:38:00 – 00:40:40). The music, a reprise of the “Ave Maria”, starts when the hermit asks the monster “Who are you?” The strings become louder for the brief moment when the monster puts his hand on the hermit’s shoulder. When the hermit ends his prayer and the monster is seen shedding a tear, the music moves from background to foreground, triumphantly louder.
17. **Hermit’s Music II** (00:43:00 – 00:43:40). Second instance of diegetic music. At the monster’s insistence, the hermit plays another tune on his violin: this time, it is a joyful one.
18. **Fire in the Hut** (00:44:10 – 00:44:40). Two lost hunters come into the hut, and, as they fight the monster and set the hut on fire, a clarinet plays the “Monster’s Theme”, which breaks out into the “Agitato Theme”, which is then transformed into the “Children’s Theme” as a group of children run away screaming from the monster.
19. **Graveyard** (00:44:41 – 00:46:00). As the monster wanders into a graveyard, violins in sections play a tristamente accompaniment, coloured by a celesta and a harp. An oboe plays the “Monster’s Theme”. The “Chase Theme” is heard with a cut to villagers chasing the monster, before the tristamente concludes.
20. **Dance Macabre** (00:48:40 – 00:51:15). The music starts with a shot of Pretorius drinking and laughing in the graveyard. He is joined by the monster, which Pretorius welcomes. Pizzicato strings create a very rhythmic pattern. An organ plays “Pretorius Theme”, joined midway by flute and oboe, in a chromatic ascent. The music transitions from “Pretorius Theme” to the “Bride Theme”: first, the “Bride Theme” is played by cello, and, in counterpoint, “Pretorius Theme” is played by the bassoon and xylophone; then, as the graveyard sequence ends, the “Bride Theme” is played by violin and viola, while the “Monster Theme” is played by muted trumpet.
21. (00:52:52 – 00:56:00). The “Monster Theme” is played repeatedly at different pitches by muted trumpet as Pretorius introduces the monster in Frankenstein’s bedroom, in order to convince to create him a bride. The “Monster Theme” is punctuated by other familiar themes, including “Pretorius Theme” and the “Bride Theme”. Frankenstein refuses to comply, so the monster abducts his wife. During the abduction, strings rise insistently. Later, we hear “Pretorius Theme” with a cut to the stairs to his apartment, reminiscent of Pretorius’ and Frankenstein’s first meeting there.
22. (00:59:00 – 01:00:00) Karl’s misterioso is heard as Karl murders a lady to get her heart for the experiment. Frankenstein suspects the truth.
23. (01:00:00 – 01:10:00) As the heart is beating, a muffled tympanum begins beating a 4-4 rhythm in eight notes. The beating will only end once the bride is brought to life.
24. (01:00:20 – 01:01:40) As the monster enters the laboratory, we hear the “Monster’s Theme”, and a whimsical version of “Pretorius Theme” as Pretorius drugs the monster to sleep. The monster’s fall to sleep is mickey-moused. The “Bride Theme” plays once the monster is asleep.
25. (01:02:00 – 01:02:10) A romantic theme related to the vision music rises majestically as Frankenstein speaks with Elizabeth using an electric machine.
26. (01:03:00 – 01:04:30) The “Bride Theme” is played as the bandaged new creation is revealed.
27. (01:05:00 – 01:10:30) As the apparatus to take the bride to the storm descends, a descending chromatic mixture of “Pretorius Theme” and the “Bride Theme” is heard. The music continues with strings leaping back and forth from high pitch to low pitch. The machines and the storm create a multitude of sound effects. The tympanum is still beating insistently. The “Bride Theme” is heard most insistently, in many variations. As Karl is pushed from the roof by the monster, the “Monster Theme” and the “Agitato Theme” are heard. Then, as the apparatus containing the bride is lowered

from the sky, the “Bride Theme” crescendos triumphantly. The timpani break into a quick sound. When the bride is brought back, Frankenstein examines her, announcing “She’s alive!”

28. (01:10:30 – 01:12:30) The bride is seen standing up uneasily in a white wedding-like dress, her hair frizzing up. As Pretorius presents “The Bride of Frankenstein”, the music breaks into a mock wedding fanfare, with bells. The music then follows the action, with variations on the many themes introduced during the movie, especially the “Bride Theme” and the “Monster Theme”. The monster gently asks the bride: “Friend? Friend?” Ironically, even the bride shrieks from the monster in horror.
29. (01:12:30 – 01:13:00) A rhythmic pattern is insisted upon by the strings, creating a dramatic tension, as the monster exclaims “She hates me!” and ferments the idea of exploding the tower by grabbing the lever. Meanwhile, Elizabeth appears at the door, and Frankenstein opens it.
30. (01:13:00 – 01:14:00) As the monster explodes the tower while allowing Frankenstein and Elizabeth to escape, a variation on the “Monster Theme” with descending scales is played. Finally, as we see Elizabeth and Frankenstein safe outside, the “Bride Theme” is repeated majestically.
31. (01:14:00 – 01:14:30) The end credits feature the “Bride Theme”, in crescendo, concluding in an upward melody.

Report

The music of the film *The Bride of Frankenstein* reinforces its horror and colours its morals. The music consists of variations on themes, played by classical instruments, the use of whole-tone scales contributing to the sense of strangeness and supernatural. Interestingly, the three main character themes, the “Monster Theme”, “Pretorius Theme” and the “Bride Theme”, are each associated with either a monstrous or devilish character, already suggesting the focus of the movie on the evil and the horrific. Yet, the horrific and the evil do not intersect. For evil is represented by Pretorius, the mad scientist whose motivations for creating a monster stems perhaps from morbid curiosity, and, the horrific is represented by the monster, who, strangely, appears as the victim of the scientists’ phantasm and men’s prejudice.

Our ambivalence towards the monster is reflected in the music. On the one hand, the “Monster Theme” sounds like an ominous danger warning and the chills in the scene where the monster first appears are accentuated by the music. On the other hand, when the monster is wandering in the countryside, the music is a lovely pastorage, reminding us of his innocence. This idyllic scene is destroyed twice: first, slightly, at his own sight mirrored in the river, and then, of course, in contact with humans. The music signals these destructions: at his own sight, a trumpet plays a loud out-of-place note; when the humans hunt him, the music shifts from the pastorage to the “Chase Theme”.

Even the monster shrieks at his own sight, forewarning the shriek of the bride at the end of the movie, but also hinting at his sensitivity to beauty. His sensitivity to beauty is made clear when he delights in the hermit’s violin play. The hermit, blind, is unaware of the horrific aspect of the monster, and takes him as a friend. This episode highlights that the monster is

only physically horrific, while the humans who burn the hut, kill a heart for an experiment, or create monstrous creatures, are morally horrific, and, hence, the real monsters. Thanks to the hermit, the monster learns of good and evil ("Friend, good!").

In the movie, it is almost curious that the monster is the hunted one, constantly persecuted by humans. When the monster flees from the hunters who abruptly interrupted his idyllic friendship with the hermit, ending in a graveyard, the accompanying music suggests his sadness at his lost replete. Whenever he is pursued by villagers, the "Chase Theme" is played, emphasizing his victim hood.

The last 25 minutes of the movie feature music constantly. The music contributes to the tension as we wonder whether Frankenstein and Pretorius will succeed in creating the bride. The beating of the tympanum suggesting the beating of the heart becomes a constant reminder of their goal of creating a new monster. Once the bride is alive, the wedding-like music seems to be deriding the whole enterprise. The music confirms the ironic scenario: the bride cannot fulfil her role, because the monster is so physically abject that he scares her off. The end of the movie, from the bride's coming to life to the destruction of the laboratory, is intensely paced. The music helps cope with all the events, by giving us a familiar grounding in all the variations on themes introduced throughout the movie.

In conclusion, the music in the film *The Bride of Frankenstein* contributes to the dramatic tension and enhances our understanding of the moral depravity of the mad scientist and the moral innocence of the monster.