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FILM SCORE

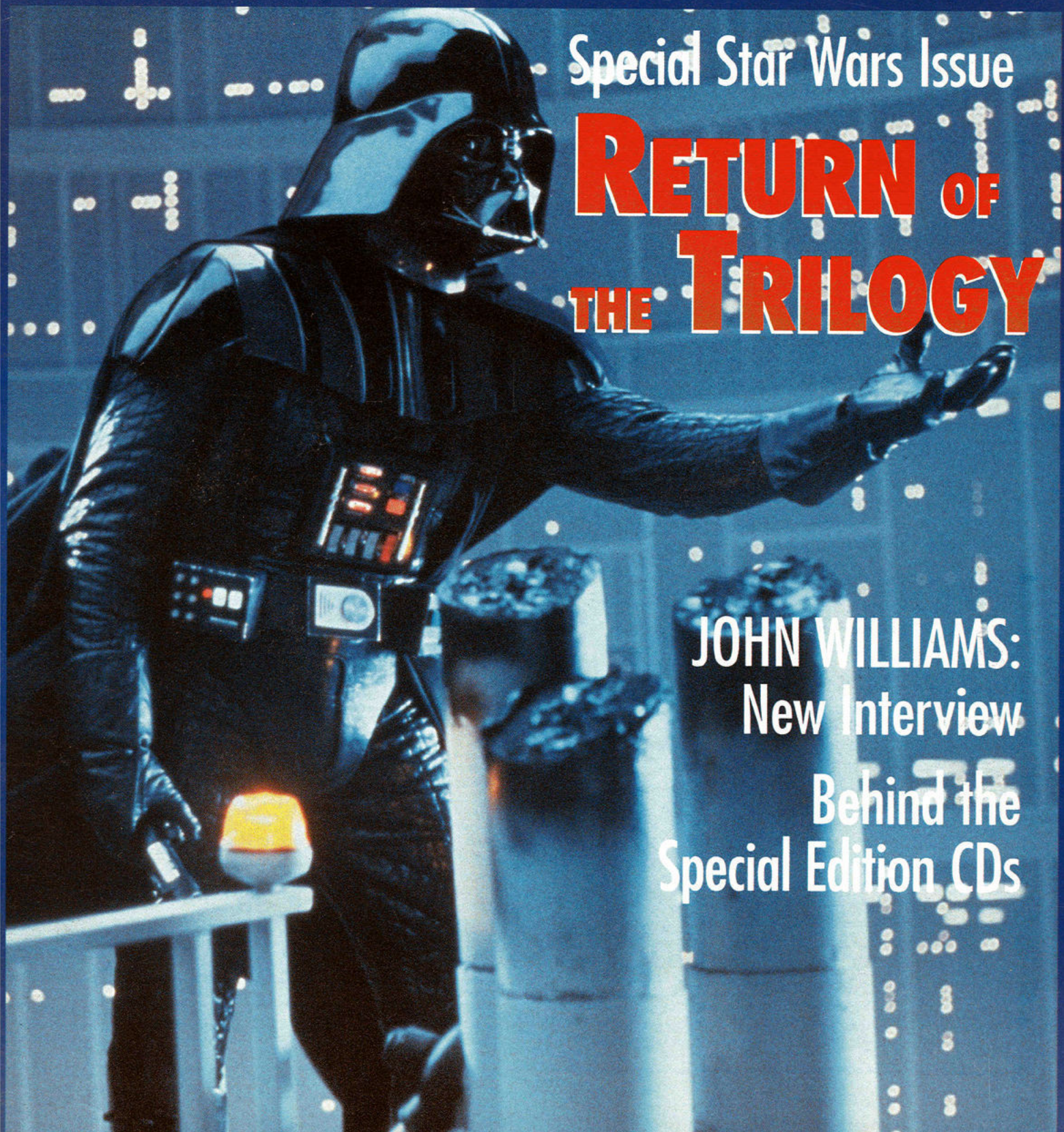
M O N T H L Y

**MOST
IMPRESSIVE
New Format!**

Special Star Wars Issue

RETURN OF THE TRILOGY

**JOHN WILLIAMS:
New Interview
Behind the
Special Edition CDs**



May the Format Be with You

This issue is the first in *Film Score Monthly's* brand-new format. My thanks go out to Joe Sikoryak, desktop publishing designer extraordinaire, who donated his time and expertise to create it. Let me extend a hearty "welcome back" to FSM's regular readers, and "hello" to those who might be discovering it with this edition.

This new look is the first step towards bringing *Film Score Monthly* to the next level of distribution, coverage, and professionalism, and it's appropriate that this first issue covers one (three?) of the most important scores to soundtrack fans, those to the *Star Wars Trilogy*. To this end we've assembled a triple-whammy of exclusive coverage:

1) Inside information from Michael Matessino, editing and assembly supervisor on the new Special Edition CDs, who tells the complete story behind the new discs, and gives the definitive data on the different edits, alternates and available versions of *Star Wars* cues.

2) A new interview by Craig L. Byrd with John Williams himself, discussing the *Trilogy* scores at length for the first time since the liner notes to the original LPs.

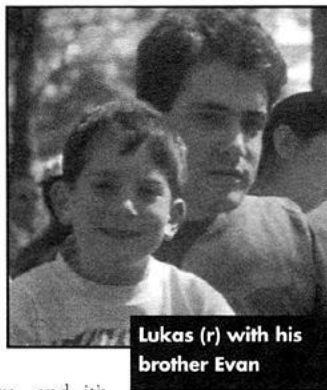
3) In-depth commentary by myself on the *Star Wars* scores, how they work with the films, and with each other.

I hope this combination of primary-source research and thoughtful film-score criticism represents the best of what a soundtrack publication should offer to its readers. It's just the beginning of what I have lined up for the coming issues, and simply put, you're not going to find this kind of stuff anywhere else. Here at FSM, I'm proud to have the best writers that a film-score magazine editor ever could want. (Except for *Fanfare's* Royal Brown, I'd want him too.)

My only regret this issue is that the *Star Wars* coverage grew so large, it displaced some regular features, specifically the Mail Bag and CD reviews. Those will return next month, along with the cover story originally slated for this issue, Doug Adams's interview with the amazing Alf Clausen, composer on *The Simpsons*. Stay tuned!

While I'm doling out thanks, it's time for Michael Matessino to take a bow. The new *Star Wars* Special Edition CDs are, musically, virtually perfect representations of the John Williams scores. People might be grumbling that they "have to" buy the *Trilogy* music again (nobody's holding a gun to my head)—and some who have bought the new discs might be nit-picking about the laser etchings (which are legitimately ugly) or slipcases—but *nobody* who has heard the new masters has made a rational complaint about a missing cue, wrong take or improper edit. That's because there aren't any; Michael, with his amazing memory, ear and dedication, has spent countless hours making sure these discs are correct, on behalf of buffs everywhere. Yes, this has made him a freak who can identify any bit of music from the *Trilogy* by hearing a split-second of it (no kidding), but all of us should extend to him our most sincere gratitude. Most will never realize just how hard he has worked on our behalf. Enjoy his articles.


-Lukas Kendall



Lukas (r) with his brother Evan

FILM SCORE

M O N T H L Y

VOL. 2, NO. 1 • JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1997

DEPARTMENTS

- 3 You're Reading It
- 4 News & Information
- 7 Reader Ads

STAR WARS FEATURES

- 9 *Return of the Trilogy*
An inside look at the production of the new *Star Wars* Special Edition 2CD soundtracks by album editing and assembly supervisor Michael Matessino.
- 13 *The Comprehensive Star Wars Reference*
A cue-by-cue editing-weirdness guide to John Williams's music scores for *Star Wars*, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*.
- 18 *John Williams: The Star Wars Interview*
Craig L. Byrd speaks one-on-one with the composer about his most famous scores.
- 22 *Did You Know There's No Theme for Han?*
Lukas Kendall takes a probing look at the music for the *Trilogy* in terms of the films.

REVIEWS

- 27 *Jeff Bond's Review Column*
The 30th Anniversary *Star Trek* barrage.

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Return *of* the Trilogy

This time, the Force is with us

by Michael Matessino

Well, here we are talking about *Star Wars* yet again, but with the films back in theaters, new soundtracks in stores, and the 20th anniversary of this revolutionary film (and score) upon us, should we be surprised? At first it might seem that the much-talked-about and gold-selling 4CD boxed set anthology isn't that old, but it was actually released three and a half years ago! FSM's own Lukas Kendall provided the track-by-track annotation for the set and subsequently documented some exclusive info in the winter 1994 issue, but this time around he suggested that I tell the latest chapter in the continuing *Star Wars* music saga. I expect, and hope, however, that he'll offer some more of his own insightful comments.

To my and hopefully every *Star Wars* fan's delight, definitive 2CD sets for each of the *Trilogy*'s scores are now a reality. In addition to the liner notes, I was sub-contracted by producer par excellence Nick Redman to assist with the restoration and provide the assembly and sequencing for these new releases. In doing so we have learned much more than we ever wanted to know. Once again it was a battle worthy of *Star Wars* itself and worthy of documentation.

One battle we didn't anticipate was the strong resistance expressed by soundtrack collectors to the new releases, especially in a time when audio/videophiles seem more than willing to re-buy something whenever a significant improvement is made. Moreover, debate about the boxed set has continued on the Internet for three years, with many people complaining about the sequencing and making tapes with their own preferred chronology. It is hoped that the following chronicle of the Special Edition project will clear up unanswered questions and help those who are uncertain about the new versions to make a decision about them.

First it must be stated that, unlike the boxed set, the primary target audience for the new editions are not those who have owned *Star Wars* music in some previous form. The goal is to reach a new generation of fans in conjunction with the theatrical releases. As part of this, it is hoped that the soundtracks arouse young people's interest in film music just as the first score did in 1977. We did, however, hope to appeal to the loyal core group by

Michael Matessino was editing and assembly supervisor for the new Star Wars Trilogy Special Edition soundtracks.

rectifying the faults of the boxed set, providing new music, and creating definitive versions that will remain available for a long time. This was never viewed as a scheme to bleed fans of their money. There were no plans for the Special Edition at the time the anthology was produced, and both Fox and Arista had mandated that the boxed set be four CDs only. Working within this limitation, Nick oversaw the selection of five hours of music from the only material available at the time, leaving 90 minutes of music still unreleased. With the advent of the Special Edition, the market changed, new source material surfaced, and much more freedom was granted. All involved truly believe that the end result will please the entire spectrum of listeners from neophyte to veteran.

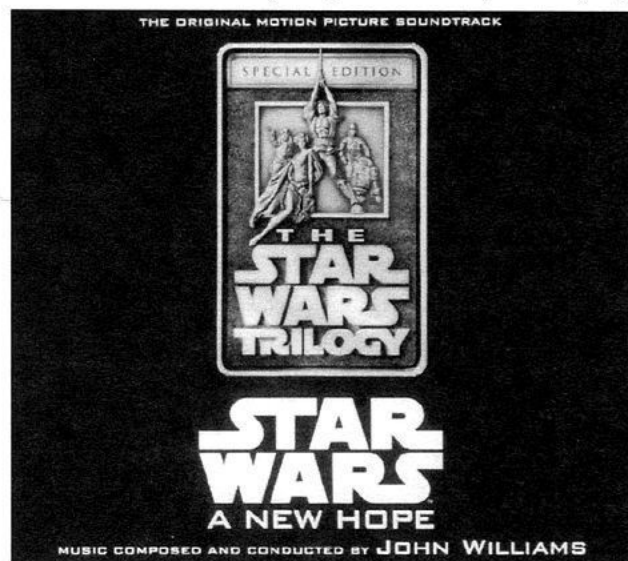
Nick Redman and I first worked together on the extended, remixed CD for *The Sound of Music* which was only available in its Special Edition Laserdisc from Fox Video. While working on it in early 1994, we discussed the 4CD *Star Wars* anthology, and Nick related the difficulties of that project. Five hours of music had to be readied in as many weeks, and PolyGram (the previous distributor of the scores) would not provide any elements. Nick managed to pull it off anyway, working from reference copies and various elements from Lucasfilm, Williams's music editor Ken Wannberg, and the late Fox music editor Len Engel.

Once we were working together Nick patiently entertained my praises and quibbles about the anthology. Although I was grateful for the long-overdue new music available on the boxed set, I was frustrated by disc four's hodgepodge, disc one's slavish adherence to the original *Star Wars* album, and the continued elusiveness of some of my favorite cues from *Jedi*. Throughout the first half of 1994 there was some talk about a possible fifth disc, but this was quickly rejected. A year later, Nick proposed that a short disc of unreleased music accompany Fox Video's Christmas '95 wide-screen VHS release of the *Trilogy*, but this was halted as well. Finally, the original plan to break up the 4CD set for individual release was also nixed. For a while it seemed that the anthology would be the

sole incarnation of the *Star Wars* scores for several years. The amazing thing is that had any of these efforts come to fruition, the viability of creating our new 2CD releases would have been questioned by Fox, Lucasfilm, and most record companies.

At last came the news about the theatrical release of *Star Wars* Special Edition. Back when there was talk only about bringing back the first film, Nick approached Lucasfilm about re-doing the soundtrack. When he suggested that it would be a good opportunity to do all three, there was immediate interest. Then, when *Empire* and *Jedi* became part of the Special Edition plan, there was no question that all three would be re-done.

The original plan was to release the *Star Wars* CD for Christmas of 1996, and not wanting to end up in the same sort of crunch as he did on the boxed set, Nick suggested that we get started immediately. I began work last April first by log-



ging and evaluating the material used for the boxed set while Nick began conversations with Tom Christopher, the editor of the Special Editions. With so much activity in the Lucasfilm vault due to the film restorations, Tom was able to access the inventories and tell us exactly what was there. To our amazement, the first things recovered were PolyGram's album masters for *Empire* and *Jedi*, which had been returned sometime during the previous year. The album masters, the liberal time-frame, and the hands-on assistance of Lucasfilm were luxuries Nick didn't have on the boxed set, so we were ahead of the game already. Adding the album masters to the equation, it

seemed we had everything we needed to make complete score albums with the exception of a few bits from *Empire*. So as Nick began a concerted effort to find additional elements, I began planning out a preliminary sequencing.

With two CDs for each film, there was no doubt that as long as I had anything to do with it, these things were going to be as complete and as chronological as humanly possible. Nick eagerly advocated this game plan and secured the support of Lucasfilm. Some people seemed doubtful that the scores would play well in sequence, but ever since I made my first cassette mock-ups I was convinced that there was simply no better way to listen to them. Without missing cues and altered sequences the music takes on a progressive, narrative quality that exceeded my initial expectations. There were several options to consider for the source music, concert suites, and alternates, and although I had my own definite ideas, I spoke with several collectors and monitored chat on the Internet to assess the preferences of the people who cared the most. Happily, I found that for the most part my own opinions were widely shared, but I was bewildered that my single biggest complaint about the boxed set was not mentioned by anyone else—this being the fact that most of the score for *Star Wars* as reconstructed on disc one utilized incorrect takes. For a brief time I accepted the explanation that the increased clarity compared to the original album had allowed a lot of bum notes to become more pronounced, but as soon as I listened to the complete session tapes, which contain several takes of many cues, I knew that it had simply been incorrectly edited. Nick was somewhat skeptical about it because he had not received any negative feedback on this particular issue. So despite the fact that I might be going to a lot of trouble to do something no one would notice, I began experimenting with re-editing a few cues. Before I knew it I had spent three days creating a mock-up edit of the entire score.

The new releases were never viewed as a scheme to bleed fans of their money. There were no plans for the Special Edition at the time the boxed set anthology was produced, and both Fox and Arista had mandated that the boxed set be four CDs only.

In order to come up with some exact edit points, I had to listen to the old muffled Polydor CD over and over, focusing on individual musical phrases and how they were played. Sometimes I could actually detect an analog edit after zeroing in on a section where I knew one was located, but for the most part I had to simply compare the old album to the multiple takes, back and forth, again and again, until I settled on an edit point. I did this for every cue with multiple takes and came up with an assembly plan for each.

When I was finally satisfied I found that I'd made nearly 100 edits in the score, which sur-

prised me. Nick told me that this was possible for two reasons: At the time *Star Wars* was recorded, the London Symphony Orchestra did not have any recent film scoring experience. And secondly, the music budget on *Star Wars* was modest, which meant that Williams jumped into it knowing that there would be very little rehearsal time. They would simply lay down several takes knowing that Ken Wannberg would cut it to eliminate the flubs and make everything synch to the picture. This was all well and fine, but where was the edited master? Where was the editing paperwork? It was the absence of these items which made it necessary to employ my weird and decidedly un-scientific method of editing by memory. At the time I was too close to the project to see the absurdity of it.

On the day we actually started work I told Nick that my mock-up was as close as I could get to identifying the edits without any paperwork. Suddenly Nick thought of Ron Fuglsby, who works on mag restoration at Fox, building all of the multi-track music masters when a project gets underway. To do this he first locates the paperwork which shows how to line up the various reels, and somehow he seems to always know just where to look. Nick had suddenly realized that Ron was not yet working at Fox when the *Star Wars* boxed set had been done. He had simply been told by the studio that no paperwork on *Star Wars* existed and there was no reason to believe that anything had changed since 1993. But Ron told Nick he would look anyway and would have anything he found ready for pick-up the following morning.

The next day we were in for a surprise beyond our wildest expectations. Ron had come up with spotting sheets and recording logs for *Star Wars* and *Jedi*. On the *Star Wars* log, the selected takes were circled. These conformed to the takes on our session masters, and for most of the cues there were notes explaining how the music was to be edited! This didn't mean that the problem was solved, however, because the edits were identified by the bar numbers in the music. Without an actual score to look out, there was no way to determine

the exact edit points. However, it did indicate the number of edits in a given cue and what takes were involved. To Nick's (and my) shock, the re-creation I'd done on my own was about 90% accurate.

If this weren't enough, while searching for paperwork Ron had opened the right closet door and found, under 15 years of dust, a set of 3-track 35mm mags of *Star Wars* music and five reels of 24-track *Empire* music! It was assumed or hoped that the *Star Wars* reels were an edited but pre-Dolby score copy, but as it turned out they contained the same session masters with which we

had been working. Re-editing would still be required, but playing them on the North mixing stage at the Zanuck Theatre was a revelation—the sound was unbelievable! With this new discovery and the best possible plan for re-editing the score, it looked like the *Star Wars* music was going to sound better than it ever had.

Two days were spent at Zanuck working with the new material. Digital transfer needed to happen right away because before long *Independence Day* was set to completely commandeer the Fox sound department. Working with Brian Risner, Nick's usual mag re-mixer and a *Sound of Music* alumnus, we began by transferring *Star Wars*. Lucasfilm was absolutely thrilled by our find and requested that we preserve the music in the 3-track domain in case they elected to use it for the Special Edition. A few reels were missing, and a few takes were unmanageably deteriorated, but at least 3/4 of our CDs could be taken from this new source.

Working with *Empire* was a different animal. The original intention was to procure only those cues or sections that we needed for one reason or another, but listening to the reels, Nick decided that we just couldn't ignore the huge increase in quality that they offered. Brian was now called upon for the daunting task of re-balancing about half the *Empire* score in six hours. I stood over his shoulder, again relying on my memory to achieve the correct result. The intense schedule forced us to let a few things go, but overall we ended up with a phenomenal sound. Cues like "The Asteroid Field" and "Imperial Walkers" were particularly impressive, especially when opened up to full volume on that huge mixing stage. We knew we had a true gem when mixers from the next stage came over wondering what the great sounding music was. As "Imperial March" played as it never played before, picture a bunch of jaded engineers standing in the back of the room smiling and tapping their feet! They hung around for the "End Title" and when the LSO crashed to a halt, there were audible gasps. Obviously it had been too long since a score this good had passed through these

walls. The day ended with another perk when Jo Ann Kane Music Service sent over copies of Herbert Spencer's orchestrator sheets for seven cues from *Star Wars*. A few were unusable because they were for cues that had no edits, but the others enabled me to confirm some of the proper edit points. Now it was time to move to DigiPrep and the digital mastering magic of Dan Hersch, who has been through over 200 projects with Nick including *The Sound of Music*, the *Star Wars* boxed set, and the aborted CD for the video release. By this time I was ready with my sequencing and edit plans for all three projects and we had every note

that was needed.

The overall scheme was simple: start each soundtrack with the Fox fanfare, followed by the Main Title, and then simply proceed chronologically through each score from beginning to end across two CDs. Our final decision was to present concert suites at the beginning of disc two of each set, giving it a formal opening and facilitating easy access or omission. Conversely, we felt that source music on *Jedi* would disrupt the narrative flow if we placed it in sequence every time it occurred, so the solution was to have it at the end of the disc on which it belonged, facilitating sequential programming if so desired. For *Star Wars* there was no problem, since the cantina cues would occur at the end of disc one but still be in sequence. Alternate *Jedi* cues would follow the source music on each CD—"Sail Barge Assault" on disc one, and "The Forest Battle" on disc two. Again, they could either be programmed in sequence, eliminated, or simply enjoyed where they are. For *Empire* there were two short alternate bits that I had to somehow work in, but there were several alternates, inserts, and overdubs for *Jedi* and I incorporated as many as possible.

There are sure to be differences of opinion about the placement of concert suites, source music, and alternates on the new CDs, but we feel the final presentation is programmable and interactive enough for the knowledgeable collector and user-friendly enough for the first-time listener.

First up for production was *Jedi*, for which we had 3-track tape reels that were not used on the boxed set even though they were available at the time. It became immediately obvious that the discrete center channel enhanced the overall presence and dynamic range of the music, even after converting it to two-track. It's a long score and there was a lot of music to load into the computer, but editorially it was actually the simplest. By 1983, the LSO and orchestras in general were much more accustomed to film scoring. *Jedi* had also had a healthier budget, so for the most part each cue was perfected in one take. The few exceptions were already edited on the reels we were working with. Once assembled, a few aesthetic fixes were made, but the big change came with the news about the Special Edition version of the film. We were told to drop "Lapti Nek," but it was several months later that its replacement, "Jedi Rocks," arrived. Additionally, both versions of "Ewok Celebration" were to be dropped in favor of a new cue that Williams was going to score for the revised finale of the picture. The extra space enabled us to add the Ewok village source music. Although we had to wait until December to inte-

grate the newly recorded material, the basic sequence was locked by mid-summer. The only defeat on *Jedi* was that the album recording sessions could not be located. Because of this, all the album arrangements and certain cues were taken from the PolyGram album master. Also disappointing was the apparent disappearance of the Joseph Williams material, which meant the continued absence of the oft-requested Max Rebo music and (even though we couldn't use it any-



"TIE Fighter Attack" was one of the first cues worked on for the new albums. Like the rest of the *Star Wars* score, the correct portions of different takes had to be painstakingly selected and combined anew.

way) the film version of "Lapti Nek." (Note the absence of these cues on the new radio show version as well.)

Overall, *Jedi* ended up sounding terrific and really working well in the chronological sequence. It is a commitment to listen to all of it straight through, but a long overdue reprisal to the paltry single LP that disappointed so many fans in 1983.

Next came *Star Wars*, but before loading the entire score into the computer, we were asked by Lucasfilm to provide 3-track, digitally edited versions of "Main Title," "Ben Kenobi's Death," "TIE Fighter Attack," "The Throne Room" and "End Title." These would serve not only as samples of our work but as a guide for match-editing those parts of the score for the film itself, using the newly-discovered mag. For us it was a good way of getting a feel for how the edit plan would work with Dan's technical skills and equipment. In these five cues there are over 20 cuts from one take to another, which will give some idea of how complex the editing was overall. After these cues were sent, the word from Lucasfilm's sound department was that they had no idea the *Star Wars* music had ever sounded this good.

Before proceeding with the *Star Wars* edit, we requested access to the 16-track master reels of the score in order to secure the few missing bits that were lost or damaged. While carefully examining the scoring log to determine which reels we needed, I discovered the likelihood that an alternate "Binary Sunset" existed. We also requested the unheard first two takes of the "Main Title" and planned the "Main Title Archive." As it turned out, these were all we could salvage from the 16-track

reels because this very element was used to edit the score back in 1977. What was long-thought to be the untouched recording tape actually had all the correct sections spliced out to create some lost or destroyed edited master. Listening to the reels we'd ordered at least told us that they did not survive as well as the 3-track mag, and I was also able to reconfirm the proper edits since a splice always occurred at the exact point where a bit of correct music began. Although this seemed initially disappointing, the discovery of "Binary Sunset (alternate)" had made the entire venture worthwhile, as did the reassurance that the mag reels found at Fox were the world's best-sounding source of the *Star Wars* score. Whereas the boxed set had been at least five generations down from the original, we now had a digitally transferred second-generation master. Editing on *Star Wars* then began in earnest and was surprisingly easy due to the beat-specific flight plan and Dan's own musical knowledge and command of the digital editing process.

Some finessing and tweaking was done to both *Star Wars* and *Jedi* before we turned to *Empire*. The big challenge on the middle score was not com-

bining different takes, but different sources. The selections remixed from the 24-track sounded so good that care had to be taken to make sure they blended acceptably with the other sources, which included session masters, a magnetic music stem from the film itself, and the PolyGram album master. Several days in June were devoted to *Empire*, after which test CDs and tapes were made so that we could live with the new soundtracks for a while and address anything that we missed.

Everyone involved was grateful for the luxury of time. For Nick this was the total opposite of the boxed set experience, and since these were to be the definitive presentations of these scores, it was great to be able to listen to them on speakers, through headphones, in the car, over and over, knowing that there was time to fix any problems that were heard. In the meantime, I got started on the liner notes and by August Nick and I were scheduling a day here and a day there to make minor fixes and perfect the assemblies to the limits of human ability.

The ironic thing is that even by this point, we had no idea what record company was going to release these discs. Fox had a continuing relationship with Arista, who had released the boxed set, but RCA Victor was eager to acquire the new ones and came forward with the best offer. Finally the deal was made and if there was any crunch to be found on the project, it was in the packaging. Fortunately, we'd begun planning that early as well, and I offered my suggestions for the disc labels and booklets, helping to expedite the process. The goal was to achieve a streamlined, classy look which would be simple and memorable.

The release date for the first of the scores was eventually changed to a more realistic January 14th, since the PepsiCo marketing push was set to begin on Super Bowl Sunday, the 26th, in anticipation of the premiere of *Star Wars* Special Edition on the 31st. The *Empire* CDs were slated for release on January 28th, and *Jedi* on February 25th.

In the past, coming to the end of a project has sometimes been anti-climactic, but with *Star Wars* about to once again explode into theatres, this was an exception. As the production wound down I began to appreciate what a completely satisfying experience it had been. It's an amazing feeling to be involved in a project for which one feels uniquely qualified, and I am grateful that fate (or the Force) has brought me this privilege more than once. I am also grateful for the tremendous guidance of Nick Redman through all of the edits and revisions and for the support of Fox and Lucasfilm, especially Ron Fuglsby, Tom Cavanaugh, Tom Christopher, Lucy Wilson, and Sue Rostoni. I am grateful that we were blessed with a comfortable schedule and with two meticulous and unbelievably patient technicians, Dan Hersch and Brian Risner. The ultimate satisfaction, however, came when the first CDs hit the stores, because the greatest joy of this dream project will be sharing it. So on that happy note, may this timeless music bring a galaxy of listening pleasure to us all!

The Comprehensive Reference for the John Williams Music Scores

For Know-It-Alls and Know-It-All Wanna-Bes

by Michael Matessino, Album Editing and Assembly Supervisor

The following breakdown provides specific details on the new *Star Wars* CDs which will hopefully answer some questions before they're asked. It is intended as a companion to the new CDs for those listeners who are intimately familiar with the movies, the music, and the various incarnations of the scores. Rather than bog down the CD liner notes with these unnecessary minutiae, it seemed best to target only those who are interested in such technicalities. We are assuming, of course, that all true soundtrack collectors or aficionados read this prestigious publication regularly. Every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive reference by addressing all issues of sequencing, cue and track titles, scoring outtakes, film outtakes, track jobs, rescoring, minor edits, alternate versions, concert suites, and source music. Some information documented by Lukas Kendall in the Winter 1994 issue has been repeated for convenience.

Please note that if a track is not listed in the breakdown, this means it is presented exactly as on previous versions including its title.

Star Wars

Disc One

Track 1, 20th Century Fox Fanfare:

As described in the CD liner notes, this is the original recording of Alfred Newman's fanfare as conducted by the composer in 1954. This recording is still heard on *Star Wars* Special Edition but it was decided to preserve it on the new CDs long before this was confirmed.

Track 2, Main Title/Rebel Blockade Runner: The "Main Title" sounds better than ever but does not segue into the "End Title" as previous releases have done. It seemed from reading cyberchat and assessing other feedback on the subject that this would be perceived by today's listeners as an unnecessary interruption of narrative flow.

Track 3, Imperial Attack: In the film there are some minuscule, barely detectable edits in this cue at Darth Vader's entrance and in his conversation with the Imperial commander.

Track 4, Dune Sea of Tatooine/Jawa Sandcrawler: This track begins with "Dune Sea of Tatooine," formerly called "The Desert," while "Jawa Sandcrawler" was formerly listed as "The Little People Work." The beginning of this second cue contains material which was edited out for the film. Judging from the cue sheets the music may have been intended to begin earlier in the scene, but it is likely that some footage of the jawas carrying R2-D2 was snipped after scoring.

Track 5, The Moisture Farm: In the film, this cue begins with some bars of the Jawa theme tracked from a few measures into the piece. On previous albums, this cue was called "Robot Auction." On the new CD this track ends with the previously unreleased short coda which plays as the droids head for the homestead garage.

Track 6, The Hologram/Binary Sunset: Previous title: "The Princess Appears."

Track 7, Landspeeder Search/Attack of the Sand People: This track begins with a statement of

Luke's theme which is not heard in the film due to the elimination of some landspeeder shots. "Attack of the Sand People" begins with previously unavailable music as R2-D2 detects the approaching savages. With the exception of this newly released section, the material on this track comprises what was formerly titled "Land of the Sand People" ("Sandpeople" on the original album).

Track 8, Tales of a Jedi Knight/Learn About the Force: This track is actually four

separate chronological cues of which only the first has been previously available (as the middle of three cues in "Inner City"). The latter three cues all take place in Ben's house and end with the first view of the Death Star.

Track 9, Burning Homestead: Previous title: "The Return Home."

Track 10, Mos Eisley Spaceport: In the Special Edition only, the middle portion of this cue (featuring a bouncing trombone, piano and bongo) has been replaced with a piece from "Dianoga" (disc 2, track 6). The unedited cue matches the original version of the film. On the 4-CD anthology this cue was identified as "A Hive of Villainy."



Track 13, Binary Sunset (alternate): When we were given access to the 16-track music reels I first carefully studied the scoring log and came across the cue for the sunset on the second day of recording. Two takes were laid down but both were marked N.G. Williams and the LSO moved on to the next cue. A week later the cue was re-recorded and one of the takes was selected. I realized that the earlier recording was the original version of the piece as described in the liner notes for the original album. A bit of deductive reasoning led us to the premiere release of this fascinating alternate version. This piece and the first two takes in the "Main Title Archive" are all that was taken from the 16-track reels.

Disc Two

Track 2, The Millennium Falcon/Imperial Cruiser Pursuit: "The Millennium Falcon" was the last part of "Inner City" on previous releases, although the original album presented a truncated version of it. In the Special Edition this cue is now split in half by the addition of Han Solo's encounter with Jabba the Hutt in the Falcon's docking bay. The new scene is tracked with two cues from *Return of the Jedi*: "The Pit of Carkoon" and "Bounty for a Wookiee."

The first few seconds of "Imperial Cruiser Pursuit" have been previously unavailable until now. This cue was formerly called "Blasting Off," and in the Special Edition an extension has been executed in order to accommodate an added shot of the Millennium Falcon's lift-off.

Track 3, Destruction of Alderaan: A few seconds towards the end of this cue are "dialed out" in the film sound mix.

Track 4, The Death Star/The Stormtroopers: In the film, "The Death Star" contains some repeating bars and therefore runs longer. On previous releases, this cue was the first of three segments of the "Inner City" track. Now it is followed by "The Stormtroopers," the longest of the previously unavailable cues (not counting the alternate "Binary Sunset" and "Main Title" takes). This music is heard as Han and the others emerge from the smuggling compartments aboard the Falcon, ending as they enter the Death Star control room.

Track 5, Wookiee Prisoner/Detention Block Ambush: The first cue was previously entitled "Mouse Robot," and the second was the first cue heard in the track called "The Last Battle." For the Special Edition, a portion of "Wookiee Prisoner" is used for the extended sequence of the stormtroopers searching for the droids in the Tatooine desert.

Track 6, Shootout in the Cell Bay/Dianoga: The first cue made up the first half of "Rescue of the Princess" on prior releases, while "Dianoga" has previously been the ending of "The Trash Compactor." "Dianoga" is the only cue written for the film and then dropped from the scene, which has been enhanced for the Special Edition but still plays unscored. The cue, however, has now been utilized in the Special Edition for the new establishing shots of Mos Eisley spaceport (see above).

Track 7, The Trash Compactor: The beginning of this cue is cut from the film up to the chord preceding the Imperial theme. On previous albums it was called "The Walls Converge" and ended with "Dianoga" (see above).

Track 8, The Tractor Beam/Chasm Crossfire: On prior releases "The Tractor Beam" was the second cue heard in "The Last Battle," while "Chasm Crossfire" made up the second half of "Rescue of the Princess."

track runs through Han's departure on a tauntaun in search of Luke and matches the cut of the film as originally scored. When synched to the film it becomes apparent that some minor editing was done to Luke's introduction and Han's entrance into the command center. It was also decided to re-score the probot sequence with a subdued, quiet piece instead of the bombastic rendition of Vader's theme heard here. On the original album the first track was called "Star Wars (Main Theme)" but



Top: "Launch from the Fourth Moon" (formerly "Standing By") is linked to the rest of the "Battle of Yavin" cues for the first time on CD. Bottom: Luke is contacted by Ben in *Empire's* previously unreleased "Vision of Obi-Wan."

Track 9, Ben Kenobi's Death/TIE Fighter Attack: Some repeating bars are audible in the film mix in order to extend the first cue.

Track 10, THE BATTLE OF YAVIN: At long last, "Launch from the Fourth Moon" (formerly "Standing By") can be heard leading directly into "X-Wings Draw Fire," recreating the final battle as heard in the film. "X-Wings Draw Fire" and "Use the Force" finished up "The Last Battle" on previous albums.

The Empire Strikes Back

Disc One

Track 1, 20th Century Fox Fanfare: Newman's fanfare is this time conducted by Williams at the *Empire* sessions. This version was used on all four CDs of the boxed set and on many other Fox releases.

Track 2, Main Title/The Ice Planet Hoth: As specified in the CD liner notes, this cue begins a sequence of 16 minutes of continuous music, much of which was cut, re-scored, or tracked. This

only included the first three minutes of this cue, after which it segued to "Mynock Cave" (see track 10). A shorter re-recording of the cue as presented here was included on Charles Gerhardt's *Empire* album and was called "Main Title—The Imperial Probe." On the 4CD anthology it was identified as "Main Title/The Imperial Probe (extended version)" in order to distinguish it from Gerhardt's version and the re-scored film version (see track 4). For the new release, assigning a new title to this long version simplified the issue.

Track 3, The Wampa's Lair/Vision of Obi-Wan/Snowspeeders Take Flight: Continuing immediately, this track opens with music heard in the film as Luke is seen in the ice creature's cave. (Of this writing, it is not known if this scene is being extended for the Special Edition; if so, the music will be edited accordingly.) In the film, the

music is dialed out as Luke emerges into the blizzard, and the scenes of Han searching and the droids keeping vigil play without the scoring heard here. A slightly abbreviated version of this cue made up the first half of "The Heroics of Luke and Han" on the original 2LP set, but this was eliminated from the CD version. It was restored on the 4CD anthology and identified by its cue sheet title, "Luke's Escape."



The previously unreleased "Betrayal at Bespin"

The previously unreleased "Vision of Obi-Wan" follows immediately and was intended to begin during the scene in which the shield door of the Rebel base is closed for the night. In the film this beginning was dropped, and the music instead starts at the cut to Luke lying in the snow, continuing through his instructions from Ben.

Again following immediately, "Snowspeeder Rescue" is the original version of the scene in which Rogue Flight searches for Luke and Han. Except for a brief snippet, edited sections of "Hyperspace" (disc 2, track 11) are used in its place and a piece of "The Wampa's Lair" (see above) is heard as Luke is rejuvenated in the bacta tank. In the film as scored by Williams, this cue would have ended in Luke's hospital room over outtake footage which showed Luke's bandages being removed and Leia's entrance. In the scene, Luke and Leia share a tender moment and a passionate kiss, as glimpsed in the comic adaptation and the first theatrical preview (which can be seen on the boxed set laserdisc).

"Snowspeeder Rescue" comprised the first half of "Rebels at Bay" on the original *Empire* double album. For the 4CD anthology it was called "Luke's Rescue."

Track 4, The Imperial Probe/Aboard the Executor: Unlike *Star Wars'* alternate "Binary Sunset," which was never used in the film or heard on any soundtrack album, I hoped to place this previously unreleased alternate opening of *Empire* into the musical sequence because it was actually used. However, I did not want to change Williams's original beginning for the film, which has become a familiar opening for the *Empire* album.

The solution presented itself very clearly: In the film, the narrative returns to the probot once all the wampa business is resolved, so it seemed fit-

ting to begin this new dramatic sequence with this short cue. Added to it is a short transitional cue which Williams wrote for Han's entrance into the Rebel base when it was decided to drop the bulk of "The Ice Planet Hoth" (see above). Still dissatisfied, the filmmakers elected to track the transition with a snippet from "Arrival on Dagobah" (track 7). This short cue, heard in the *Empire* radio shows, works nicely as a transition to "Aboard the

Executor." This previously unreleased cue plays over the command center sequence in which the shield of the probe is detected and continues through the scene where Han destroys it. This leads to a grand statement of Vader's theme as the action moves to the Imperial starfleet. In the film, the first portion of this cue was cut, and the starfleet sequence was replaced with the opening of "The Imperial March" (disc 2, track 1), Williams's formal and now-famous concert version of the theme. This was then combined with the ending of the cue as heard here.

Track 5, THE BATTLE OF HOTH: In the film, minor music edits occur in "The Ion Cannon," "Beneath the AT-AT," and "Escape in the Millennium Falcon." The opening bars of "Imperial Walkers," featuring rhythmic piano, were eliminated entirely. The previous title for "The Ion Cannon" was "Drawing the Battle Lines/Leia's Instructions," while "Imperial Walkers" was formerly called "The Battle in the Snow."

"Beneath the AT-AT" made up the second half of "Rebels at Bay" on the original album but was called "Luke's First Crash" on the 4CD set as it was on Gerhardt's re-recording. "Escape in the Millennium Falcon" comprised the second half of "The Heroics of Luke and Han" on the original double LP, while both the anthology and Gerhardt album referred to it as "The Rebels Escape Again."

Track 7, Arrival on Dagobah: The music which opens this track was formerly called "Crash Landing," and is heard after Luke's fighter lands in a swamp. The second cue of this track is previously unreleased and plays as Luke sets up camp, ending with the surprise appearance of the creature who will soon be revealed as the Jedi master.

Track 8, Luke's Nocturnal Visitor: This cue was written for the scene in which the unidentified Yoda rummages through Luke's survival gear. It

was cut from the film except for the very end, but even this was modified in the film to eliminate the rising flutes. On previous albums this selection was the second half of "The Training of a Jedi Knight" (see track 11).

Track 9, Han Solo and the Princess: *Empire's* love theme is heard here, followed by the scene in which Vader converses with the Emperor. It is mentioned here only to note that the composer arranged a highly recommended, full concert version of the love theme for Charles Gerhardt's re-recording of the score (Varèse Sarabande VCD 47204; reissued as VSD-5353).

Track 10, Jedi Master Revealed/Mynock Cave: On previous albums, the first cue in this track was the opening part of "City in the Clouds" (disc 2, track 5). Here it is followed by "Mynock Cave," which begins with a bold statement of Vader's theme scored for the starfleet's bombing of the asteroid in which the Falcon is hiding. The cue was intended to play over the surprise appearance of the mynock and end with the Falcon's narrow escape from the mouth of a space slug. In the film, this cue was eliminated up to the point where Han and Leia emerge into the "cave."

The portion of the cue used in the film was heard (albeit with some further edits) on the original 2LP *Empire* set as the end of "Star Wars (Main Theme)." It was missing from the 4CD boxed set but is now restored and presented in its entirety for the first time.

Track 11, The Training of a Jedi Knight/The Magic Tree: This cue was intended for the first training sequence, in which Luke carries Yoda on his back. It was completely cut from the film but has always been included on the soundtrack release where it has previously been combined with "Luke's Nocturnal Visitor" to make up a cue of the same title used here. Now the actual ending of the cue can be heard, a section which was also included on the Gerhardt re-recording where it was called "May the Force Be with You."

"The Magic Tree" plays intact in the film except for the ending transition to Vader's ship. This was replaced with a snippet of "The Imperial March" (disc 2, track 1) and the last drum-roll from "Aboard the Executor" (disc 1, track 4).

Disc Two

Track 3, Attacking a Star Destroyer: Previous title: "Attack Position."

Track 4, Yoda and the Force: This cue contains a minor edit in the film version and its ending, like that of "The Magic Tree," was dropped in favor of some edited bars from "The Imperial March" and that "Aboard the Executor" drum-roll again.

Track 5, Imperial Starfleet Deployed/City in the Clouds: The first and previously unreleased cue was scored to begin as soon as Vader says, "Apology accepted, Captain Needa." In the film, the music doesn't appear until just before the Falcon is revealed attached to the Avenger. The very end of the cue is also dialed out, as are the first

few notes of "City in the Clouds." This subsequent cue also contains some minor edits in the film version and its ending (as Lando appears) was completely dialed out. However, the addition of new shots in the Special Edition has enabled more of the music to be heard. The four-note choral section was reduced to a murmur on previous mixes but is now clearly audible.

Track 7, Betrayal at Bespin: This track comprises three previously unreleased cues, beginning with Luke's launch from Dagobah and ending with Han in Vader's torture chamber. The very last note was heard on the original *Empire* album as the ending of "Departure of Boba Fett" (see track 9).

Track 8, Deal with the Dark Lord: Another previously unreleased cue, this plays over the sequence in the Cloud City prison cell.

Track 9, Carbon Freeze/Darth Vader's Trap/Departure of Boba Fett: This lengthy track was presented on the 4CD boxed set with the exception of a short dissonant section of "Carbon Freeze" which is heard at least three times in the radio show. It is actually Williams's original music for the raising and subsequent dropping of the carbonite block, which he later replaced with the dramatic violin rendition of the love theme that immediately follows the dissonant section. Not

wanting to frustrate any fellow completists I elected to combine the two versions together.

For "Darth Vader's Trap" (called "Luke Pursues the Captives" on the anthology), only the first part is heard in the film, the music dialing out as Luke enters the carbon chamber. "Departure of Boba Fett" begins as Lando's guards take over the stormtroopers, but in the film version this cue is edited, dialing out entirely as Boba Fett's ship lifts off. As originally scored, the music covered this entire sequence as well as the continuation of the duel. The Force theme and Yoda's theme would have been heard as Luke leaps from the carbon pit and retrieves his lightsaber. The cue ends as Vader is driven off the edge of the platform. Under the same title, a shorter version of this latter cue was heard on the original 2LP set (see track 7).

Track 10, The Clash of Lightsabers: Previous title: "The Duel."

Track 11, Rescue from Cloud City/Hyperspace: In the film, some minor editing was done to the end of "Rescue from Cloud City," to shorten a shot of Lando emerging from the Falcon's top hatch. "Hyperspace," meanwhile, was extended for an editorially created scene in which Piett orders the tractor beam prepared. (Note the reversed insignia, indicating that the film has been

flip-flopped; most of the shots appear taken from the scene in which Vader orders the fleet deployed.) On the 4CD set, "Rescue from Cloud City" was called "Losing a Hand."

Track 12, The Rebel Fleet/End Title: In 70mm versions of the film, the final scene began with this cue. Preparations of these prints began before the film was "locked," so the 35mm version contains several differences (see sidebar). The most prominent is the inclusion of extra dialogue and a few additional effects shots to the closing scene. The re-edited sequence required the tracking of a section of "Yoda and the Force" to precede "The Rebel Fleet." For both prints, a few bars of "The Rebel Fleet" were eliminated.

This track was called "Finale" on the original album and the Gerhardt recording and "Finale/End Credits" on the anthology set.

Return of the Jedi

Disc One

Track 2, Main Title/Approaching the Death Star/Tatooine Rendezvous: Unlike *Empire*, there was only one difference between the 35mm and 70mm versions of *Jedi*: the 70mm version used the "Main Title" from *Empire* (referring to the music recording, not the visuals), but no one has been able to determine why. Presented here, of course, is the *Jedi* recording. Although "Approaching the Death Star" was used as a title on the boxed set and on Gerhardt's re-recording, the original *Jedi* album began with "Main Title (The Story Continues)." This cue is drastically truncated in the film version, and here the complete version is followed by the previously unreleased "Tatooine Rendezvous," which features the only music in the *Trilogy* scored for a cut sequence. A reprise of Vader's theme is heard as the Dark Lord enters the empty throne room and makes telepathic contact with Luke. The action moves to Tatooine where Luke has a brief exchange with his father. The droids then appear and Luke is seen placing the lightsaber in R2-D2's head. The music then picks up as it is heard in the film when the droids arrive at Jabba's palace, although brief cues for the opening of the door and for the droids' reception by Bib Fortuna (also heard here) were eliminated.

Track 3, The Droids Are Captured: This previously unreleased track is heard as Threepio and Artoo are marched off to Jabba's droid labor pool.

Track 4, Bounty for a Wookiee: Also previously unreleased, the beginning of this cue was replaced in the film with snippets from "Father and Son" (disc 2, track 3).

Track 5, Han Solo Returns: This track, which formerly contained the subtitle "At the Court of Jabba the Hutt," has a complicated history. On the original *Jedi* album and in the 4CD boxed set, this track ended with a portion of Jabba the Hutt's theme which did not match the film. Judging from other recordings by Williams and Gerhardt, it was clear that this was the ending of Williams's formal concert suite called "Jabba the Hutt." On the *Jedi* scoring session tapes, this cue ends as it is heard here, with a similar rendition of Jabba's theme, but one that does match the scene even though it is different than what is heard on screen.

This, then, is Williams's original cue for the scene in which Han and Leia are captured by Jabba, although only a few notes of it are heard in the film. That left the question of where the section of the Jabba concert suite came from, since it is not on the scoring sessions. It was determined that this concert suite was most likely recorded by Williams in its entirety at the *album* recording sessions for *Jedi*, which took place separately from the main scoring sessions. It was here that the concert suites "Luke and Leia," "Parade of the Ewoks," and "The Forest Battle" were recorded, as well as the "End Title" and the revised "Sail Barge Assault" (track 7). None of these pieces are on the scoring session masters (but the earlier unused alternate version of "Sail Barge Assault" is [track 15]).

70mm VARIATIONS STRIKE BACK

There have been a variety of magazine articles addressing the variations in prints of *Star Wars* (mostly in its sound mix). Amazingly, no one has documented the fact that the 70mm version of *The Empire Strikes Back* had several significant audio and visual differences from the 35mm print later released on video and laserdisc. These mostly concerned the uses of wipes, dissolves and hard cuts. Michael Matessino, who saw both versions around 70 times (once for each millimeter) in 1980, kindly documented some of the differences:

- After the probot lands on Hoth and moves frame left, there is an optical wipe to the overhead shot of Luke on his tauntaun, instead of a straight cut.
- After Luke wanders through the snow and falls face down, there is an optical wipe to Han instead of a straight cut.
- The bacta tank scene starts on a close-up of Two-OneBee and pans right to a close-up of Luke in the tank. It then cuts to FX-7 extending its arm to the tank. There is no cut to Leia, Han and Threepio observing.
- In the snow battle scene, when Luke drops into the snow after throwing a charge into the Imperial walker, the AT-ST in the background has no atmospheric depth. It looks too close and small.
- In the Emperor scene, the hologram of the Emperor is already present in the first shot—it does not "tune in" gradually.
- The Imperial fleet establishing shot after the magic tree scene has a different TIE fighter sound effect.
- When Luke falls from Cloud City into the Millennium Falcon, the Falcon's radar dish is not added to the shot.
- The telepathy between Luke and Vader during the "Hyperspace" cue has straight cuts instead of quick dissolves.
- In the final scene, there is no tracked music from "Yoda and the Force." The scene begins with the first establishing shot of the rebel fleet, then cuts inside the Falcon for Lando to say "Luke, we're ready for take-off" (but a different take of this is used). After Luke says (voice over), "Good luck, Lando," scene cuts to inside the Rebel cruiser where Luke says "I'll meet you at the rendezvous," etc. Not in this version are two more establishing shots of the fleet and an interim effects shot over which Lando says, "When we find Jabba the Hutt and that bounty hunter we'll contact you."

Despite our efforts, the album recording session masters could not be located, so all of the above have been taken from the master analog reels for the completed original *Jedi* album. Since the album only offered a small portion of the Jabba theme it was decided to eliminate this and present the unedited original version of "Han Solo Returns." There are many re-recordings of the full "Jabba the Hutt" suite including Gerhardt's (RCA RCD 14748), Sony Classical's *John Williams Conducts John Williams: The Star Wars Trilogy* (SK 45947), and (my own favorite) *Out of this World* with John Williams and the Boston Pops (Philips 411 185-2).

So why was the edit made in the first place? The best theory is that when it was decided that *Jedi* would only be one LP instead of two, Williams must have felt that a slightly more formal rendition of Jabba's theme was more appropriate than the cue as written. That leaves the question of the other music heard in the film as Jabba captures Han and Leia. Keep reading...

Track 6, Luke Confronts Jabba/Den of the Rancor/Sarlacc Sentence: The previously unavailable "Luke Confronts Jabba" runs longer than the film sequence because a short sinister version of Jabba's theme has been added to it. This short piece was part of the re-scored version of "Han Solo Returns" (see above). In the film, the end of "Luke Confronts Jabba" was also replaced by a section of "The Dark Side Beckons."

"Den of the Rancor" also runs longer than the film scene, accounting for additional footage which had Luke leaping to the overhead grating as the beast grasps for him. On Gerhardt's re-recording and on the 4CD anthology, this cue was called "Fight in the Dungeon."

"Sarlacc Sentence" is the previously unreleased extension of this sequence as Luke, Han and Chewie are told of their gruesome fate.

Track 7, The Pit of Carkoon/Sail Barge Assault: This track opens with a previously unreleased cue, heard as the sail barge arrives at the sarlacc pit. Only the very beginning is heard in the film, but the complete cue was intended to lead directly into "Sail Barge Assault."

This second version of "Sail Barge Assault" (see track 15) was recorded at the later album sessions (see track 5). Even after this re-scoring, the sequence was editorially changed to a drastic degree so that in the film there are a myriad of edits and repeated phrases. All previous releases have identified "Sail Barge Assault" as "The Return of the Jedi."

Track 8, The Emperor Arrives/The Death of Yoda/Obi-Wan's Revelation: The "call-to-arms" fanfare heard at the beginning of "The Emperor Arrives" and the winds accompanying the Emperor's first appearance were replaced by simpler renditions of Vader's and the Emperor's themes (see disc 2, track 6). The ending of this cue was replaced in the film by the ending of "Emperor's Throne Room" (disc 2, track 4).

The beginning of "The Death of Yoda" was replaced by a short section of "Luke's Nocturnal

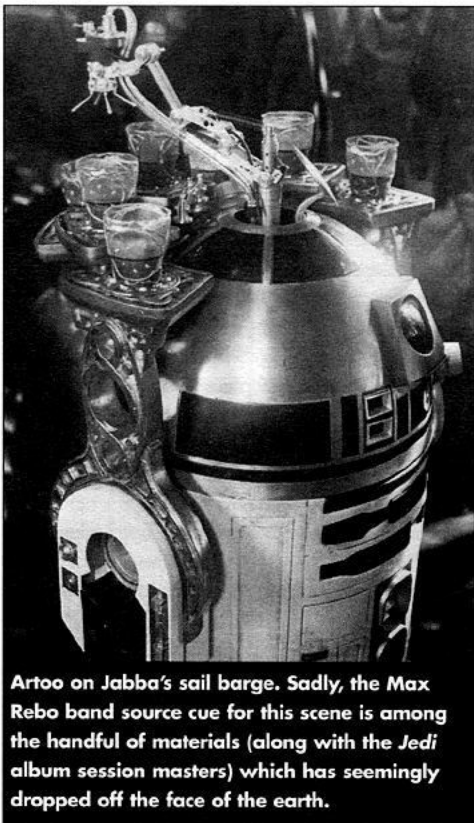
Visitor" from *Empire*, while the previously unreleased "Obi-Wan's Revelation" was dropped entirely except for the ending statement of Princess Leia's theme and the transition to the Rebel armada.

Track 9, Alliance Assembly: Previously unreleased, this pleasant cue is extended in the film through the repetition of musical phrases.

Track 10, Shuttle Tydirium Approaches Endor: The music for the view of the Emperor's command tower was rescored to eliminate the synthesizer heard in the original version (used on the 4CD boxed set). A simple revision was used in the film but is heard under screeching TIE Fighters. When the two were played together, we found that the synthesizer became sufficiently buried without destroying the integrity of the original composition. On the boxed set anthology this track was called "Faking the Code."

Track 11: Speeder Bike Chase/Land of the Ewoks: A long sequence of previously unreleased music, beginning with "Speeder Bike Chase," kicks off the action on Endor.

"Land of the Ewoks" is comprised of five consecutive cues, which in the film were altered with



Artoo on Jabba's sail barge. Sadly, the Max Rebo band source cue for this scene is among the handful of materials (along with the *Jedi* album session masters) which has seemingly dropped off the face of the earth.

one extension and one moment of Leia's initial encounter with Wicket where the music is dialed out. High staccato trumpets scored for an establishing shot of the Death Star were replaced by a section of music from a few bars later. An unused alternate version of Vader's conversation with the Emperor has been added here as an extension. The track ends as Han and the others are surrounded by spear-brandishing Ewoks.

Track 12, The Levitation/Threepio's Bedtime Story: Another previously unavailable track, "The

Levitation" is drastically reconfigured in the film to conform to the re-editing of the scene. (In a widescreen version, look for shots of Artoo standing free at the edge of the frame long before the Ewoks cut his binds.)

Track 13, Jabba's Baroque Recital: The original expectation was to include the complete "Jabba the Hutt" concert suite following track 2. When the album session master failed to materialize, it was decided to keep the intact version of "Han Solo Returns" (track 5) and give the extra space to this previously unreleased source cue. Many fans have asked for the source music performed by Max Rebo, but those cues, along with the film version of "Lapti Nek" are assumed to be on some Joseph Williams master which, like the album sessions, seems to have vanished, despite the use of this music in the documentary *From Star Wars to Jedi: The Making of a Saga*.

Track 14, Jedi Rocks: Speaking of "Lapti Nek," the familiar album version was originally to be placed here until we learned that the song was being dropped. The new song was composed and arranged by Jerry Hey. So you "Lapti Nek" lovers, hold on to your boxed sets!

Track 15, Sail Barge Assault (alternate): Disc one needed to end with a bang, so this cue, which made its debut on the boxed set as "The Return of the Jedi (alternate)," seemed to fit perfectly as a follow-up to the two Jabba-related source cues.

Disc Two

Track 3, Brother and Sister/Father and Son/The Fleet Enters Hyperspace/Heroic Ewok: This track forms a particularly graceful transition from concert suites back to underscore. In the film, "Brother and Sister" is preceded by a section of "Yoda and the Force" from *Empire*. Here the cue is followed, as in the film, by the previously unavailable "Father and Son." For this cue, the ending statement of Luke's theme was dropped and replaced by the ending of "Emperor's Throne Room" once again.

"The Fleet Enters Hyperspace" begins with a short section of previously unreleased material which leads to the action music as Lando leads the fighters towards Endor.

Track 4, Emperor's Throne Room: Previous title: "The Emperor Confronts Luke."

Track 5, THE BATTLE OF ENDOR I: This track opens with "Into the Trap," which in the film is drastically reconfigured to fit the scene. This is followed by "Forest Ambush," the only portion of previously unreleased music in this track, heard as the Emperor begins tempting Luke and continuing as the Rebels are captured on Endor.

"Scout Walker Scramble" contains a sweetener for the Ewoks' sling shots which was not included on the 4CD anthology. Some minor edits were made for this cue in the film version, but "Prime Weapon Fires" was kept intact. These two cues made up one track on the 4CD box called "First Ewok Battle/Fight with the Fighters." On Varujan Kojian's re-recording with the Utah Symphony

(Varese Sarabande VCD 47201) the latter cue was called "Fight with TIE Fighters."

Track 6, The Lightsaber/The Ewok Battle: The rescored sections of "The Emperor Arrives" are presented as the beginning of this track and lead into the scene where Luke retrieves his weapon from the Emperor's side. All are previously unreleased, but in the film the end of the cue was replaced with a snippet of "The Dark Side Beckons."

"The Ewok Battle" is the film version of the sequence in which the Imperial forces are led into a series of primitive, but effective traps. The cue is snipped slightly in the film. The original *Jedi* album only featured the concert version "The Forest Battle" (see track 12), which is a straightforward adaptation of the material heard here.

Track 7, THE BATTLE OF ENDOR II: For the film version, the beginning of "Leia Is Wounded—The Duel Begins" was replaced with a section from "Scout Walker Scramble." A sweetener was also added as Vader falls down the stairs, which was not included on the boxed set. The next cue, "Overtaking the Bunker," is a short, previously unavailable section connecting the first duel sequence to Vader's search for Luke beneath the throne room.

For the anthology set, "Leia Is Wounded—The Duel Begins" was called "Leia Is Wounded/Luke and Vader Duel," while "The Dark Side Beckons" was entitled "Final Duel/Into the Death Star." On the original *Jedi* album only, "The Emperor's Death" was simply called "The Emperor."

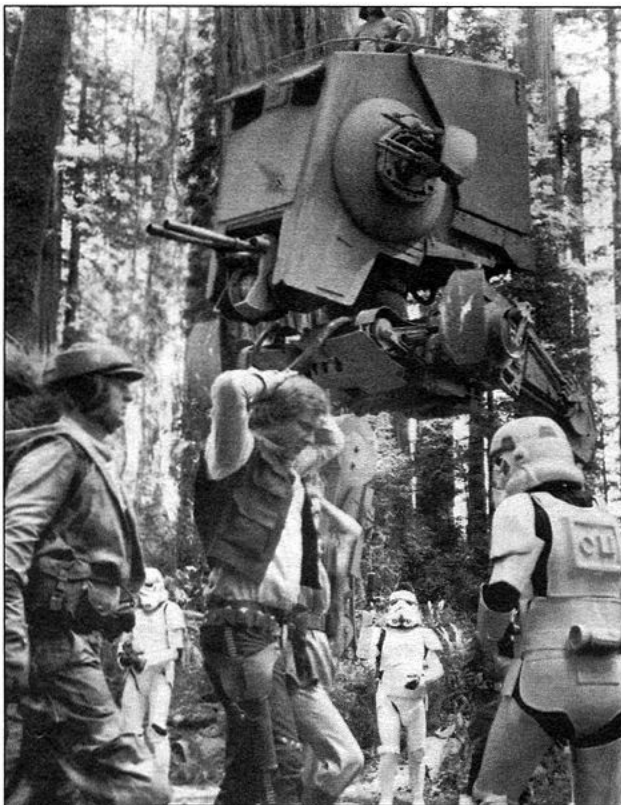
Track 8, THE BATTLE OF ENDOR III: The first cue of this track, "Superstructure Chase," is previously unreleased, although it is comprised of material heard in "Ben Kenobi's Death," "TIE Fighter Attack," and "X-Wings Draw Fire" from *Star Wars*. Some of the arrangements, as in "Sail Barge Assault," follow those found in the original *Star Wars* concert suites as heard on re-recordings by Charles Gerhardt (BMG Classics 2698-2-RG) and Zubin Mehta (London 417846-2).

Prior to the boxed set release, "Darth Vader's Death" was available only on Kojan's re-recording with the Utah Symphony. The beginning of "The Main Reactor," the final cue of this track, was replaced in the film by a snippet of *Empire's* "Rescue from Cloud City." This cue was called "Through the Flames" on the anthology set.

Track 9, Leia's News/Light of the Force: An alternate version of "Leia's News" made its debut on the boxed set, on which both versions of this cue were called "Leia Breaks the News." On the original album, the film version of the cue (main-

tained here) made up the first half of a track called "Rebel Briefing."

The second half of that track also had two versions, both of which were presented on the boxed set as "Funeral Pyre for a Jedi." Here, re-titled "Light of the Force," the two have been combined, since the first version was contained on the original *Jedi* album and the second remains in the Special Edition.



Han and his strike force are captured in "Forest Ambush," the only previously unreleased cue in "The Battle for Endor I."

Track 10, Victory Celebration/End Title: The finale of *Jedi* has now been expanded and entirely rescored by John Williams. The new piece, "Victory Celebration," was recorded in London in late November 1996, and features ethnic percussion, children's choir, a priest call, and an 85-piece orchestra performing an all-new theme.

This new music covers Special Edition footage of celebrations taking place throughout the galaxy, and also replaces "Ewok Celebration," for which both album and film versions have been eliminated. So once again, hold on to those 4CD sets!

The "End Title" remains intact, ending, incidentally, with a reprise of the throne room motif from *Star Wars* which was also part of the original 1977 concert suite. "End Title" was identified as "Finale" on previous releases.

Track 11, Ewok Feast/Part of the Tribe: Both previously unreleased Ewok source cues are presented here.

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Craig L. Byrd: How did the Star Wars project first come to your attention? How did you become involved?

John Williams: My involvement with *Star Wars* began actually with Steven Spielberg, who was, in the '70s when these films were made, and still is, a very close friend of George Lucas's. I had done two or three scores for Steven Spielberg before I met George Lucas, *Jaws* being the principal one among them. I think it was that George Lucas, when he

ting with him deciding where we would play the music and what its particular function would be for each scene.

CB: The film set any number of standards. How do you explain the *Star Wars* phenomenon as it occurred back in 1977?

JW: Well, along with others involved with the film, I was surprised at what a great success it was. I think we all expected a successful film. In my

deep past of our collective unconscious, if you like. That may be an explanation as to why it has such a broad appeal and such a strong one.

CB: You would also have to assume that the hero's journey then would be a part of that.

JW: That's right. All of these aspects of journey and heroic life and aspiration and disappointment, all of the great human subjects that this seems to touch and tap in on, must be one of the reasons for

The Star Wars Interview:

A New Talk by Craig L. Byrd

was making *Star Wars*, asked his friend Steven Spielberg who should write the music, where will he find a composer? The best knowledge I have is that Steven recommended me to George Lucas as a composer for the film, and I met him under those circumstances, and that's how it all began.

CB: How did you feel when you were first contacted about this project? Was it about one film at the time, or all three?

JW: The first contact had to do only with *Star Wars*. I didn't realize that there would be a sequel and then a sequel after that at that time. I imagine George Lucas planned it that way and perhaps even mentioned it to me at the time, but I don't remember. I was thinking of it as a singular opportunity and a singular assignment.

CB: What was your reaction when you read the script?

JW: I didn't read the script. I don't like to read scripts. When I'm talking about this I always make the analogy that if one reads a book, a novel, and then you see someone else's realization of it, there's always a slight sense of disappointment because we've cast it in our minds, and created the scenery and all the ambiance in our mind's imagination. There's always a slight moment of disappointment when we've read a script and then we see the film realized. Having said that I don't even remember if George Lucas offered me a script to read.

I remember seeing the film and reacting to its atmospheres and energies and rhythms. That for me is always the best way to pick up a film—from the visual image itself and without any preconceptions that might have been put there by the script.

CB: When you first saw an assemblage of footage, what were you looking at and how did that inspire your work?

JW: I think the film was finished when I first saw it, with the exception of some special effects shots that would have been missing. I remember some leader in there where it would say "spaceships collide here," "place explosion here," this kind of thing. But they were measured out in terms of length so that I could time the music to what I hadn't in fact specifically seen.

The first chore I really had was to spot the music of the film with George Lucas, which is to say sit-

ting with him deciding where we would play the music and what its particular function would be for each scene. I can only speculate about it along with others. I remember Joseph Campbell, the great mythologist and teacher and author, who was a friend of George Lucas's and who went to Skywalker Ranch and talked to George Lucas about the films. He began to write about the mythology, or pseudo-mythology if you like, that formed the basis of these films. I learned more from Joseph Campbell about the film, after the fact, than I did while I was working on it or watching it as a viewer.

Having said all that, I think the partial answer to your question is the success of this film must be

"If the use of symphony orchestras went out of fad in the '50s and '60s, it was just that: it was out of fad. Someone would have brought it back. It's too useful and too successful not to have it back."

due to some cross-cultural connection with the mythic aspects of the film that Campbell described to us later. The fact that the Darth Vader figure may be present in every culture, with a different name perhaps, but with a similar myth attached to it. The films surprised everyone I think—George Lucas included—in that they reached across cultural bounds and beyond language into some kind of mythic, shared remembered past—from the

its great success. I suppose for me as a composer for the film, these forces that I'm struggling to put my finger on must have been at work subconsciously. The music for the film is very non-futuristic. The films themselves showed us characters we hadn't seen before and planets unimagined and so on, but the music was—this is actually George Lucas's conception and a very good one—emotionally familiar. It was not music that might describe *terra incognita* but the opposite of that, music that would put us in touch with very familiar and remembered emotions, which for me as a musician translated into the use of a 19th century operatic idiom, if you like, Wagner and this sort of thing. These sorts of influences would put us in touch with remembered theatrical experiences as well—all western experiences to be sure. We were talking about cross-cultural mythology a moment ago; the music at least I think is firmly rooted in western cultural sensibilities.

CB: It's interesting that you brought up opera and Wagner: On a certain level it seems like the three scores are almost your "Ring Cycle." How did it become so interwoven when you originally were only scoring one film?

JW: I think if the score has an architectural unity, it's the result of a happy accident. I approached each film as a separate entity. The first one completely out of the blue, but the second one of course connected to the first one; we referred back to characters and extended them and referred back to themes and extended and developed those. I suppose it was a natural but unconscious metamorphoses of musical themes that created something that may seem to have more architectural and conscious interrelatedness than I actually intended to put there. If it's there, to the degree that it is there, it's a kind of happy accident if you like.

That may be sound deprecating—I don't mean it quite that way—but the functional aspect and the craft aspect of doing the job of these three films has to be credited with producing a lot of this unity in the musical content the listeners perceive.

CB: The album itself was in the top 20 on Billboard's charts. That was relatively unheard of for a non-pop score. How did you respond to that?

JW: I don't think we ever had in the history of

the record industry or a film business something that was so non-pop, with a small "p," reach an audience that size. I have to credit the film for a lot of this. If I had written the music without the film probably nobody ever would have heard of the music; it was the combination of things and the elusive, weird, unpredictable aspect of timing that none of us can quite get our hands around. If we could predict this kind of phenomenon or pro-

acterization and so on—just the practical aspect of sounds between dialogue that need filling up. Symphony orchestras were enormously handy for this because they're elegant and the symphony orchestra itself is one of the greatest inventions of our artistic culture. Fabulous sounds it can produce and a great range of emotional capabilities.

I think if the use of symphony orchestras went out of fad in the '50s and '60s for some reason it

recording? We won't have to be troubled with hiring freelance players, we'll just make one contractual arrangement with the London Symphony."

It also happened at that time that our friend from Hollywood, Andre Previn, was then the music director of the London Symphony. I rang him up and said, "How would it be if we borrowed your orchestra for this recording?" Andre was very positive and very excited—he had no idea what

John Williams

duce it consciously out of a group effort we would do it every year and we'd all be caliphs surrounded [laughs] with fountains of riches.

But it doesn't work that way, it's a much more elusive thing than that. Any composer who begins to write a piece would think, "this will be a successful piece." But you can't and we don't pull them out of the air that way. It also reminds us that as artists we don't work in a vacuum. We write our material, compose it or film it or whatever, but we're not alone in the vacuum, the audience is also out there and it's going to hit them. With all the aspects of happenstance and fad, and the issue of skirt length for example, which is to say style and fad, and what is à la mode? When all of these things come together and create a phenomenon like this, we then, as we're doing now, look back on it say, "Why did it happen?" It's as fascinating and inexplicable to me as to any viewer.

CB: *It's also got to be intensely gratifying.*

JW: It's enormously gratifying and it makes me feel very lucky. I'm not a particularly religious person, but there's something sort of eerie, about the way our hands are occasionally guided in some of the things that we do. It can happen in any aspect, any phase of human endeavor where we come to the right solutions almost in spite of ourselves. And you look back and you say that that almost seems to have a kind of—you want to use the word divine guidance—behind it. It can make you believe in miracles in any collaborative art form: the theatre, film, any of this, when all these aspects come together to form a humming engine that works and the audience is there for it and they're ready for it and willing to embrace it. That is a kind of miracle also.

CB: *It also changed the shape of film music. A lot of filmmakers had really abandoned the idea of big full orchestral scores.*

JW: Well, I don't know if it's fair to say the *Star Wars* films brought back symphonic scores per se. We've been using symphony orchestras since even before sound. Anyone interested in film knows that music seems to be an indispensable ingredient for filmmakers. I'm not exactly sure why. We could talk about that for days, but mood, motivation, rhythm, tempo, atmosphere, all these things, char-

acterization and so on—just the practical aspect of sounds between dialogue that need filling up. Someone would have brought it back. It's too useful and too successful not to have it back. I think after the success of *Star Wars* the orchestras enjoyed a very successful period because of that—wonderful, all to the good. I don't think we can claim that it was a renaissance really, more than just a change of fad if you'd like.

CB: *Or a little goose if nothing else.*

JW: Right. A little helping push.

CB: *All three scores were recorded with the London Symphony Orchestra. Was there a particular reason why that orchestra was chosen?*

JW: We decided to record the music for the films in London. I say we, I think George Lucas decided that. He shot some of the film in Africa and England and did some of his post-production work there. It was part of the plan that we would record there and that was fine with me. I had done *Fiddler on the Roof* and some other large-scale productions in England and I knew the orchestras

Williams considered the Trilogy scores as individual, stand-alone pieces at the time, but as a single, large work in retrospect.

very well and liked them; I was very comfortable recording there.

We were going to use a freelance orchestra, as I had done with *Fiddler* and other films. I remember having a conversation with the late Lionel Newman, who was then the music director of the 20th Century Fox studios, and we were talking about the practical plans of when to record and where and so on, booking facility stages and the rest of it. He suggested to me, "Why don't we just use the London Symphony Orchestra for this

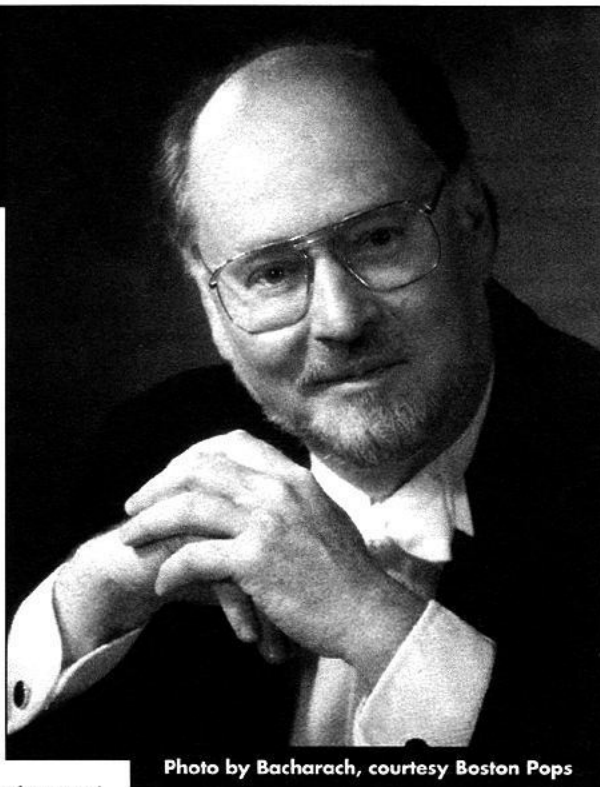


Photo by Bacharach, courtesy Boston Pops

Star Wars was going to be about or what the music would be like, but just the idea that the orchestra would have that exposure seemed to be a good plan for him. So, it was a combination of a lot of nice things. I had worked in England for years and knew the orchestras well; I knew the London Symphony well. They had played a symphony of mine under Previn's direction a few years before, and played other music of mine in concerts and so on. It was a coming together of a lot of familiar forces in a nice way and I had a good time.

CB: *At the risk of sounding like someone from Entertainment Tonight, it sounds like the Force was with everyone involved.*

JW: [laughs] The Force did seem to be with us, yes.

CB: *How do you see the scores changing from one film to another, through the three films?*

JW: The scores do seem unified to me, now that I look back on the four, five or six years involved in making the films, with the distance of time making it seem to be one short period now in my mind. The scores all seem to be one slightly longer score than the usual film score. If that contradicts what I said earlier about writing one at a time, I hear that contradiction, but given the distance of time now I can see that it's one effort really. The

scores are all one thing and a theme that appeared in film two that wasn't in film one was probably a very close intervalic, which is to say note-by-note-by-note, relative to a theme that we'd had.

I mean we would have the Princess Leia theme as the romantic theme in the first film, but then we'd have Yoda's music, which was unexpectedly romantic, if you like, in the second film, but not such a distant relative, musically speaking, inter-

and heroic, in a very different way than Darth Vader of course, and a very different tonality—a very uplifted kind of heraldic quality. Larger than he is. His idealism is more the subject than the character itself, I would say.

CB: *And Han Solo?*

JW: I would make similar comments there about Solo's music. Although they overlap a lot; I mean it's one thing really in my mind, a lot of it. And of

than a little I think.

The response of the audience that you ask about is something that I certainly can't explain. I wish I could explain that. But maybe the combination of the audio and the visual hitting people in the way that it does must speak to some collective memory—we talked about that before—that we don't quite understand. Some memory of Buck Rogers or King Arthur or something earlier in the cultural salts of our brains, memories of lives lived in the past, I don't know. But it has that kind of resonance—it resonates within us in some past hero's life that we've all lived.

Now we're into a kind of Hindu idea, but I think somehow that's what happens musically. That's what in performance one tries to get with orchestras, and we talk about that at orchestral rehearsals: that it isn't only the notes, it's this reaching back into the past. As creatures we don't know if we have a future, but we certainly share a great past. We remember it, in language and in pre-language, and that's where music lives—it's to this area in our souls that it can speak.

CB: *Can you tell me what it was like working with George Lucas on these three movies?*

JW: Working with George Lucas was always very pleasant. For a great innovator and a great creative artist and a great administrator, he's a very simple, very accessible man. Now people will hear that and they'll say he's a very private man, he's very inaccessible. I suppose that is also true. But when you're working with him as a colleague sitting in the room, he's very informal, very approachable, very reachable, and communicates very well.

In discussing the spotting of the music for the film he's very particular in a way. He would say, "The music could get bigger here, or would be softer there"—you would think these ideas would be obvious, and sometimes they are, but sometimes it's very helpful to articulate the obvious. Especially in this interpersonal way that he's able to do it, he has made it a very comfortable thing for me. When he first heard the music he liked it very well, it was encouraging—I felt positive reinforcement always with George. A lot of people will say, "Don't go in that direction"; it's always "Don't do this, don't do that." With George, my experience with him was, "That's right, keep going." With that kind of collaboration, we get better results I think. He has the secret of this naturally.

He was even then, when he hadn't done a lot of films, a very experienced filmmaker and a very serious and assiduous student of filmmaking. He brought a lot of knowledge to it and a lot of knowledge about how music could be used.

I found him pleasant, a good communicator, a good leader and an expert filmmaker. And it's quite a combination of good, positive things I think.

CB: *Are there any scenes that stand out for you?*

JW: Well I have stand-outs in my mind because of the music that we play in concerts more recently: the asteroid field I remember from, I think it was the second film. It had a musical piece that was like a ballet of flying spaceships and asteroids



"The Throne Room" from *Star Wars*, which Williams performs frequently in concerts, is one of his favorite pieces in the *Trilogy*.

valically/melodically speaking, to Princess Leia's music. So you can marry one theme right after the other. They're different, but they also marry up very well and you can interplay them in a contrapuntal way, and it will be part of a texture that is familial.

CB: *I'd like to touch on some of the characters' themes. A lot of people remember the Darth Vader theme. What was the idea behind Darth Vader and how do you see his theme?*

JW: Darth Vader's theme seemed to me to need to have, like all of the themes if possible, strong melodic identification, so that when you heard it or part of the theme you would associate it with the character. The melodic elements needed to have a strong imprint.

In the case of Darth Vader, brass suggests itself because of his military bearing and his authority and his ominous look. That would translate into a strong melody that's military, that grabs you right away, that is, probably simplistically, in a minor mode because he's threatening. You combine these thoughts into this kind of a military, ceremonial march, and we've got something that perhaps will answer the requirement here.

CB: *And then also the hero, Luke Skywalker. What about his theme?*

JW: Flourishes and upward reaching; idealistic

course the Luke Skywalker music has several themes within it also. You'd be testing my memory to ask me how I used them all and where [laughs].

CB: *At the Star Wars Special Edition screening in December, when the main theme came on, the audience responded. What were you looking for in the main theme?*

JW: The opening of the film was visually so stunning, with that lettering that comes out and the spaceships and so on, that it was clear that that music had to kind of smack you right in the eye and do something very strong. It's in my mind a very simple, very direct tune that jumps an octave in a very dramatic way, and has a triplet placed in it that has a kind of grab.

I tried to construct something that again would have this idealistic, uplifting but military flare to it. And set it in brass instruments, which I love anyway, which I used to play as a student, as a youngster. And try to get it so it's set in the most brilliant register of the trumpets, horns and trombones so that we'd have a blazingly brilliant fanfare at the opening of the piece. And contrast that with the second theme that was lyrical and romantic and adventurous also. And give it all a kind of ceremonial... it's not a march but very nearly that. So you almost kind of want to [laughs] patch your feet to it or stand up and salute when you hear it—I mean there's a little bit of that ceremonial aspect. More

colliding. That was a very effective and successful scene in my mind both musically and visually.

I remember the finale of the first film, which had that stately procession, where I made a sort of processional out of the middle theme of the main title music—for the beginning, I took the second theme of that and made a kind of imperial procession. And that was a very rewarding musical scene also. So many things, but I would say those two just right off the top of my head.

CB: *A lot of people have said that their favorite scene is the cantina scene in the first film. And they often speak of the music.*

JW: The cantina music is an anomaly, it sticks out entirely as an unrelated rib to the score. There's a nice little story if you haven't heard this, I'll tell you briefly: When I looked at that scene there wasn't any music in it and these little creatures were jumping up and down playing instruments and I didn't have any idea what the sound should be. It could have been anything: electronic music, futuristic music, tribal music, whatever you like.

And I said to George, "What do you think we should do?" And George said, "I don't know" and sort of scratched his head. He said, "Well I have an idea. What if these little creatures on this planet way out someplace, came upon a rock and they lifted up the rock and underneath was sheet music from Benny Goodman's great swing band of the 1930s on planet Earth? And they looked at this music and they kind of deciphered it, but they didn't know quite how it should go, but they tried. And, uh, why don't you try doing that? What would these space creatures, what would their imitation of Benny Goodman sound like?"

So, I kind of giggled and I went to the piano and began writing the silliest little series of old-time swing band licks, kind of a little off and a little wrong and not quite matching. We recorded that and everyone seemed to love it. We didn't have electronic instruments exactly in that period very much. They're all little Trinidad steel drums and

Wannberg who was originally a music editor and still is today.

The only thing I had to re-record was a short finale for *Return of the Jedi*, the very end of the film where George created a new scene of Ewoks celebrating. He had some ideas for new music and gave me a film without any sound but with a tempo, with Ewoks dancing and reacting and reveling in their success. You and I are now talking in January 1997; just a few weeks ago, the end of '96, I went over to London and recorded that music for the new finale. And as a matter of fact this very day that we're talking, George is dubbing that new music into the final reel of the reissue.

CB: *These films are classics. Why tinker with them now?*

JW: Well, this is a very interesting question. If the *Star Wars Trilogy* is a kind of classic, why would we want to tamper with it? I'm not particularly in favor of coloring all the old early films in black and white and might come down on the side of saying, leave things alone. That's one side of the argument.

The other side of it is true for music also. For example, every time Brahms went to hear one of his symphonies played, he would go in the audience and listen to the symphony, and the next day he would go to the Bibliothek in Vienna, get the original score out and make changes—he never could leave it alone. Some sage said that a work of art is never finished, it's only abandoned. That's really true of all of us; it's like one of our children. You never finish trying to groom it; the child could be 60 years old, and you're still saying, "Well you look better if you dress this way."

So I think George is well within the predictable and understandable and probably correct area of an artist's prerogative to continue to try to want to improve what he's done. He complained that he didn't have the animatics 20 years ago and he wants to do it now. So I think on the one hand don't tamper with it, and on the other an artist can, should and, I think, must be excused for wanting

JW: I can't speak with an expertise about film preservation, but I can talk emotionally and not as a serious art historian. I would make this observation: In the last 20 years or so, I've been very heartened—I guess we all have—by the consciousness that has emerged about preservation.

We're suddenly realizing as the 20th century comes to a close, one of the greatest cultural legacies, especially American but around the world also, is our filmmaking, and that we need to be very serious about preservation and about the archival aspects of all of these things that we do. It isn't only film, it's also music. The horror stories are myriad about the great MGM library that had *Doctor Zhivago* original music and *Singin' in the Rain* original music and musicals from the '30s and '40s—all these scores and orchestra parts that people want to perform now were all destroyed in the fire after some real estate company took over the physical lab of the studio.

The American Film Institute and other interested people, their preservation sentiments are wonderful in film and I think they should extend to original scripts that people have their marginalia on, and the original scores and sketches and orchestra parts of all this material. Imagine our grandchildren fifty, a hundred years from now, the interest that they would find in being able to take the orchestra parts to *Wizard of Oz* and sit down and play the whole score.

That is something devoutly to be wished. I don't confuse popular arts with high art. That's another discussion not suitable for this kind of time. But, however you evaluate the popular art of American filmmaking, as a high, middle, low, wherever you place it in your mind, doesn't alter the fact that this preservation task is desperately needed. I'm just delighted that we're seeing in the recent period of years people being very conscious of it, especially young people.

CB: *I understand that George Lucas is in pre-production for the first three films. Can we look forward to*

"I very much hope I can do the new trilogy, or as much of it as I'm granted the energy and time to do. There's no reason why I shouldn't be able to. I hope that that happens."

out-of-tuned kazoos and little reed instruments, you know. It was all done acoustically—it wasn't an electronic preparation as it probably would have been done today.

I think that may be also part of its success, because being acoustic it meant people had to blow the notes and make all the sounds, a little out of tune and a little behind there, a little ahead there: it had all the foibles of a not-very-good human performance.

CB: *In the Special Editions there's some added footage. Did that require any rescoring?*

JW: George has changed the lengths in some of these films for the reissue because of his improved animatics and so on. It required some changes in the music, mostly additions and subtractions of a small sort. This was all attended to by Ken

to continue to improve his or her work. That's the two answers.

The third answer could be for those traditionalists who want the original the way it is—it's there. They don't have to go; they can listen to the Brahms without his latest edition. So they can see the original version and they can also see the new, updated George Lucas wish-list for his work.

I think it's a wonderful question and the answer has to admit all of these possibilities for us to be fair.

CB: *The original negative for Star Wars was in horrible condition.*

JW: I didn't know that.

CB: *Because of the stock that they were using at the time. What is your take on the whole idea of film preservation and how that affects both the films themselves and the scores?*

another John Williams/George Lucas collaboration?

JW: Oh, I very much hope I can do the new trilogy, or as much of it as I'm granted the energy and time to do—I would welcome the opportunity and hope I will be able to do it. There's no reason why I shouldn't be able to. And I would look forward to it and I hope that that happens.

CB: *Has there been a conversation about it?*

JW: Well George is—yes, we talk about it all the time. It's more in the area of George threatening to say, you know, I'm going to get these three things done so get ready. So the conversation is kind of on that level, and he knows I'm ready and willing and hopefully able and certainly keen to do it.

CB: *It sounds like the ultimate hurry up and wait. Thank you very much.*

JW: Thank you. •

Did You Know There's No Theme for Han?

A look at the *Star Wars* scores in terms of the movies and what makes them work (or not work)

by **Lukas Kendall**

At the end of my article on the *Trilogy* scores in FSM #41/42/43 (early 1994), I said, "There you have it, folks. I am never writing anything about *Star Wars* music again."

Silly me. *Star Wars* mania is in full bloom again, and although I find this renewed obsession to be traveling point-five beyond absurdity on the nava-computer—what was originally an enjoyable, efficient children's film has been elevated to the second coming of Scientology, a cult with its own lexicon of names and dialogue, founded upon multiple financial transactions—this is a perfect time to take a more probing look at the films, and their John Williams music scores.

The *Star Wars Trilogy* is a well-told and compelling adolescent narrative that speaks to a lot of things important to children and young adults: identity, the nature and responsibility of power, the pressures and redemption of the Father. (For a great look at the well of symbolism in the *Trilogy*, read this book: *Seeing Through Movies*, edited by Mark Crispin Miller, Pantheon ISBN 0-679-72367-6, New York, 1990. It has a brilliant chapter on the Lucas/Spielberg transformation of Hollywood cinema and places the *Trilogy* in context of America and moviemaking in the '70s.) In this essay I'd like to address some of these themes in terms of the music, because for famous scores that have been analyzed endlessly in terms of missing cues, scant attention has been paid to what they are (and are not) actually evoking.

The *Star Wars* Phenomenon

I'll start by printing what was intended to be an introductory essay to the new *Star Wars* soundtrack release. As fans know, I wrote the track-by-track liner notes to the 4CD box set in 1993, while esteemed director Nicholas Meyer was commissioned to write an essay on the music overall. For these new 2CD issues, the original plan was to have Michael Matessino, who did a superlative job sequencing and editing the new albums, write the track-by-track notes, while I wrote the broader essay. I crafted a 2000-word piece which I thought eloquently and positively explained the *Star Wars* phenomenon. The essay was approved by Lucasfilm with some minor changes, but curiously, upon re-submittal, was axed. The word I got from producer Nick Redman was that Lucasfilm felt it didn't take the right tone, and was not necessary for the package. (Believe it or not, I agreed about the latter, but was disappointed by the former.)

I will spare you the first half of my "liner notes," because they towed the company line to a degree I now find uncomfortable. Basically I talked about *Star Wars*' enormous popularity and durability: that something 20 years old could still be so fresh and alive in the public's imagination, while so many other trends have gone the way of disco. I concluded that *Star Wars* was different because it fills a need:

"Unlike food or shelter, this need is a little more complicated to explain. It's a craving for entertainment and diversion; to be given two hours of pure

fun, free from earthly concerns. For children it's an opportunity to exercise that wondrous gift that deserts most of us around puberty—the ability to imagine that anything, anywhere could be a portal to another world, or a spaceship, or a bantha. For adults it's a chance to forget about taxes and work, and recollect that joyous time of childhood when imagination was commonplace—because whether it's six-shooters and horses, or laser blasters and X-wings, it's all the same tradition. There are good guys in white and bad guys in black. Amazingly, if *Star Wars* at first was a nostalgia-trip of Saturday afternoon matinees and Flash Gordon serials, it now engenders nostalgia of seeing *Star Wars* itself for the first time—a tribute to its longevity.

"Crucial to *Star Wars*' success is its perfect mix of something old and something new. For a story that deliberately takes place 'a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away,' the *Trilogy* is loaded with images and story-points drawn from the here and now. The hero on a quest, the damsel in distress, the wise old man, the villain in black—all have cultural connotations older than any individual alive. These are mythical themes; we know how the stories will end almost as soon as we see them begin. The *Trilogy*'s appeal is not bound solely to finding out who framed the senator, or if the cop's girlfriend is the killer—this is even though, for three years, the world was riveted by the questions, was Darth Vader Luke's father, and who is the Other? Now, fans everywhere know what is going to happen, but they still love to watch the films forwards and backwards, studying every nuance, living the stories over again. The films present basic human struggles which people yearn to see: It is the thrill of the Quest, the search for self-discovery, the need to feel needed. It is the coming of age in claiming one's status as an adult, and finding one's true origins. It is also the struggle to temper that desire for adventure—the pressures of adulthood, and the responsibility that comes with power. Sometimes it takes the abstraction of science fiction to address these themes to the fullest—Luke might have been a medieval prince, a settler in the old West, or an ordinary kid from 1977 Philadelphia, but each of those carries its own story-telling baggage, and drastically limited shelf-life.

"By placing Luke on a far-away desert planet of the make-believe past, *Star Wars* added the stroke of genius that allows the old to become fresh again: the new galaxy that awaits exploration, full of excitement. Never before had a whole universe been created in such vivid, imaginative detail. Signs of earth culture appear everywhere: different races have become different life forms, there's a multi-ethnic American rebellion against a colonial-

Lukas would like to extend special thanks to Raphael Atlas, Professor of Music at Smith College, Northampton, MA, who taught a class in "Music and Gender in Film" at Amherst College last spring. In a brief unit on The Empire Strikes Back, he pointed out that there's never a theme for Han Solo alone, and inspired a lot of the thinking that went into this essay.

ist, European empire, and existing technology has been extrapolated into fantastic spaceships and gizmos. The presentation, however, is completely its own, from the gritty designs of the hardware, to the myriad creatures, to the groundbreaking visual effects by ILM—even the names are memorable, ‘Tatooine,’ ‘Millennium Falcon’ and ‘Chewbacca’ carrying just the right mix of the strange and the familiar. The films move at a lightning clip, but there’s a sense that around the corner of every shot is something fantastic. If what’s on the screen is this fascinating, what is behind all those doors and walls must be even more interesting. Each location and character carries its own history: What did Han Solo do before he met Luke and Ben? What else is there in the Rebel base? There are potentially thousands of dangling, intriguing threads. *Star Wars*’ universe might be a difficult one to live in—there is a galactic civil war going on—but with its vast array of places, people and things, it seems like it would be pretty cool to visit. *Star Wars* is at once a tried-and-true, satisfying narrative, and the greatest travelogue ever created: that is what creates a phenomenon.

“The magic formula of narrative plus universe, old form and new content is equaled in John Williams’s soundtracks. The visuals are potentially abstract and alien; Williams’s melodies are concrete and seemingly as old as time. As opposed to science fiction films of the past, weird ‘spacey’ music is not necessary to explain that Tunisia is standing in for Tatooine: the visual context does that. Instead the music reaches above and beyond the immediate shot. When Luke and Leia struggle to escape stormtroopers, the music communicates not merely the pace and excitement of the chase, but the fact that this is Luke’s story, his adventure coming to the fore. The one alternate selection contained on this album shows just how seriously Williams’s music affects the image. In the ‘Binary Sunset’ cue used in the film, the only one fans have known—and one of the most stirring in the *Trilogy*—the swelling version of the minor-mode theme for Ben and the Force conveys Luke’s ache for adventure, and foreshadows his link to the Force, his predestination to become a leader and a Jedi. In Williams’s first recorded take of the cue, the music features a new, dark theme, like a ticking-clock orchestral lament for lost dreams—‘I can’t believe I’m stuck here another season.’ One could surmise that any instant in the film could have been scored in a dozen different ways. It is the genius of John Williams, with George Lucas as the galactic/mythic tour guide, that every moment has come out as brilliantly as it has. Even when not using the recurring themes, just the orchestrations recall the correct mood from the past associations of the instruments: trumpets for royal fanfares (the main title) or a dirge for the dead (the Jawas early in ‘Burning Homestead’); timpanies (pitched low percussion) and snare drums for the military; strings for romance; a flute for Princess Leia. You can even imagine that if Princess Leia played an instrument, it would be flute.

“The through-composed nature of John Williams’s music has contributed to the *Trilogy*’s longevity. Even when the films were brand-new, they felt like they had existed forever, just waiting to be watched, relaying events in the past tense. The cues have beginnings, middles and ends; this implies that the composer knows what is going to happen, which implies that everything has *already* happened. This is in contrast to music scores which back off from melody, laying down atmospheres instead, afraid of ‘tipping off’ the audience. But again, the *Star Wars* phenomenon is not reliant on a particular moment of the present. It has no ‘faddish’ quality which will be lost next week at the box office—in musical context, no wah-wah guitars or psychedelic rock. Even the source music for the cantina band is a variation of Benny Goodman jazz, itself several decades inscribed into the past at the time of the film’s release.

“With this new, fully chronological and complete *Star Wars* soundtrack album, John Williams takes us on a tour of a galaxy with the narrative as merely a guide... For this 20th anniversary Special Edition rerelease, fans can sit back and purely enjoy the music—because there’s no need to keep a mental check-list of what’s missing and what goes where. That’s all been done. Instead, enjoy having the music-track virtually pried off the film so that you can venture within, hearing what might have been buried under sound effects, or clipped by a film edit or crossfade. John Williams will take you ‘around the corner’ of what’s on screen: into the next room, or before or after the story begins. He abstracts its visuals into musical terms, seeping into its emotional nooks and crannies. Imagine yourself ‘through the looking glass,’ at the controls of the Millennium Falcon fighting off a squadron of TIE fighters; or at the ‘primal scene’ itself: the scoring sessions with George Lucas and John Williams, as this music is heard for the first time. This is the event that *Star Wars* gives us: something that has equal capacity to go forward or back in time, right on top of the narrative or deep within the backstory. As such it will never be tied to last week’s favorite trend.”

That’s what I wrote. I thought it was an informative look at why these films and scores are successful. Its rejection says to me that Lucasfilm doesn’t want people to know why they are liked, because that gives people the tools for figuring out why they can be *disliked*. Right now, Lucasfilm cannot accept any of their literature addressing itself. Everything has to be about how great the sound quality is, what is superior about the newest incarnation of product X, or how much

you love Lucasfilm. You can’t say, “*Star Wars* is a great movie because...,” you can only talk about the lengths to which people go out of their strange worship for it. It’s all about whipping people into this feeding frenzy. *Ka-ching*. Anyway...

The Empire Reality

I was let go before I started my notes for *The Empire Strikes Back*, but I thought a lot about it and



Throughout the course of the three movies, Han is the only major character who never gets a musical theme of his own.

will now drop that load here. This is my favorite film in the *Trilogy*, as it is for many people, and I love how that has happened: at the time, *Empire* left people royally pissed. We waited three years for this, and there’s no ending? I didn’t like it either at the time (I was six in 1980, nine in 1983), preferring the rounded, happy conclusions of *Star Wars*, and later *Jedi*.

The wonderful thing in the leap between *Star Wars* and *Empire* is that the series grows up, even if that growing up is hardly complete, or pleasant. In this movie, the rebels get their butts kicked, Luke becomes a wreck, Han is left frozen in carbonite, and Leia is torn away from Luke romantically (hey, we didn’t know). Even supporting players like Threepio and Chewbacca are annoying in their respective behavior, and Lando is hardly a likable character. The movie goes from the safe world of a nine year-old to the changing, confused world of a 14 year-old. It’s not easy being 14. You’re coming to terms with your growing body (i.e. training in the Force), you’re fighting with dad, and things are being irrevocably torn apart. You’re pretty edgy. The world goes from being defined by your parents more to being defined by

you, and I have a theory in regards to that and the large amount (20+ minutes) of music which Williams wrote and recorded for *Empire*, but which was dropped from the film.

Overall, *Empire* still has more music than *Star Wars*, but of all the big adventure films Williams did with lots of underscore (*Superman*, the *Indy* films—*Jaws* and *Close Encounters* do not count, they are a different beast, '70s movies and not '80s movies), *Empire* has the most music which was written and recorded but subsequently left out. How come?

When I interviewed Williams briefly for DCC's *Raiders of the Lost Ark* CD in 1995, this was the one off-topic question I sneaked in—I was so curious and couldn't pass up the chance:

LK: *The one thing I've really been burning with curiosity about is when we went to do this Star Wars box set, we found 20 minutes of music or so from The Empire Strikes Back which was not used in the picture and I was just wondering... why?*

JW: Oh, I can't remember, probably cuts that were made, I don't think that's anything particularly exotic in our business, it happens all the time.

So much of what we do ends up on the cutting room floor; it's like a director who shoots eight miles of film to produce a one-mile product. It's part of the natural process of this kind of collaborative art.

Needless to say, this was not very helpful. I later heard that when Irvin Kershner and Williams (and presumably Lucas) were spotting the film, they kept deciding upon music for every scene, until all they could do was pick out a few moments which *shouldn't* be scored. So perhaps *Empire* was simply spotted overzealously, but to this day I wonder if it was Lucas who decided to jettison cues, or if Kershner had any say, or if a third party showed up (maybe even Williams, upon seeing the final product) and said, "Hey this thing is wall-to-wall music, it can't breathe."

In any case, whoever made that decision—was right. I wrote in my rejected notes above that part of the success of these movies is that they are told in the past tense—narratively, in the opening "A long time ago" line, they have *already happened*, and cinematically, they are dressed up to look like movies of the past, with unknown, white-bread actors, cheesy dialogue, wipe cuts, WWII-style

dogfights and, yes, symphonic music. These movies are told in the *past tense*, which is a style that works with music. It's like this composer has unearthed this movie, this artifact, and has written all of this music to help us understand it.

In *Empire*, however, with its dark tone and unexpected character turns, the movie strays from being comfortably "already over." It becomes more (not entirely) *present tense*, and carries more of the ambiguity of reality—and as some have regretted, there ain't no background music in real life. It's as if the composer got stuck. It's like he went, "Hm, I didn't expect this. I don't know what to write. You watch it!"

Tellingly, most of the unused music in *The Empire Strikes Back* concerns Luke: when he is lost in the snow on Hoth, when he is training on Dagobah, and when he is fighting Darth Vader in the Cloud City freezing chamber. (When Luke is winning, they dropped the music. When Vader starts winning, the music comes in, featuring Vader's theme.) Williams did write music for these scenes, and very good music, but the character of Luke is so unusually disturbed in this film, it's not something that could be expressed in

Recently, in a Postmodern Galaxy All Around Us....

by Lukas Kendall

Before I wrote the submitted (and unused) liner notes for the *Star Wars Special Edition* soundtrack, in a fit of being a recent liberal arts college graduate I came up with this rationalization of *Star Wars* in terms of Jameson and postmodernism. [What was I thinking?] When I faxed it to album producer Nick Redman, he said, "It would be a nice essay for you to print in your magazine, since it's certainly not going in the CD booklet." So, here it is! Hopefully actual scholars will not find it too boorish:

It is often humorous what people will accept as "real" in a movie. Somebody might carp on the fact that, due to mismatched shots, a character's shirt changes from long sleeves to a T-shirt and back again in the same scene. Somehow, it is perfectly acceptable for people to fly around the galaxy, come back from the dead, and shoot laser beams from their eyes (whatever), but if a shirt impossibly changes lengths within a scene—that's fake! The difference is that the former are licenses established for the narrative, rules that are created and adhered to, whereas the mismatched shirt is just a filmmaking goof (unless it has been established that a character has psychic control over his clothing). But who is to say that that character does not have such con-

trol, but we are just not being informed of it as the viewers?

Perhaps you are not enjoying contemplating such a pointless question. It's annoying, because it raises the question: what is a movie? In the most literal sense, a movie is light projected onto a screen, but nobody ever thinks of that, because it's obvious and stupid. The only time you think when watching a movie, "This is light on a screen," is when something has gone wrong: if the house lights are still on, or the image is out of focus, or the sound is off. But if conditions are right, it becomes so much more—and sometimes the conditions don't have to be perfect. Sometimes the conditions can be downright unbearable. There can be inaccurate subtitles, bad sound, dust on the image, and a TV screen the size of a postcard, but you can follow along—it's just nowhere near as pleasant an experience, which is George Lucas's entire point in restoring and re-releasing the *Star Wars* Trilogy in its new Special Edition form. [I lied. The point is to make a shitload of money. -LK]

As long as there have been movies, each movie has had to address the fact that it is light on a screen. A few do it overtly, in those pictures in which a character goes into a movie-within-a-movie. But most do it covertly, behind

their back. It's unavoidable—as soon as you turn on the camera, or cut from one shot to the next, you are invoking a whole language of established film techniques, with all of its accompanying baggage of meanings.

Some of the most innovative films of the 1960s and '70s, the generation of filmmakers to which George Lucas belongs, did not try to hide their films' cinematic origins, but openly challenged their artifice. The French new wave director Jean-Luc Godard, for example, was notorious for violating the rules of continuity—if you think it is bad for a shirt to change lengths, just look at any '60s Godard film. Watching one of those, the screen becomes not a "window" to another world, but a mirror, constantly reflecting back on the viewer. You had a character walking around a room, and then all of a sudden there was a cut and he was sitting down. How did that happen? It forces you as the viewer constantly to grapple with the constructed nature of the cinema. That's what the term "deconstruct" means, bandied about all too often in academic jargon: not to take apart, but to reveal the methods of its construction. Some people do not like such things, but it's not any more "fake" than the representation of sound in space in *Star Wars*.

[Another favorite technique of films over the years to foreground their inherent unreality was to base the story around a "surrogate viewer." There is a character investigating something, watching other people just as we are watching him, and through this process we become aware, if only subconsciously, of the voyeuristic nature of the cinema; *Rear Window*, for instance.]

You may be thinking, enough of all this baloney, and that's pretty much how moviegoers felt in the mid- to late 1970s, who had had it up to here with audaciously boring pictures. That's where *Star Wars* comes in. It is a landmark, a veritable first-step-on-the-moon change in the history of motion pictures. It's akin to when Al Jolson opened his mouth and spoke in 1927's *The Jazz Singer*, Hollywood's first sound film, 50 years prior; or when directors like Godard turned things topsy-turvy somewhere in between. There was no escaping it: things were never going to be the same again.

Much more so than Steven Spielberg's *Jaws* in 1975, *Star Wars* put the movie back in movies. Enough of all this overly "fake" moviemaking, of convoluted time structures, weird editing—and music scores that didn't say anything, but seeped out of car radios and record players on screen.

music. It's not merely a matter of, oh this is an action version of Yoda's theme, so Luke is using his Jedi training to do a backflip. There's something here that's so this-can't-be-happening that it can't be reinforced in music. Note that in *Star Wars*, the most complex and grown-up character is Han, and the music never tries to explain him by giving him a theme. In fact, Han never gets his own theme during the course of the movies; he only gets characterized with the love theme for him and Leia, as he is softened up as a character during that time.

There are also a few atmospheric moments in *Empire* that benefit enormously from silence, such as the whole opening of the movie, when Han is walking around the Rebel base. *Empire* is a film with some severe structural problems at its outset; as fans know, a subplot with the wampa ice creatures was cut out, and the first 15 minutes of the picture have a rushed but red-herring quality, as if the only purpose of Luke's near-death was to explain the scars Mark Hamill incurred in a vicious car accident after filming *Star Wars* (look at his face in the sequels, it's a completely different nose). For those moments of Han walking around, especially with the brilliant production design and measured direction, it's like you're *there*. There's not much of

a narrative point to it, so what other purpose could it be but "a day in the life"? I don't know if this would have had the same effect had Williams's cue (which makes for great listening) been retained; then, it becomes more obvious that you're watch-

The Empire Strikes Back,
unlike John Williams's other
large-scale scores, features a
large amount of music which
was written and recorded,
but subsequently dropped.

But whoever made this
decision—was *right*.

ing a movie, and that this is the *rebel* base because you're hearing part of Luke's theme. Similarly, Williams scored the entire "this is not a cave" sequence in the asteroid field, not just the second

half, but the initial moments have a wonderful creepiness and atmosphere with just the subtle effects of the ship, a brilliant use of sound.

(Every time these movies get remixed, the sound effects get louder and denser, to the detriment of the music. The *Empire* mix puts the score underneath the fray—because of the "present tense" of it all, I think it works—but two added effects in the *Star Wars* SE are horrendous distractions: the Falcon's tactical readouts in the "TIE Fighter Attack" make high-pitched chirps, and the door that opens to the throne room sequence makes a loud rumble. I'm told these were originally in the film's mono mix, but still, enough already!)

I used to think that any time a composer's music was dialed out in a movie it was because of Evil Producers (which is sometimes absolutely the case). But as Williams himself says, film is a collaborative art. *Empire* benefits enormously from its stretches of silence, and also provides the most interesting chronological soundtrack album when all the dropped bits are placed in sequence: you can have visuals without the music, or music without the visuals, with each creating its own unique reality. And because the two can never be reconciled, you'll keep coming back for more!

Let's have "real" stuff again, like... sound in space? Space aliens, light-speed, and sentient robots? Waitaminute, these things are just as phony—if not more so, as people at the time of *Star Wars*' production ridiculed. (Remember, at the time, sci-fi was deadly at the box office, as evidenced by such films as the bloated *Logan's Run*, which was made only a year before *Star Wars*, but seems dated by decades in comparison.)

The answer is that flying spaceships may be "fake," but their effect on movie audiences is real. In comparison to what came immediately before, *Star Wars* set things "right" again: the narrative is straightforward; the characters, cast mostly with then-unknown actors, fit into archetypes older than any motion picture; the special effects, while mind-blowing, are subservient to the story and do not turn into light-shows for their own sake. Frederic Jameson, in a landmark 1982 lecture "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," saw fit to mention *Star Wars* both for its tremendous influence on culture and for its legitimate status as postmodern art:

"One of the most important cultural experiences of the generations that grew up from the '30s to the '50s was the Saturday afternoon serial of the Buck Rogers type—alien villains, true American heroes, heroines in distress, the death ray or the doomsday box,

and the cliffhanger at the end whose miraculous resolution was to be witnessed next Saturday afternoon. *Star Wars* reinvents this experience in the form of a pastiche: that is, there is no longer any point to a parody of such serials since they are long extinct. *Star Wars*, far from being a pointless satire of such now dead forms, satisfies a deep (might I even say repressed?) longing to experience them again: it is a complex object in which on some first level children and adolescents can take the adventures straight, while the adult public is able to gratify a deeper and more properly nostalgic desire to return to that older period and to live its strange old aesthetic artifacts through once again."

Why would people yearn to see this type of material again? One of the most seemingly "made up" elements of *Star Wars* is the Force. The laser blasters seem identifiable enough, and the spaceships and vehicles, while sophisticated and powerful beyond our wildest earth-bound dreams, are not that far an extrapolation of existing machinery. But the Force, an all-powerful energy field that controls our actions...? Han Solo questioned it in the movie, and we would too in real life if we were told such a thing existed—not a spirituality or religious faith, but if there was an actual Force that people could use to deflect laser bolts. Of course there's no such thing. But like

all things in *Star Wars*, there is a real-world counterpart. In "real life," you can't use an all-powerful Force to levitate rocks or steer spaceships, but you can use it to make entertainment about these things that will rivet a generation. It's the sum total of our collective culture in this increasingly global, and Western, age: language, law, fashion, religion, literature. It does exist between this tree and this rock, between you and me. It lets you read this page, listen to this music and watch these movies. It's the human go-between between sign and referent; it's what attaches a meaning to an image.

This real-life "Force"—i.e. (duh) semiotics, the study of meaning—is what lets a movie be so much more than light projected onto a screen. *Star Wars*, for a story that deliberately takes place "a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away" is loaded with images and meanings drawn from the here and now. But even more than it draws on images from reality, it draws on them from past movies and past forms of entertainment. The hero on a quest, the damsel in distress, the wise old man, the villain in black—all of these are referenced and cast into a new tapestry of places, creatures and vehicles. People have a deep yearning to see basic human struggles re-enacted again, stripped of contemporary baggage and put forth in a direct, entertaining way. *Star Wars* plays out these

eternal themes anew, except they are now referencing not past life experiences, but past *entertainment* experiences.

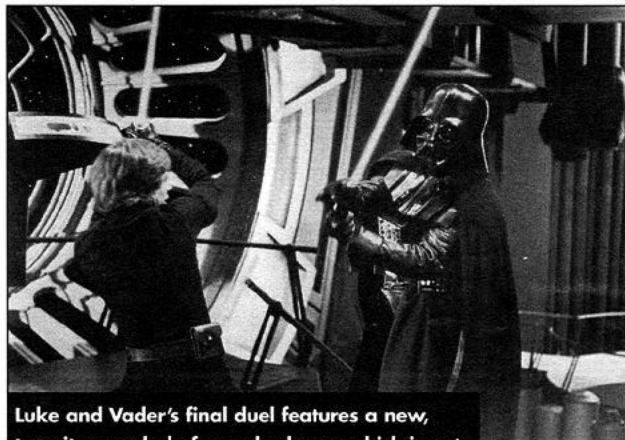
In doing so, *Star Wars* demonstrates one of the central tenets of postmodern art: the sign can be just as "real" to us as the referent. Here, that means an image of a villain in black is just as "real" as an actual villain, who nowadays don't go around wearing all-black suits with masks and helmets.

Star Wars restored the relationship between viewer and the viewed; it changed the screen from a mirror back into a window, one enhanced by the fanciest frame ever, from the visual effects to the stirring John Williams score. Even the wipe cuts show how it is not ashamed of being a movie; it loves it. And we love it back. Because an amazing thing happens: by being completely unpretentious about its status as a window, *Star Wars* somehow turns that very fact into a mirror itself. It becomes about how we relate to myths and movies and good fighting evil and the windows through which they are seen, in addition to packing the thrills and fun that they provide. That is a gift George Lucas has given the world at a time when such things were dead, or, worse, so far-out that they were generally perceived as dead. Somehow, *Star Wars*, by being completely unself-reflexive, is totally self-reflexive. •

Regression of the Jedi

Star Wars was a self-contained adventure, and its score reflects this: the Imperial motif is of lesser importance, and most of the music is old-fashioned, Korngoldian swashbuckling, with Williams emphasizing the action as well as the characters. The score works by playing up the familiar, the protagonists: Luke, Ben, the Princess, the action.

In *Empire*, the tone of the music changes to



Luke and Vader's final duel features a new, transitory melody for male chorus which is not heard elsewhere in the film.

reflect the turmoil of our people. It plays up the antagonistic elements of the story—not necessarily the “bad guy” parts, but those elements which disrupt what had been comfortable: Vader (evil), Yoda (responsibilities of adulthood), the romance between Han and Leia (sex—adulthood again). It uses the existing themes mainly for reference; enhances the atmosphere of certain places and situations with through-composed, stand-alone pieces (Cloud City, the Dagobah swamps pre-Yoda's arrival, the Hoth snowscapes); and provides more sophisticated fare for the chases (the Hoth battles, “The Asteroid Field,” “Hyperspace”). These full-blown musical setpieces emphasize nervous semitone figures in strings and French horns—the whole thing is, essentially, a giant foxhunt for the rebels. And just as the film visually is bathed in muted blues, the orchestrations emphasize strings and more subdued brass and woodwind colors.

For *Return of the Jedi*—a film spotted as wall-to-wall as *Empire*, but with almost all of the cues left in—the well kind of ran dry. Williams has scored the protagonists, and he's scored the antagonists—now what?

What should have been provided was new music to reflect how the situations resolve—and to a certain degree, it's there—but mostly Williams writes themes for new characters which are merely ornamental plot points: Jabba and the Ewoks. These characters don't inspire changes in our protagonists, they are only a one-dimensional heavy and comic relief, respectively.

The best new theme is “Luke and Leia,” a satisfying evolution in the relationship between the two characters. The one that's emblematic of *Jedi* being boring is the Emperor's: it's appropriate with its

“ooh-ee-ooh,” patriarchal and indifferent moaning, but it's not a piece of music like “The Imperial March” as much as a color. If *Star Wars* is “past tense” and *Empire* more “present tense,” *Jedi* too often has the portentousness of the latter with the predictability of the former. Williams spends way too much of the movie duplicating atmosphere on the screen, particularly when characters are at Jabba's court, and again in the Emperor's throne

room (notice the similar settings). These are all dialogue scenes—same with the dropped cue for Ben talking to Luke on Dagobah—and Williams sits underneath them with low brass chromaticism and atonal string gestures, the ranges split wide apart, unevenly surging and dropping back as the tenors of the conversation change. It doesn't say much and atmospherically gets tiresome, like scoring a courtroom argument. Maybe if the movie was better, these scenes would be tighter, and wouldn't need music.

(See the most recent *Sci-Fi Universe*, February 1997, for an insightful and humorous catalog of *Jedi*'s flaws.)

Then again, in *Empire*, certain dialogue scenes could be left without music because there was so much crackling tension resulting from the characters being apart. The second film is like a political power struggle, with the players being Vader in his ship, Luke with Yoda on Dagobah, and Leia, Han and the rest hiding in the Falcon—but nobody knows where anybody else is. People have untold motives—you don't know what Vader will do when he gets his hands on the rebels, but you feel an unspeakable sense of dread should that happen. That need not be duplicated in music, although to a certain extent it successfully is.

In *Jedi*, too often the conflicts are happening between people who know exactly where each other are: they're right next to each other! Leave this unscored, and you have actors standing around in funny costumes—they aren't concealing their scary motives, but revealing them, in dialogue that, if not enhanced with unsettling music, can just disappear. It's the difference between Luke and Vader telling each other exactly what they're thinking on the walkway of the Endor base (scored and used), and Han and Lando *not* telling each other what they really mean when they first see each other at Bespin (scored but dropped).

My favorite moments of the *Jedi* score mostly occur in the third act of the film when the Rebel and Imperial fleets are engaging. The action music continues the tradition of *Empire*'s, especially when it looks like the Rebels will lose, and it's beautifully written, the semitone backings returning. (For those who do not know what a semitone is, it's a half-step—the closest together two notes can be in traditional harmony. Sing the *Jaws* theme fast—that's *Jaws* the movie,

not “*Jaws*”—and that's the backing for most of this material.) I also can't help but be thrilled when the *Star Wars* battle music makes a return appearance (it's that exciting), or when Williams briefly develops isolated, interesting musical ideas, like parts of what used to be called “Faking the Code” and the actual “Rebel Briefing.”

The real problem with *Jedi* the score is that *Jedi* the movie takes all the interesting plot points and characters from *Empire* and systematically neuters them. Yoda dies, after revealing that nope, Luke doesn't need more training after all; Vader becomes good again, although they do milk that for all it's worth; Lando is an all-out good guy; and the love triangle is dispensed with by having Leia and Luke be siblings. The score is fine, but there are too many themes going on for Williams to keep it fresh. It's hard to tell what is familiar and what is new, what is important and what is trivial. And it's hard to find room for any development when the movie goes from serious to goofy to camp to a re-run of what has gone before. (*Star Wars* has one plot going on at the ending, *Empire* two, and *Jedi* three.)

I only wish Williams had made a counterpart piece to “Luke and Leia” for “Vader and Luke,” instead of just playing the Force theme and Vader's theme off of each other, and off of the Emperor's theme. The most this approach amounts to is the unexpectedly moving arrangement of Vader's theme for high string harmonics as he dies. (I wish it had been James Earl Jones under the helmet—surprise!) Maybe if somehow that great choral theme as Luke goes psycho on Vader had been expanded into the funeral music, incorporating the Force motive instead of just restating it...

Then again, having that moment scored with a new theme for male chorus, a color otherwise associated with the Emperor, isolates it as an instance of the sublime, the unthinkable (Luke going beserk). By necessity it quickly retreats: Luke discards his lightsaber (with its phallic, adult connotations) and pronounces himself a Jedi; the music likewise returns to the familiar.

At least there's honesty in this approach: the movie and music are not presuming to represent that which, by definition, cannot be represented: Luke shies away from his aggressive tendencies which had to be left unscored in *Empire*, and which engendered this frightening display of powerful, unrepeatable choral music in *Jedi*.

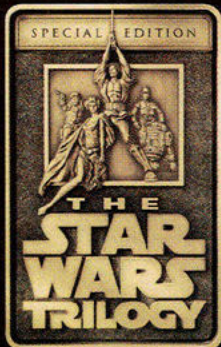
But at the same time, by not transforming the music, there's a dishonesty involved: after all the pretense of this being a story about growing up, we're told that being an adult really means being a child, which is what we were—what Luke was—in the first place. The *Trilogy* threatens to drop us into a void (the foreboding of *Empire*), actually brings us there, and then says, “Naw, you don't want this.” Then it returns us to a comfortable world of victory, family and the same old music we started with—when really, living without that familiar music, and in the “void,” is what growing up is all about. •

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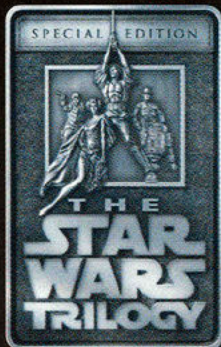
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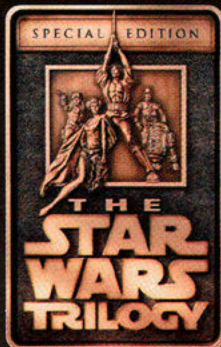
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