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The Interplay of Motifs and Instruments in RADWIMPS' "Sparkle": A Compositional Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between film and music is a deep and intricate phenomenon that significantly shapes the viewer's experience by blending visuals and audio to create a beautifully captivating ambiance. This synthesis is especially crucial in genres such as drama, supernatural, and fantasy when music serves as a channel to the imaginary worlds depicted on television. The 2016 Japanese fantasy animation film *Kimi no Na wa* (Your Name) demonstrates the connection between well-crafted music and a film's narrative and emotional depth. It showcases character design by Masayoshi Tanaka and a remarkable score by the Japanese rock band RADWIMPS. The tale centers around a schoolgirl hailing from rural Japan and a student residing in Tokyo who inexplicably swap bodies, creating the backdrop for a very emotional story. This research underscores the importance of the soundtrack, namely RADWIMPS's utilization of piano, in evoking emotional and imaginative reactions. The study highlights the intricate influence of music in films, impacting psychological, visual, emotional, and imaginative processes. Music enhances the cinematic experience by setting the mood, intensifying feelings, and providing a captivating background, transporting the viewer to different worlds. This study aims to explore the optimal utilization of music in fantasy and supernatural films to enhance storytelling and engage spectators in response to the growing output of such films. This study employs a qualitative research approach to examine the recurring utilization of piano motifs in the music of *Kimi no Na Wa* and its influence on the cinematic experience. The findings illustrate that particular musical components substantially impact how the audience perceives and emotionally responds, offering vital insights for filmmakers and researchers. This study emphasizes the multifaceted function of music in improving storytelling and its significant influence on viewers' emotional and psychological involvement.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The interaction between film and music is a profound and complex phenomenon influencing the viewer's experience, producing a thoroughly engaging atmosphere where visuals and audio harmoniously merge. This synthesis is vital in drama, supernatural, and fantasy since music is a conduit to the fictional worlds portrayed on screen. The 2016 Japanese fantasy anime film **Kimi no Na Wa** (Your Name) showcases the interplay between a well-crafted soundtrack and the narrative and emotional depth of a film, emphasizing the importance of the soundtrack in strengthening these aspects. *Kimi no Na wa* is a film written and directed by Makoto Shinkai, with production by CoMix Wave Films. Masayoshi Tanaka does the character design, and the film has a notable score from the Japanese rock band RADWIMPS (Puspitoningrum, 2022).

"Your Name" is a tale that revolves around a schoolgirl living in a rural area of Japan and a student residing in Tokyo. These two individuals undergo a mysterious phenomenon where they unexpectedly exchange bodies. This occurrence sets the stage for an intricate and emotionally intense storyline. The film is an adaptation of Makoto Shinkai's eponymous novel, published one month before the movie's debut. The incorporation of music into the film's storyline is evidence of the pivotal significance of soundtracks in cinematic storytelling. The soundtrack composed by RADWIMPS, known for its use of piano, has garnered extensive acclaim for its capacity to elicit the emotional and imaginative aspects of the picture, pivotal in the movie's artistic triumph.

The role of music in film is a complex phenomenon that influences various aspects of the audience's experience, including their psychological, visual, emotional, and imaginative processes. Afriandi (2012) states that movies are a form of popular art that engages the audience in a thrilling sensory experience. Music enriches this voyage by establishing the ambiance, heightening emotions, and constructing an immersive backdrop that can transport the audience to many realms. In the film *Kimi no Na Wa*, the music by RADWIMPS is not just a background component but a crucial aspect of the narrative that significantly enhances the film's ability to elicit strong emotional reactions.

Comprehending the significance of music in film, especially in genres that primarily rely on constructing imaginative and emotionally intense settings, is imperative for both filmmakers and researchers. Given the growing output of fantasy and supernatural films, examining how music might be optimally employed to improve storytelling and captivate the audience is imperative. This study aims to fulfill this requirement by analyzing the soundtrack of *Kimi no Na Wa*, offering valuable insights into how the repetitive utilization of piano and other musical components can significantly influence the audience's perception.

This study focuses on a single facet of musical composition and its impact on the cinematic experience despite the extensive literature on the overall significance of music in film. This research delves into the analysis of how the piano motifs are utilized to accompany the melody and enrich the narrative. It aims to provide a more profound comprehension of how particular musical aspects might influence the viewer's perception and evoke emotional responses. Concentrating on a solitary, powerful component within cinema music's more comprehensive framework offers fresh perspectives on the complex interplay between sound and visual narrative.

The soundtrack of *Kimi no Na Wa* showcases the significance of music in cinema, especially in genres that require profound emotional and imaginative involvement from the viewers. This research illuminates the profound influence of music on the cinematic experience by

examining the recurring usage of piano in the film's score. It provides significant insights for both filmmakers and researchers. This study highlights the significance of music as a versatile component that improves the storyline and dramatically influences the spectator's emotional and psychological experience.

2. METHODS

Qualitative research seeks to understand phenomena or behavior in research subjects by describing them through word) (Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019). This research intends to understand the quality of music in the Kimi no Nawa soundtrack by describing its music composition and musical elements (Kadafi & Utami, 2021). Data were collected through literature study, discography study, and observation. Literature studies aim to find the correct theory or foundation of thinking to support problem-solving (Maryam, 2017). Researchers have collected theories related to the discussion of music composition and epic soundtracks. Discography study is an activity of analysis, description, and decomposition of recorded sounds (Azwar, et al., 2021). Hence, the researcher transcribed the Kimi no Nawa soundtrack with the Sibelius program to facilitate studying its form, structure, and musical elements. Observation of the soundtrack audio and animation video aims to find out the use of instruments or the use of certain parts of the Kimi no Nawa soundtrack in the scene it accompanies. The analysis technique is carried out by first reducing the data or selecting the main things related to the research (Hartono, 2018), including audio and soundtrack scores, as well as literature on music composition, epic music, and film soundtracks.

3. RESULTS

According to Prier, music analysis means paying attention to the details of music by forgetting the whole of a musical work (Nurhalimah, et al., 2022). So based on this definition, composition analysis can be interpreted. As an attempt to study the composition of musical works through the exploration of their form, structure, and elements. Popular music formats generally include an intro, verse, and chorus. This Sparkle soundtrack has an intro, verse 1, verse 2, verse 3, pre-chorus, chorus, bridge, outro. The first part uses E Major tonality with a tempo of 128 bpm and is composed of Intro - Verse 1 - Verse 2 - Verse 3 - Pre-Chorus - Chorus - Bridge - Chorus - Outro. A piano performs the intro.



Figure 1. Motifs in intro

The verse begins with a repetition of the first motif, the intro, and then the guitar solo is entered as follows.

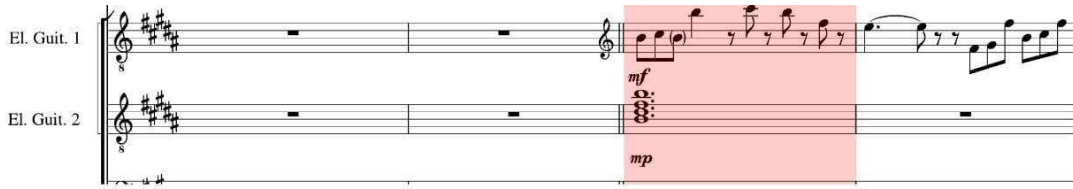


Figure 2. Motive 1

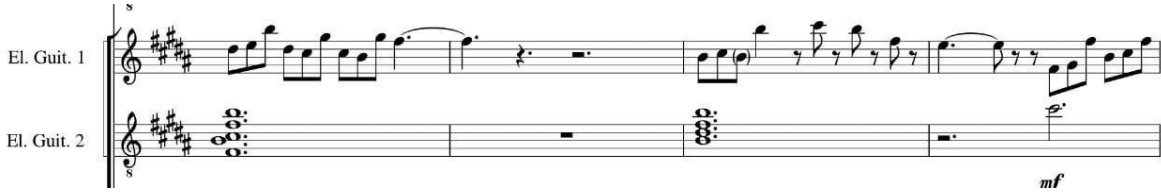


Figure 3. Motive 2



Figure 4. Motive 3

Verse 1 is a minimal accompaniment consisting of one period. Verse 2 is a double period performed in ostinato, a simple and repetitive melodic loop built by the repetition and intensity of short motifs. Going into the solo section, there is the addition of the following drum instruments.



Figure 5. Motive in verse 1



Figure 6. Repetitive melodic loop

The image shows a musical score for two sets, D. Set 1 and D. Set 2. Each set consists of two staves. The top staff of each set has a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The bottom staff has a bass clef and the same key signature. The music is minimalist, featuring sparse notes and rests. Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte) in the second measure of each set. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

Figure 7. Minimal accompaniment

In verse 2, a bass instrument is also added to accompany the main melody. Then, in the section before the bridge, there are additional instruments: violin 1 and violin 2, viola, and violoncello as follows.

The image displays a musical score for Verse 2, featuring four string parts: Violin 1 (Vlns. 1), Violin 2 (Vlns. 2), Viola (Vlas.), and Violoncello (Vcs.). The score is divided into four systems, each with four staves. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The first system shows the strings entering with various dynamics: *f* (forte) for Vlns. 1, *mf* (mezzo-forte) for Vlns. 2, *mf* for Vlas., and *mf* for Vcs. The second system continues with *mf* for Vlns. 1, *f* for Vlns. 2, and *mf* for Vcs. The third system shows the strings playing sustained notes with *mf* dynamics. The fourth system concludes with a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking for the Viola part. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Figure 8. Additional instruments in strings in verse 2

The next section is the Chorus. The main melody of the Chorus is performed by the strings after the main melody is finished. This section is dominated by a dense melody rather than rhythmic or harmonic variations; This section is dominated by a dense melody rather than rhythmic or harmonic variations; after the Chorus, there is a section that is different from the verse and Chorus that builds the tension up between the verse before going to the Chorus. This section is referred to as the bridge, which can be instrumental or lyrical and is distinct from both the Chorus and verse (Fabbri, 2012). The Interlude is followed by a repetition of the Chorus with variations in the accompaniment, namely the drums and guitar playing in the same pattern as the Interlude. The electric bass also uses a 6-string bass.

On violin 1 using tempo arco, arco is used to reverse/eliminate the pizzicato command (Turetzky, 1988). And violin 2 uses tempo mp which means it is played quite softly. The guitar solo uses an electric guitar with distortion effects. In the last bridge section, the main melody piano uses the technique of dim, which is to play gradually softer.



Figure 9. Motive piano in chorus

Next, using synthesizer instruments, electronic sounds aim to provide unique sounds and support the customization of the music to the scenario (Juwita, et al., 2021). Electro instruments also give composers more options to create certain effects without the need to think about pitch range or technique as traditional instruments do (Sayoga, 2013). The synthesizer fills in partly to accompany the main melody to emphasize that the tempo is slowing down.



Figure 10. Synthesizer instrument

In this section using piano as the main accompaniment plus electric guitar adds to the impression of an outro as the end of a song.

The image displays a musical score for the song "Sparkle" by RADWIMPS. The score is arranged for a full band and includes the following instruments: A. Sax., T. Sax., El. Guit. 1, El. Guit. 2, El. B., D. Set 1, D. Set 2, Synth., Pno., Vlns. 1, Vlns. 2, Vlas., and Vcs. The score is written in a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. A prominent feature is a vertical red shaded area that spans across all instrument staves, covering approximately the middle third of the page. This area highlights a specific section of the music. Within this red area, the electric guitar parts (El. Guit. 1 and El. Guit. 2) are particularly active. El. Guit. 1 has a melodic line with notes like G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5. El. Guit. 2 has a clean tone (indicated by "mp" and "'Clean'") and plays a chordal accompaniment. The piano part (Pno.) also has a melodic line with notes like G4, A4, B4, C5, and D5. The bass part (El. B.) has a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The drums (D. Set 1 and D. Set 2) have a consistent rhythm. The strings (Vlns. 1, Vlns. 2, Vlas., and Vcs.) have a sustained accompaniment. The overall mood is soft and melodic, consistent with the description of an outro.

Figure 11. The main accompaniment

The image displays a musical score for an instrumental arrangement. The score is written for the following instruments: A. Sax., T. Sax., El. Guit. 1, El. Guit. 2, El. B., D. Set 1, D. Set 2, Synth., Pno., Vlns. 1, Vlns. 2, Vlas., and Vcs. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is common time (C). A prominent red vertical band highlights a section of the score, spanning from the second measure to the end of the third measure. In this highlighted section, the T. Sax. and El. Guit. 1 parts feature melodic lines, while the El. Guit. 2 part plays a rhythmic accompaniment. The Pno. part also has a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Dynamics markings include *p* (piano) and *mp* (mezzo-piano). The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

Figure 12. Motive in outro

4. DISCUSSION

The song "Sparkle" by RADWIMPS can be examined using classic compositional theory, with particular attention to its melody, harmony, rhythm, and dynamics. Leonard B. Meyer's theory of musical meaning, which explores music's narrative and emotional roles, is highly applicable in this context. The term "Sparkle" fulfills a dual purpose in the film, acting as both a narrator and a means to elicit emotions, effectively leading the spectator through significant events. A motif is a concise and repetitive musical theme that is the fundamental basis for a more extensive piece. The piano introduces the primary motif from the beginning of "Sparkle." The theme is a fragile and flowing musical pattern that creates a feeling of calmness and expectation. The motif experiences substantial progression throughout the song, expanding in intricacy and emotional expression.

At first, the motif is presented in its most pristine state, performed alone on the piano. The simplicity of the music enables the listener to understand its core, establishing a solid

musical foundation quickly. Throughout the song, the motif is reiterated with alterations, both in terms of rhythm and melody. These variations sustain the listener's engagement and mirror the evolving narrative of "Your Name." For example, the motif could be introduced with additional harmonies, diverse instruments, or at different tempos. Each modification would contribute to the motif's development and adjustment to the emotional atmosphere of the song.

An essential component of motif development in "Sparkle" is its dynamic interplay with other musical elements. The dynamic motif engages with the voices, strings, and other instrumental elements, resulting in a complex and intricate sound composition. This contact enables the motif to acquire fresh significance and emotional overtones. When the motif is paired with strings, it acquires a warmer and more spacious tone, enhancing the longing and connection that is important to the film's storyline.

Thematic unity in music pertains to the cohesive and unwavering utilization of melodic concepts throughout a composition. In the song "Sparkle," RADWIMPS develops a sense of oneness by consistently including and evolving the central musical theme. The repeated motif serves as a unifying element that connects the many portions of the music, creating a feeling of consistency and logical progression.

The song's structure serves to strengthen thematic cohesiveness further. "Sparkle" exhibits a narrative structure that parallels the emotional progression of the characters in "Your Name." Initially presented in the exposition, the motif resurfaces in the development section with alterations that mirror the characters' maturation and challenges. During the conclusion, the motif achieves its pinnacle of complexity and emotional intensity, reflecting the film's most dramatic moment. Ultimately, in the resolution, the recurring theme resurfaces in a contemplative and restrained manner, offering a feeling of conclusion and settlement.

RADWIMPS utilizes harmonic and rhythmic constancy to strengthen thematic coherence. The harmonic language employed in "Sparkle" is extensive and diverse while maintaining a foundation in the fundamental places provided by the motif. The harmonic stability guarantees that the motif consistently seems familiar and linked to the entire framework regardless of the variations and advancements. The theme patterns are repeated rhythmically throughout the song, even in places where the motif is not directly present. This slight rhythmic reinforcement aids in preserving the thematic coherence without descending into monotony.

The interaction between the growth of motifs and the establishment of thematic unity in "Sparkle" is not merely a technical exercise but rather a significant storytelling tool. Through consistent motif evolution and the preservation of thematic coherence, RADWIMPS constructs a musical narrative that closely reflects the film's scenario. The motif serves as a symbolic representation of the character's progression, evolving and changing alongside them. This strategy amplifies the music's emotional resonance and intensifies the listener's engagement with the narrative.

The composition commences with a fragile and recurring piano motif, which provides a pensive and self-reflective atmosphere. This motif is a leitmotif, a recurrent musical theme linked to distinct characters and concepts. Within the framework of *Kimi no Na Wa*, the piano deliberately emphasizes pivotal events and shifts in the storyline. The recurrent use of piano motifs contributes to establishing a consistent and unified atmosphere, strengthening the film's underlying themes and emotional progressions. It is consistent with David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's notion of "narrative unity," in which repeating musical motifs contribute to the story's overall coherence.

RADWIMPS' utilization of the piano is distinguished by its wide range of volume and variety

of textures. During quieter and more introspective passages, the piano is performed with a gentle touch, employing minimal harmonies and delicate arpeggios, thereby establishing an intimate and contemplative atmosphere. On the other hand, during moments of intense emotions or dramatic tension, the piano is played with increased intensity and complexity. It is achieved by playing full chords and quick passages to enhance the emotional impact.

The deliberate utilization of the piano in *Kimi no Na wa* greatly amplifies the audience's involvement with the film. Claudia Gorbman, a musicologist, proposes the theory of "unheard melodies," which suggests that film music frequently works on a subliminal level, discreetly shaping the viewer's emotions and perceptions without explicitly bringing attention to itself. The piano in *Kimi no Na wa* is a prime example of this notion, as its repeated motifs and thematic progression effectively implant the film's emotional impact into the viewer's subconscious mind.

During the sequences depicting the protagonists, Mitsuha and Taki, becoming aware of their connection through body-swapping, the piano music emphasizes their perplexity and the development of their emotional ties. The piano melody's simplicity in these sequences reflects the innocence and purity of their connection, intensifying the eventual disclosure and resolve with a dramatic effect.

Moreover, the piano's adaptability enables it to effortlessly move between various emotional nuances, complementing the film's transitions from lighthearted instances to severe, dramatic episodes. Adaptability is essential in a film like **Kimi no Na Wa**, which combines aspects of romance, drama, and fantasy. The piano's capacity to express diverse emotions renders it a perfect instrument for a narrative encompassing multiple aspects.

5. CONCLUSION

The song "Sparkle" by RADWIMPS, showcased in the anime movie "Your Name," demonstrates the significant influence that intricate rhythms and harmonies can exert on a musical piece. This essay has examined the song's various elements, including motifs, instrumental textures, orchestration, and rhythmic and harmonic subtleties. It has demonstrated how RADWIMPS utilizes these elements to craft a highly impactful and emotionally captivating piece of music. The motif development and thematic unity in "Sparkle" are fundamental elements of the piece. The main theme, initially presented by the piano, undergoes substantial metamorphosis throughout the composition, mirroring the developing storyline of "Your Name." This motif is neither fixed nor unchanging but actively engages with other musical parts, gradually becoming more intricate and evoking deeper emotions. This creative process guarantees that the motif stays a pivotal and cohesive element, ensuring consistency and flow throughout the song.

The instrumental texture and orchestration play equally crucial roles in the composition of "Sparkle." RADWIMPS skillfully combines several instrumental timbres to generate a lush and captivating soundtrack. The interaction among the piano, strings, guitar, bass, and percussion is carefully harmonized, with each instrument playing a role in the overall texture and emotional resonance. The dynamic interaction of these instruments reflects the intricate nature of the tale, captivating the listener's focus and amplifying the song's emotive potency. The song "Sparkle" achieves rhythmic intricacy by incorporating syncopation, polyrhythms, and changing time signatures. The utilization of rhythmic techniques in the film creates an element of unpredictability and motion, which mirrors the fluid narrative structure. Syncopation interrupts the anticipated rhythmic pattern, keeping the listener interested,

while polyrhythms form a complex arrangement of intertwined rhythms that enhance the overall texture. The alterations in the time signature depict the characters' emotional progression, thus enhancing the complexity of the work. "Sparkle" is characterized by its harmonic complexity. RADWIMPS utilizes modal interchange, numerous modulations, and prolonged harmonies to construct a diverse and intricate harmonic palette. Modal interchange enhances the musical composition by introducing variety and intrigue, while modulations indicate essential changes in emotion or storyline. Extended harmonies enhance the depth of music, enabling a broader spectrum of expression. The interaction among these harmonic components amplifies the song's emotional depth, making it more captivating and multifaceted.

The complex interaction of motifs, instrumental textures, rhythmic patterns, and harmonic progressions gives rise to a piece that is intellectually fascinating and emotionally meaningful. By skillfully employing these musical aspects, RADWIMPS enhances the storyline of "Your Name" and crafts a self-contained musical composition that profoundly connects with its audience. This analysis emphasizes the significance of comprehending the compositional approaches that contribute to the effectiveness of anime soundtracks, explicitly highlighting their function in enhancing the story and engaging the audience emotionally. "Sparkle" exemplifies how intricate musical arrangements can enhance a musical composition, becoming an essential element of the narrative encounter.

6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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