

John Williams: A Musical Genius

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Reflective Piece

I chose to write about John Williams' original movie soundtracks because he is honestly my idol. I look up to him more than anyone else in the world. He is an amazing composer. He manages to write music that is happy, exciting, beautiful, and wondrous, all within one piece of music, which is an amazing feat most composers only dream of accomplishing. I thought I knew everything there was to know about John Williams, it sounds arrogant, I know, but I've read dozen of books about him, and even I managed to learn new stuff. I'm glad this piece of writing was a podcast, because without the audio recording, I don't think I would have been able to write this piece. I think the podcast script is the best piece of writing I have ever done, but without being able to include recordings of some of the pieces, I don't think I would have been able to pull off this piece.

Although I tried to start recording my podcast early on, I ended up getting a sinus infection, which impeded on my ability to make a decent recording of my voice. Even through this, having to record my voice for this assignment taught me a lot; I learned more about how to perform through my voice. This skill is extremely important to me as I am a French Horn performance major, and my ability to put on a good performance is vital to my future career, so I will be able to learn skills I learned in this class, in future aspects of my life.

I think this podcast assignment is the best writing assignment I've ever had to do. It gave me many skills that I can apply in the future. This assignment also taught me that I need to allow my voice, so to speak, flow more in other academic writing that I do. This assignment made me realize that, for a very long time, I thought that for a good academic paper, I had to be extremely formal. This assignment taught me otherwise, and made me realize that I can still be academic in other papers, yet not make myself sound like a dusty textbook from the library.

Script for John Williams: A Musical Genius

[Intro Music: "Hedwig's Theme", by John Williams]

Host: Hello, it's Kyla here and today I'm going to be discussing John Williams, a world-renowned composer. His original movie soundtracks are world-famous, including the soundtracks for movies such as *Star Wars*, *Indiana Jones*, *Jurassic Park*, *E.T.*, *Superman*, and *Harry Potter*, which is the soundtrack you were just listening to. John Williams' rise to fame as a movie soundtrack composer came as a refreshing change to those who thought that the original movie soundtrack format was dying.

John Williams' career as a movie soundtrack composer has been extremely long and very successful, a combination that is rare in the fickle music industry. John Williams' first Academy Award nomination for best original score occurred in 1969 for a film called *The Reivers* (Scheurer 59). According to the official Academy Awards Database, Williams has since been nominated for a grand total of 49 Academy Awards, making him the most nominated person alive today. The only other person to ever receive more nominations than Williams was Walt Disney. The reason for Williams' success is clearly evident in his music; he manages to capture the essence of a scene within his music, he writes music that is exciting, thrilling, nostalgic, and

beautiful, all at the same time. The music enriches movie scenes like no other art form can do. As stated by Timothy Scheurer in his article *John Williams and Film Music Since 1971*, "What Williams has done in his scores is capture and articulate what the audience sees—or better, what the audience wants to see—as the emotional core of the film. He leaves aside his need to experiment, to push the artistic envelope, and constantly looks for the musical metaphor that will enable the audience to have that larger-than-life experience they expect the movies to give them." (Scheurer 67). In other words, Williams' music enriches the emotional impact of a scene.

I have been obsessed with John Williams' movie soundtracks for a very long time. In fact, when I was 17, I attended a John Williams concert, put on by the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, with my parents. I had looked forward to this concert for weeks and weeks, and I'm sure my parents were fed up with my constant remarks about how excited I was. We finally arrived, parked the car, and took the bus to the Bowl. We arrived in our seats about an hour early, and I was sitting in my seat, essentially bouncing because I was unable to contain my excitement. My mom and dad left to go walk around, and I was supposed to stay at our seats to watch our stuff. While my parents were gone, John Williams, the man himself, walked by and saw my shirt. I was wearing my high school band jacket which had lots of music and French horn related memorabilia all over it. He commented on all my French horn stuff and asked if I was excited for the concert. I told him I was extremely excited because my parents had been trying to get tickets to this concert for years but it was always sold out. He told me that he was extremely grateful that I loved his music so much, and he said that maybe one day I would even get to play in a concert he conducted. Needless to say, I was awestruck. He left to go prepare for the concert, and my parents came back. When they came back I found out they had bought me a toy light saber. I was so excited, I felt like a 7 year- old kid playing make-believe. The concert

started, and I was leaning forward in my seat, almost falling off in anticipation. The music was the most beautiful sound I had heard in my entire life. Throughout the concert, they played clips from the movies whose soundtracks they were playing such as *Star Wars*, *E.T.*, *Jurassic Park*, *Harry Potter*, and *Superman*. The very last piece they played was the main theme from *Star Wars*, and I turned around and in the seats above me there were hundreds of light sabers being waved in the air by hundreds of people who had been brought together and unified by the power of music, specifically by the musical genius known as John Williams.

Ultimately, John Williams is the most famous movie composer of all time. His music is exciting, adventurous, sad, and emotional, all at the same time. His music sets scenes, without his music the movies would not be what they are today. His music moves us emotionally and gives us scenes with more emotional impact than would occur without the music. Everyone knows John Williams' music worldwide, and now I will conclude with what I maintain is the most beautiful piece John Williams has ever written, which is the main theme from *Jurassic Park*. Enjoy!

[Play: Main Theme from Jurassic Park]

Works Cited

Scheurer, Timothy E. *John Williams and Film Music Since 1971*. London: Routledge, 1997.

Print.

"John Williams". *Academy Awards Database*. July 24 2014.