

The Application of Traditional World Music Elements in Hans Zimmer's Film Music

Wang Anqi^{1,2*}, Chong Yewyoong¹

¹ Faculty of Music, Menara Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah, UiTM Shah Alam, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

² College of Elementary Education, Ludong University, East Campus, No. 186 Hongqi Mid-Road, Zhifu District, Yantai, Shandong province, China

* Corresponding Author: 2021489748@student.uitm.edu.my

Received: 11 January 2025 | Accepted: 19 February 2025 | Published: 15 March 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55057/ajress.2025.7.1.36>

Abstract: *This article explores the profound impact of Hans Zimmer's film compositions, with a particular emphasis on his remarkable ability to seamlessly integrate traditional world music elements. Zimmer, a highly acclaimed film composer, transcends cultural boundaries by drawing inspiration from a diverse range of international musical traditions, including African rhythms, Middle Eastern melodies, and Asian patterns. Through detailed case studies and critical acclaim, this investigation illustrates Zimmer's capacity to infuse authenticity and depth into characters and narratives. The article also traces Zimmer's career evolution, from his early musical endeavors to his pivotal works like "The Lion King," "Gladiator," and "The Dark Knight Trilogy," where he skillfully combines orchestral arrangements with electronic elements, reshaping the landscape of Hollywood soundtracks. It highlights Zimmer's pioneering use of international folk music in his compositions, challenging conventional Hollywood standards. His diverse musical background is exemplified in films such as "Kung Fu Panda," "The Prince of Egypt," and "The Last Samurai," where he creatively integrates traditional and international folk music components. This article underscores Zimmer's enduring legacy, characterized by its universality, celebrating the diversity of humanity and fostering global harmony and understanding through the emotional power of music. It illuminates how Zimmer's innovative approach enriches cinematic storytelling and shapes the landscape of contemporary film music.*

Keywords: Hans Zimmer, film music, traditional world music elements, international folk music

1. Introduction

Hans Zimmer is regarded as a virtuoso and maestro in the field of film music, and his compositions have a profound emotional impact on viewers worldwide. Beyond just the melodies and harmonies, Zimmer's compositions represent a diverse range of cultural traditions and a deft integration of traditional world music components into the narratives of motion pictures. This investigation explores Zimmer's artistic transformational ability, emphasising his creative fusion of several international musical traditions.

Zimmer has changed the face of cinema scoring with his ability to incorporate traditional world music components into his compositions Inho and Johee, (2022). He embraces the rich rhythms of Africa, the ethereal melodies of the Middle East, and the complex patterns of Asia via his

craft, fusing these cultural treasures into the stories of classic films in a seamless manner. Zimmer's musical talent transcends all cultural borders, as seen by his work in *The Lion King*, *Gladiator* and *The Dark Knight Trilogy* which takes place in the murky alleyways of Gotham City and the gladiatorial arenas of ancient Rome.

The layers of Zimmer's works will be revealed in this investigation, which will also go into particular case studies with significant traditional world music influences. We shall explore through the numerous sounds that Zimmer expertly deploys, from the emotional depths boosted by African rhythms to the authenticity placed onto characters through Middle Eastern and Asian elements. We will also look at the accolades and critical acclaim bestowed upon his works, demonstrating how widely his innovative methodology has been acknowledged.

Come along on this aural journey with us as we explore the convergence of many cultural harmonies, resulting in a symphony that speaks to the universal language of human emotion and transcends national boundaries. By analysing Zimmer's compositions, we uncover not only the melody but also the essence of the narrative, honouring the splendour of cross-cultural merging in the film medium.

One of the most successful film composers in the world, Hans Zimmer, whose work is unavoidably brought up when talking about contemporary Hollywood soundtracks. According to Prendergast (1992: xiii), "from an artistic standpoint... the writer, cinematographer, and composer are the most creatively influential people involved in making a film." Born in Frankfurt, Germany on September 12, 1957, Hans Zimmer studied music throughout his childhood and adolescence before relocating to London, UK, where he started to compose music and play the piano. He joined many bands in earlier life, including *The Buggles*, *Krisma* and *Helden*. Zimmer used to be the keyboard player of *Krisma* and played the synthesizer. In 1980, Zimmer co-produced the album titled "*The Damned*" with a British band for the first time, which was also included in the LP album titled "*The Black Album*". Zimmer's rich experience in working with the band has allowed him to gain skills for developing and creating music. The advertising soundtrack business of Air-Edel in London offers him a chance to independently compose the score.

Zimmer is renowned for his ability to blend traditional orchestral arrangements with electronic music elements in his works. He has created music for more than 150 films since the 1980s. Zimmer's first self-completed work is the original soundtrack of the comedy film *Terminal Exposure* (1987). Later, he participated in the music production of the famous film *The Last Emperor* (1987), which won an Oscar for Best Original Score. A year later, Zimmer scored for the Hollywood film *Rain Man* (1988), which won four Oscars that year. Since then, Zimmer has become famous in the field of composition of music for films. His credits include the *Pirates of the Caribbean* films, *Interstellar*, *Gladiator*, *Inception*, *Dunkirk*, and *The Dark Knight Trilogy*. He was awarded the 1995 Academy Award for Best Original Score for *The Lion King*. He has won an Academy Award, two Golden Globes, three Classical BRIT Awards, four Grammy Awards, and two Golden Globes. He was also listed on *The Daily Telegraph's* list of the Top 100 Living Geniuses. Prior to relocating to the US, Zimmer lived and worked in the UK for the most of his career. Leading the DreamWorks studios' film music division, he collaborates with various composers via his own firm, Remote Control Productions (previously Media Ventures). With the wide array of computer technology and keyboards at his Santa Monica, California studio, demo versions of film soundtracks may be produced fast. Additionally, he has worked on other films with filmmakers such as Penny Marshall, Ron

Howard, Michael Bay, Gore Verbinski, Antoine Fuqua, Steve McQueen, Zack Snyder, Denis Villeneuve, and Christopher Nolan, in addition to Ridley and Tony Scott.

Hans Zimmer has established himself as a very significant film composer over a number of musical eras in Hollywood productions (Zhao, 2011). People often associate Hans Zimmer's distinctive sound with his use of electronic percussion. However, Zimmer also pioneered the use of digital synthesizers, sophisticated computer technology, and electronic keyboards, successfully fusing these instruments with classical orchestral compositions in film and television scores (Ndebele, 2011). His 1991 film score for *Backdraft* serves as an example of this specific approach, which is ultimately realised in his 1995 soundtrack for *Crimson Tide* (Zhao, 2011). Many Hollywood blockbusters demand fast-paced filming methods and the best theme to grab the audience's attention. His distinctive music style may match these criteria, generating strength, rhythm, and speed—especially in action pictures. Hans Zimmer has benefited from this by receiving several awards and job possibilities. He is especially well-known for his innovative usage of international folk music (Zhao, 2011). It is unclear why this happens as a result of meeting Hollywood blockbuster standards.

Over the course of his approximately three decades as a composer, Hans Zimmer has written music for a number of exotic motion pictures. These include the lively Chinese-style soundtrack for *Kung Fu Panda*, the Middle Eastern-style soundtrack for *The Prince of Egypt*, and the Japanese-influenced score for *The Last Samurai*, which showcases his diverse musical background. Consequently, this article will examine his inventive use of traditional and international folk music components in his film soundtrack compositions, drawing on the three aforementioned works.

2. Analysis of works

Kung Fu Panda

The 3D animated comedy *Kung Fu Panda*, which stars Mark Osborne and John Stephenson, is centred around Chinese martial arts. The film's distinctive character modelling and dubbing by several movie stars have made it popular with viewers of all ages. Furthermore, fans highly consider the music composed by Hans Zimmer for the movie (Zhao, 2011). This article will assess the soundtrack of Hans Zimmer's Chinese components in the film by focusing on two tracks, "Let the Tournament Begin" and "Dragon Warrior is Among Us," among the many background pieces.

This song takes its template from Chinese pentatonic scales, 4/4.



Figure 1: Chinese pentatonic scales (Gong)

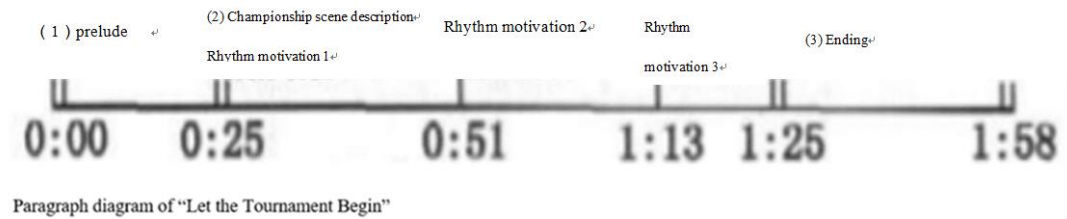


Figure 2: Diagram of the 'Let the Tournament Begin'

The moment in *Let the Tournament Begin* where Panda Po is attempting to find out how to get into the arena to see the championship is accompanied by the movie. Unfortunately, Po is unable to enter the arena since the door is closed. He keeps trying, but in the end, he is unable to get inside the championship arena. The song is Zimmer's shortest composition, clocking in at less than two minutes. Despite this, Zimmer manages to showcase his mastery of the relationship between music and image, as well as his ability to seamlessly blend Chinese and Western instruments and electronic and traditional tones to accentuate the exuberance of the scene leading up to the championship. The length of the music is represented by a lateral axis in this paper (see figure 2), with nodes designating the various sections. 4/4 as a model.

This composition is broken up into three main sections, as seen in the diagram: the thirty-second opening passage and prelude, the one-minute "championship" subject, and the similarly thirty-second finish. Two phrases, each lasting 15 seconds and 10 seconds, make up the prelude and opening section. Before the tournament starts, the audience is meant to feel uneasy with the sounds of Chinese musical instruments rising to a crescendo. Specifically, the quaver of a huge drum and the semiquaver of a little waist drum are played together. The Suona horn is then added, creating an incredibly raucous environment that establishes the title. A 15-second bamboo flute piece builds in loudness gradually until ending fortissimo. The gentle tones of a tiny waist drum then serve as the backdrop for a quick burst of pizzicato string music. Po stays outside during this passage and does not make it into the stadium. String music is added, and it is played gently for a little while longer until the second fade-in, which starts with the tremolo of a pipa and the quavering of string instruments. An accelerating drumming then enhances the performance of every instrument. The crescendo of the prelude is finally marked with a powerful cymbal crash. It is interesting to observe how the contrast between forte and piano in this opening section draws attention to the different ambiances inside and outside the arena as well as Po's pressing desire to enter, creating a stark contrast between the intense scene inside the arena and the calm outside the championship.

The "championship" theme is then divided into three sections, each of which has a catchy melody. The opening movement realises the traditional pairing of "the flute and violin" in western symphonic music, with the melody played on the bang di, which has a resonant tone, and the Qu di, which has a clear tone, both playing in tandem with a violin.



Figure 3: The movements in the first melody (3:07-3:35)

Following this movement, a drum sequence that uses traditional Chinese percussion instruments to introduce electronic percussion for ten seconds creates a fast-paced rhythm. The second melody is then played twice: the bang di, a dulcimer, and other traditional Chinese instruments accompany the copper pipe during the first section, which is played twice. This results in a high octave performance that reveals the whole beat. This song features a pretty straightforward melody that is enhanced by the inclusion of a dulcimer and a copper pipe to highlight the growing tension in the contest environment. The two last, strong notes build to a spectacular moment that highlights the arena's flaming atmosphere and sets up Po's stage entrance. They harmonise with the resonance of a large drum.



Figure 4: The movements in the second melody (3:35-4:01)

The third melody is composed of many layers and blends a traditional Chinese pentatonic mode with a synthesised bottom beat. The synthesizer's bass synchronises with the normal percussion to create a bass beat that echoes the overall rhythm, creating a call-and-response pattern before they race against one another. Traditional percussion instruments, including gongs and cymbals, alternate with the song, disrupting the harmony between the two. In terms of tone, Zimmer employs strong percussion sounds to drive the beat together with a low frequency and rich synthesised bottom to harmonise and contrast the song. Furthermore, the theme's primary performing instruments—a clavichord and a flute—are harmonised with each other. In this way, Hans Zimmer's soundtrack for Kung Fu Panda employs a successful strategy of combining the tone of electronic synthesisers and western instruments with traditional Chinese instruments within an appropriate framework (Zhao, 2011).



Figure 5: The motivation of the third melody (4:02-4:16)

Dragon Warrior is Among Us

The two-part soundtrack lasts for two minutes and fifty-seven seconds. The first segment starts at the outset and ends at 1:53. The music in this section is primarily non-melodic and acts as a foil. It is essentially made up of fast-paced percussion music and background music with extended tones. Even if there are sporadic ups and downs, adjustments will quickly make them vanish. There are eleven of these alternations, and it is clear how the harmony and pace differ. Frequently, there is an abrupt shift from a minor chord in one passage to a major chord in another, or from a melancholy andante to a joyful allegro. This striking contrast is further complemented by Chinese national instruments like the pipa and erhu, which tell a tale. Some sections are filled with cheerful Chinese folk percussion, while the next suddenly switches to a sacred harp and choir. These changes make people feel dignified and cheerful back and forth, and there always seems to be an unexpected surprise in the next second.

It is not until 1:54 that the movements of the second melody begin to emerge and the music reaches a turning point where the erhu, piccolo and pipa play the main theme together, accompanied by strings and brass (as shown in example 4).

Example 4 The movements in the second melody of ‘Dragon Warrior is Among Us’



After both sides of the movements were played by Chinese instruments, the brass entered, bringing changes to the melody, and creating a solemn atmosphere in the percussion where every beat is stressed. Finally, the melody reappeared by string and flute, completing the last melody, and ending this piece of music.

Tai Lung Escapes

The Escape of the Thai Wolf is the longest episode that Zimmer has made for this film, with a length of 7 minutes, accompanying the beginning and end of the escape of Tai Lung. However, in the film, the seven-minute music is divided into three parts, with some scenes of Po, the panda, in the middle. Therefore, this episode still has some "paragraph design", which is not uncommon. Although it is split, the signature style of Zimmer (electronic percussion music) runs through the whole process. In different paragraphs, a new electronic percussion music will start, followed by percussion, to create a tense atmosphere with the introduction of Chinese percussion music.

In this piece of music, Zimmer also introduced some national musical elements, including the Australian instrument Djiridoo, the Chinese instrument San-hsuan, the Indian percussion instrument Tabla, and the ancient Armenian instrument Duduk. The music can be divided into two parts:

The first piece of music creates a tense and frightening atmosphere before the flight, and is composed of fragmentary percussion, San-hsuan, synthesizer and Djiridoo. The characters' uneasiness, nervousness and hesitation before the flight are expressed, and make the music attract the attention of the audience as soon as it comes in. The playing lasted for several sections, and then the synthesizer Bass came in; The occasional Tabra and the cello embellish the deep and steep mountain road with possible dangers; Then the sixteenth note of the string came in, showing that the situation was more tense. Bass continued to play, while the brass, string and Duduk played the main melody of this piece twice (as shown in example 5).

Example 5 The first melody of Tai Lung Escapes



Although the Duduk is not a Chinese instrument, or even an Asian instrument, Zimmer chose it here for solo, which is very proper. The sound of the Duduk is cold, similar to the traditional Chinese instrument Xun. It is mixed with breath and vibrato, which has the power to solidify time.

The second section starts from the second scene, that is, the moment when Tai Lung took off his armor and escaped. The next scene shows his fight against the oppressors. In this four-minute intense chase and fight scene, Zimmer perfectly shows how to maintain the tension of the music in a long period. The most important is how to let the soundtrack in sync with the picture.

Although Zimmer is famous for his ability to combine electronic with symphonic tradition to create magnificent scenes, as well as the use of electronic percussion to create an epic with chorus. It cannot be ignored that Zimmer is also very good at using folk music elements. Sherlock Holmes is a film based on Lionel Wigram's comic book of the same name, which was shot by director Guy Ritchie in 2009. Compared with previous TV series and film versions, the 2009 version of Sherlock Holmes shows the story of Holmes from a new perspective. This film focuses on his personality and lifestyle, rather than different cases. When Ritchie read the comics of Sherlock Holmes, he thought that the image of Holmes in his imagination was different from that in previous TV series. In Ritchie's mind, Holmes desires a modern life. So when Ritchie invited Zimmer to create the episodes of the film, Zimmer was happy and promised that he would create music completely different from his previous works.

Instrument	Section	Timbre	Function
Fiddle	“Discombobulate” “I Never Woke Up In Handcuffs Before”, etc.	Higher frequencies, expressive	The Irish fiddle and the gypsy-style music are very important in the section. It not only shows the happy them, but also reflects the character and life attitude of the

				character, and shows tense scenes through special techniques.
Cimbalom	“Discombobulate”, etc.	Clear, melodic		The main melody and variations of the theme song act as a go-between.
Accordion	“I Never Woke Up In Handcuffs Before”, etc.	Rich		Create a happy atmosphere and introduce national elements.
Honky-tonk Piano	“Is It Poison, Nanny?”, etc.	Easy rhythm		Replace the traditional piano with honky-tonk piano to show mysterious atmosphere
Brass	“Catatonic”, etc.	Deep melody		Satirize the stupid tasks and behaviors
Sawing Noise	“Date, Date, Date”, etc.	Short melody		Show the tension caused by the pending case
Bagpipe	“Psychological Recover...6 Months”, etc.	Clear, recognizable	highly	Add British elements and bring a mysterious color of hope

The Prince of Egypt

DreamWorks Animation created the American animated musical drama *The Prince of Egypt* in 1998. It was the company's first conventionally animated film. The movie, which is based on the Book of Exodus, chronicles Moses's journey from an Egyptian prince to his final goal of leading the Children of Israel out of Egypt. Hans Zimmer wrote the soundtrack and Stephen Schwartz wrote the music for the film, which was directed by Brenda Chapman, Steve Hickner, and Simon Wells. This movie's soundtrack has a very unique Middle Eastern flavour to it, which is reminiscent of Hans Zimmer's world music. Thus, this essay utilises this as an example to highlight the analysis of the music.

The soundtrack displays F and the audio soundtrack uses Eb. The soundtrack's music served as the basis for this recording of the score. Moses went inside the cave at the start of the story. The violin part played an unstable second-order interval to create the cave's mystery. In this instance, Zimmer referenced the Middle East minor second found in the Hebrew folk tunes by using the traditional Arabic musical style. The ethnic regionalist nature of music is reflected in the usage of intervals. It is important to note that the harp part's second-half theme, which mirrors the violin part's musical style, is similarly based on the development of Arabic-style music. Moses first saw the fire, which stood in for God, as he slowly made his way into the cave. The theme melody is now sung by the mezzo-soprano. The theme is brighter than the preceding discordant, signifying the arrival of God's heavenly voice. The tuneful tune represents God's atonement for the world. This song reappeared later in the conversation between Moses and God, and it ended up being one of the movie's most prominent themes.



Figure 6: The melody from the 'The Burning Bush' (score according to soundtrack)

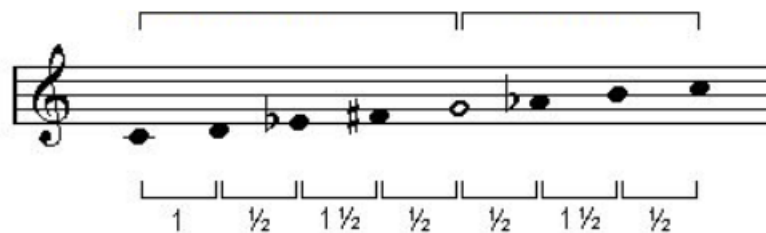


Figure 7: Arabic music scale

This trend goes along with the narrative of Moses leaving Egypt to go over the desert, renouncing his throne and status as a prince. He encounters Tziporah, a girl, while travelling. After that, he joins a tribe in the desert, marries the girl, and leads a modest life as a shepherd. At that point in the narrative, Moses has his first encounter with God, who shows him his miracles and gives him the order to save his people from Egypt. Then, during Moses' conversations with God, "The Burning Bush" is played constantly in the background. Prendergast (1992) asserts that theme repetition is a powerful tool for creating musical coherence. But according to Hans Zimmer, the time he spent working on this movie was the worst and most nervous he has ever experienced. Even though the topic of music was discussed from the outset of the filming, Zimmer had to carry uneasy feelings throughout the development process due to the enormous amount of labour that the vast diversity of musical styles presented. Furthermore, he was quite depressed after finishing "The Burning Bush" and believed that his music did not really fit the scenes in the movie. Zimmer, on the other hand, never creates anything in vain; his use of Hebrew ballads and Middle Eastern minor scales gave his compositions a unique feel, even if the outcomes were not what he had in mind. (E. Black, 1998)

The Last Samurai

Following the discussion of the Hans Zimmer Middle Eastern style soundtrack, the next notable example is the Japanese music from his 100th film score, *The Last Samurai*, which is quite

apart from the Middle Eastern style. Hans Zimmer's background music was used in the hundredth movie, *The Last Samurai*, which was helmed by Edward Zwick. This film tells the story of an American officer named Nathan Algren, played by Tom Cruise, who is invited to participate in the Meiji Reform in Japan and is eventually captured by the rebel army led by the lord Katsumoto. The film is set during the Seinan War and Meiji Reform, which took place in Japan between 1876 and 1877. The American eventually becomes engrossed in and captivated to the old samurai culture of Japan once the two characters first come into touch with one another. Hans Zimmer skillfully infuses the movie with an Asian feel with his music. He is adept at picking up useful lessons from the creations that are successful. Using the meditative temperament from *The Thin Red Line*, he creates the slow and poetic long-line string music style (Zhao, 2011). However, he is also able to convey the brutality and ferocity of combat through the use of powerful percussion music during battle sequences.

At 3:50 in the song "Idyll's End," there is a dense layer of string harmonies that mimic the short note characteristics of the Japanese musical scale. The melody, which has clear minimalist musical elements, serves as the main framework and is played in the background often. Two violin phrases follow the main theme, which is repeated at the beginning and conclusion to create an antithetical and symmetrical structure. The phrases are ascending and falling. The taiko then adds a gradual banging after the string section as a whole repeats the previous theme in a four-part harmony. Hans Zimmer skillfully captures the spirit and soul of traditional Japanese music in the backdrop of *The Last Samurai* and modifies it to fit his interpretation. In order to keep Zimmer's action themes majestic and evocative, he incorporates taiko, shakuhachi, and koto while enhancing elements of Japanese music.



Figure 8: The short note features of the Japanese musical scale in 'Idyll's End'



Figure 9: The melody from 'Idyll's End'

3. The technical features in Hans Zimmer's adoption of traditional music elements in his compositions

This essay examined Zimmer's use of traditional musical motifs in *Kung Fu Panda* and *The Prince of Egypt* in the portions that came before. He was able to accomplish this to great creative effect. As a result, the technical aspects and creative applications of Zimmer's use of conventional musical components in his works will be examined in the next section.

A composer should give careful thought to how a score may be transposed for an orchestra before writing music for a motion picture. Zimmer is fully aware of this and regularly combines instrumental and orchestral techniques. According to Mu, "around the world, the practise of combining foreign instruments with domestic national instruments is ubiquitous." This

combination mostly refers to the integration of Western symphonic parts with traditional instruments. Some could be constrained by labour shortages, while others are intentionally produced for the particular musical genre (2011). In such instance, the former is not applicable, but it is important to combine certain instruments to fit the tone and substance of the movie. Zimmer expertly creates a harmony between the violin and erhu in the background music of *Kung Fu Panda*, as well as using the traditional flute, bang di, and qu di combo in several situations.

Wooden pipe group: ʘ
Flute+ Bangdi+ Qudi ʘ
Oboe+ clarinet+ high-pitch sheng ʘ
Bassoon+ clarinet+ low-sound suona+ low-pitch sheng ʘ
Strum group: ʘ
Dulcimer+ Xiaoruan ʘ
Pipa+ Zhongruan ʘ
Daruan+ big dulcimer ʘ
Copper pipe group: ʘ
Trumpet ʘ
Horn ʘ
String group: ʘ
Violin+ Gaohu+ Erhu ʘ
Viola+ Zhonghu ʘ
Cello+ Dahu+ Dagehu ʘ
Percussion group: ʘ
Setting according to the actual situation ʘ

Figure 9: The combination of Western orchestral instruments and traditional Chinese instruments

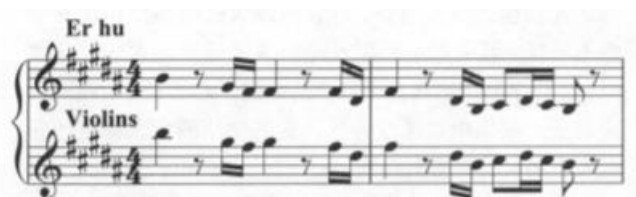


Figure 10: The theme from *Kung Fu Panda* performed on the erhu and violin

A virtual instrument (VI) is a type of software that mimics many physical instruments, including digital synthesisers, electronic pianos, organs, and samplers. It generates sounds using computer processing techniques. One benefit of virtual instruments is that they can accommodate better quality tone samples, which traditional hardware like synthesisers cannot store when a finer degree of tone is needed. In "Let the Tournament Begin," Zimmer's musical composition combines virtual tones of traditional Chinese national instruments with actual instruments. For example, he uses a virtual small cymbal tone that is used to simulate a conventional small cymbal being struck at an impossible speed during performance, vividly revealing Po's absurd situation prior to the championship.

The purpose of this article is to examine three distinct film soundtracks and demonstrate how Hans Zimmer incorporates traditional world music components into his works. As a result, it is evident that Hans Zimmer incorporates classical musical aspects into his investigation and composition of cinema soundtracks. He has also established himself as a trailblazer in his own style of fusing symphonic and electronic music (Ndebele, 2011). Because of this, he has a natural tendency to experiment with diverse styles and aspects, and as he has said, he is fascinated by and appreciates other national cultures (Ndebele, 2011). This, however, might also be linked to the film industry's quick diversification, as filmmakers are being given more and more opportunities to create films with cultural issues. Furthermore, the ability to include traditional musical components into the creation of cinema soundtracks has been made possible

by contemporary production processes. The examination of the three soundtracks' iconic snippets reveals that Hans Zimmer's movie soundtrack has a distinct national identity. His music style may become another label after “master of electronic music” in the future. Additionally, as international folk music gains popularity, it will eventually become a standard feature on movie soundtracks.

4. Traditional World Music: A Melodic Tapestry

Cultural Influences: Diverse Roots, One Harmonious Whole

Hans Zimmer's experimentation with conventional world music components is evidence of his skill in combining melodic parts from several cultural backgrounds to create a cohesive whole. By definition, world music includes the many musical traditions of different cultures worldwide Audissino, (2022). With influences from Middle Eastern melodic scales, Asian rhythmic patterns, African tribal chanting, and more, Zimmer's songs are a celebration of this diversity.



Figure 11: Ornamentation in classical music

These components of traditional world music have as many different cultural roots as the instruments themselves. African music, which has strong roots in spirituality and community, frequently uses polyrhythms and percussion instruments like talking drums and djembes Chen *et al.* (2023). Middle Eastern music evokes a sense of mysticism and old wisdom through the use of instruments like the oud and ney, as well as complex maqamat (melodic modes). Asian musical traditions, which stretch from the Indian subcontinent to the Far East, give rise to a wide variety of instruments with distinct tonal ranges and timbres, such as the sitar, tabla, pipa, and koto.

Zimmer's ability to honour the cultural roots of these musical parts is what sets his work apart. He appreciates rather than just appropriates. Zimmer embodies each culture through in-depth research and partnerships with artists from various areas Salleh *et al.* (2023). He is aware of the minute differences in ornamentation, vocal intonations, and the depth of emotion ingrained

in these customs. By including these components in his works, Zimmer honours the cultural roots of his music while achieving a harmonious fusion that communicates to listeners from all backgrounds and contributes to a universal musical language.

Instruments and Orchestration: Bridging Tradition and Modernity

Zimmer's skill is demonstrated by his inventive orchestration, which skillfully combines traditional world music instruments with contemporary cinematic soundscapes. For example, Zimmer's percussion section incorporates African rhythms, which provide levels of intensity and intricacy Akhtar and Farooq, (2023). The talking drum's sharp snap and the djembe's deep thud combine to create a rhythmic basis that drives the story along while giving situations a raw, primal strength.

By adding the warm, resonant tones of the Middle Eastern oud, Zimmer gives his pieces an exotic feel. Melancholic and yearning feelings are evoked by the melodic lines of the oud blending with the strings of the orchestra Milićević, (2021). It evokes a sense of timeless stories and ancient wisdom with its eerie presence in the music, creating an emotional bond with the audience.

Zimmer frequently uses string instruments known for their complex melodies, such as the sitar and pipa, when he explores Asian musical traditions. The unique twang of the sitar and the exquisite plucking of the pipa give Zimmer's compositions a hint of mystery and elegance Dawson, (2023). These instruments fit in perfectly with the orchestral arrangement, adding to the mood of the movie and revealing more about the nuance and complexity of the characters. World music traditions serve as the inspiration for the orchestral arrangements themselves. The Western orchestra can connect with the spirit of many civilizations thanks to Zimmer's deft orchestration, which masterfully incorporates ancient scales, modes, and melodic rhythms Wilson, (2023). He creates a musical experience that profoundly connects with people by bridging the gap between tradition and modernity through thoughtful instrumentation and arrangement.

Traditional world music components are more than just ornaments in Hans Zimmer's works; they represent the core of the story. Using a profound comprehension of other civilizations and their musical legacy, Zimmer creates a melodic tapestry that enhances the visual encounter Akkerman, (2023). Through careful orchestration and respect for the cultural roots of these components, Zimmer crafts a cohesive whole that cuts across boundaries. His works remind us of our common humanity and stand as a monument to the power of music as a universal language. Under Zimmer's direction, traditional world music transcends cultural boundaries and enhances our awareness of the world while enticing us to recognise the beauty of the world's musical legacy.

5. Case Study

5.1 The Lion King (1994) - African Rhythms and Melodies

The Lion King, composed by Hans Zimmer, is a testament to his ability to use music to provide cultural authenticity and emotional depth to a picture. We explore the complex universe of African rhythms and melodies that Zimmer expertly blended into this beloved animated picture in this case study.

African Rhythms: The Heartbeat of the Savannah

The heartbeat rhythm, a traditional African motif, lies at the centre of Zimmer's work for *The Lion King*. The film's central concept, the circle of life, is emphasised by the strong, pulsating beat, which mimics the beat of life itself Porterhouse review.org, (2023). This beat, which is frequently produced with traditional African drums like talking and djembes, permeates the *Pride Lands* soundtrack and immerses the viewer in the African environment. It transforms from just a musical component into a character and the living pulse that ties all the living things in the movie together.



Figure 12: The Lion King soundtrack

Melodic Beauty: The Influence of African Folk Music

Zimmer took influence from a variety of African melodies and folk tunes in addition to rhythmic aspects. The use of the mbira, an African thumb piano, is among the most well-known motifs. Some of its compositions, such as "This Land," have delicate, shimmering tones that evoke nostalgia and a sense of familial connection Beck, (2021). The music is further enhanced by Zimmer's incorporation of African voice techniques, which are distinguished by complex harmonies and melismatic embellishment. With the use of these vocal styles, songs like "Circle of Life" and "He Lives in You" immerse the listener in the essence of African musical traditions.

Cultural Significance and Impact on the Film's Narrative

It is impossible to overestimate the cultural significance of using these African tunes and rhythms. Africa is a continent rich in cultural diversity that represents the genesis of life and the interdependence of all living things. Incorporating genuine African musical elements into the film allows Zimmer to honour the rich cultural legacy of the region while also giving the story a deeper cultural relevance.

These musical selections invite viewers into a foreign culture by acting as a cultural bridge inside the framework of the movie. Not only does the music have African influences, but it also takes on the role of a guide, a character, and a storyteller. It accentuates Simba's emotional journey by highlighting his setbacks, victories, and the cyclical aspect of life. The soaring

African rhythms and melodies highlight the victory of the circle of life as Simba climbs Pride Rock to retake his rightful place as king, making a lasting impression on the viewer's soul.

Impact on the Audience: Emotional Universality

Zimmer's usage of melodies and rhythms from Africa crosses cultural borders to evoke feelings that are felt by all people. The genuineness of the song amplifies the themes of love, grief, and salvation. The heartbeat rhythm and musical beauty speak to the base emotions of the audience, regardless of their cultural origin. It connects us to the common human experience of life, death, and the cyclical journey that unites all living things by evoking a feeling of collective memory.

The Lion King becomes a deeply emotional and culturally significant film when Hans Zimmer blends African rhythms and melodies into the story. Through the incorporation of African musical traditions, Zimmer creates an enduring masterwork that resonates with the core of humanity. The film's timeless influence stems not only from its striking visuals and gripping narrative but also from the universal language of its soundtrack, which serves as a constant reminder of our interconnectedness as well as the perpetual rhythm that both the universe and ourselves beat.

5.2 Gladiator (2000): Roman and Middle Eastern Musical Elements

Hans Zimmer's orchestral score for Ridley Scott's epic picture *Gladiator* is a marvel of cross-cultural harmony. Zimmer creates a sonic universe that reflects the grandeur of ancient Rome and the mystique of the Middle East by deftly fusing melodic themes from both cultures.

Ancient Roman Influences: Echos of the Colosseum

Zimmer uses melodic ideas and period instruments to perfectly convey the spirit of ancient Rome. Throughout the score, there are eerie echoes of the duduk, an antique woodwind instrument from Armenia. Its melancholy tones reflect the Colosseum's size and recall the devastation of Maximus' voyage Raymondusrex.wordpress.com, (2023). The audience is transported to the heart of the ancient Roman arenas by the brass section, which is evocative of Roman military instruments and heightens the majesty of the gladiatorial fights. Because of Zimmer's painstaking integration of these details, the audience can envision the majesty and cruelty of the Roman Empire while still feeling a sense of historical realism.

Middle Eastern Intricacies: The Allure of the Exotic

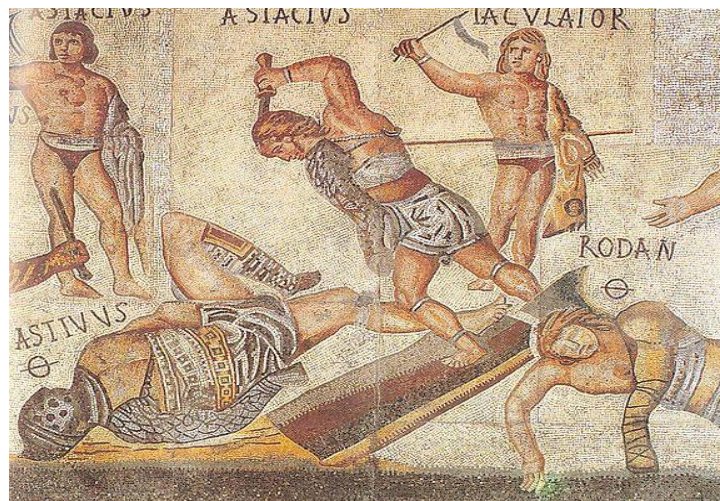


Figure 13: Gladiator

By contrast, Zimmer incorporates Middle Eastern musical influences throughout the composition, especially the ney, a classic Middle Eastern flute. The film's depiction of the mystical and mysterious East is further enhanced by the ney's captivating tunes, which lend an exotic charm. This decision stands out especially in passages that show the splendour of the Roman Empire, striking a striking contrast between Rome's excess and Maximus' earlier austerity. The ney's presence gives the characters more nuance, especially Commodus, who is mired in political power struggles and intrigue that reflects the complexity of Middle Eastern politics.

Emotional Depth: A Symphony of Sorrow and Triumph

These musical selections give *Gladiator* a significant emotional depth. The depressing tones of the duduk represent Maximus's inner struggle, his sorrow for his family's demise, and his unshakable will to exact revenge. The melodies of the ney represent the invisible forces at work, the subtly manipulative and betraying actions that mould the characters' destinies, as Maximus navigates the perilous world of Roman politics. The film's themes of retribution, honour, and the resilience of the human spirit are highlighted by Zimmer's work, which develops into a symphony of grief and victory.

Cultural Fusion: A Tapestry of Human Experience

Gladiator's musical blend of Middle Eastern and Roman influences is more than just a creative decision; it's evidence of how intertwined human history is. Zimmer highlights the universality of human feelings by deftly fusing these many musical traditions. The film's characters share basic feelings - love, loss, ambition, and resilience - despite their diverse backgrounds. By uniting the mysterious appeal of the East with the ancient world of Rome, Zimmer's music acts as a unifying thread, thus tying the past to the present.

Hans Zimmer's score for *Gladiator* captures the spirit of the mysterious Middle East and ancient Rome in a way that cuts beyond time and space. The film's plot is enhanced by Zimmer's musical masterpiece, which highlights the film's examination of human nature and gives people more nuance through the mesmerising ney and the mournful duduk. The soundtrack of *Gladiator* becomes a monument to the expressive power of music, serving as a constant reminder that the songs of the past are still woven into the fabric of our common history.

5.3 The Dark Knight Trilogy (2005-2012): Asian and Arabic Musical Motifs

The Dark Knight Trilogy by Christopher Nolan revolutionised superhero movies, and the atmosphere of the trilogy was greatly influenced by Hans Zimmer's inventive use of Arabic and Asian musical influences. In this case study, we examine how Zimmer's musical compositions enhanced the movie by giving characters more nuance and highlighting Gotham City's multicultural dynamics.

Asian Influences: Martial Discipline and Intensity

Zimmer emphasises Batman's martial discipline and resolves by fusing Asian melodic themes, especially from Chinese and Japanese traditions. A sense of unrelenting intensity is created in songs like "Why So Serious?" and "A Dark Knight" by the pipa, a traditional Chinese instrument Imdb.com, (2023). The pipa's quick, sharp notes are reminiscent of the focus and accuracy of martial arts, which is in line with Batman's unmatched fighting abilities. This decision emphasises Batman's physical prowess and gives his persona a touch of mystery and intrigue, underscoring his function as a symbol of dread for Gotham's criminal underworld.

a. Minor third motive introduced in *Batman Begins* (all transcriptions by author)



b. Danny Elfman's central motive in *Batman* (1989)



c. Shirley Walker's hero theme in *Batman: Mask of the Phantasm* (1993), main titles



d. Elliot Goldenthal's main theme to *Batman Forever* (1995)



Example 1. Batman film themes

Figure 14: Motivic transformation in The Dark Knight Trilogy

Arabic Influences: Mysticism and Complexity

In contrast, Zimmer uses Arabic musical components to convey the mysterious and nuanced quality of characters like Ra's al Ghul, such as the melancholic sound of the oud, a traditional Middle Eastern lute. In "Watchful Guardian" and "A Watchful Guardian," the oud's rich resonance is audible, evoking the mystique and age-old knowledge connected to the League of Shadows. These motifs highlight Ra's al Ghul's aura as well as the ideological disagreement between Batman and him. The films' depth and complexity are enhanced by the Arabic influences, which draw attention to the characters' deep moral and philosophical aspects.

Cultural Diversity in Gotham: A Sonic Portrait

The Dark Knight Trilogy revolves around Gotham City, a multicultural metropolis. Zimmer creates a musical depiction of the city's diversity through the use of Arabic and Asian musical themes. The amalgamation of these disparate components reflects the dynamic and heterogeneous populace of Gotham. By using these elements, Zimmer highlights the city's larger cultural fabric in addition to capturing the soul of each unique character.

Emotional Resonance: Themes of Honor and Identity

In addition to their cultural significance, the Arabic and Asian motifs arouse strong feelings. The martial ferocity attributed to Asian traditions emphasises the concepts of justice, honour, and sacrifice. These themes highlight Batman's battle, his dedication to justice, and the sacrifices he makes on behalf of Gotham. In the same vein, the mysterious quality of the Arabic elements highlights the protagonists' quest for self and meaning while delving into the thin line that separates heroism from villainy. Because of Zimmer's compositions, the audience can relate to the characters' interior struggles because of their emotional depth.

Hans Zimmer's use of Arabic and Asian musical themes in The Dark Knight Trilogy provides a rich auditory environment that enhances the stories in the movies. Zimmer takes the movie beyond the world of conventional superhero stories by including in the soundtrack elements such as the intricacy of ethnic diversity, the mysticism of ancient knowledge, and the precision of martial discipline. The characters' themes of honour, justice, sacrifice, and identity are emphasised, enabling the spectator to connect with them deeply. The trilogy's long influence stems from its deft musical selections that highlight the complex human drama at the centre of Gotham City, in addition to its gripping story and outstanding performances. Zimmer's inventive blending of Arabic and Asian melodic themes is evidence of film music in shaping the cinematic experience.

6. Reception and Impact

Critical Reception: A Harmonious Fusion of Praise

Scholars and critics alike have praised Hans Zimmer for incorporating traditional world music aspects into his pieces. His realistic and emotionally impactful integration of various musical traditions into cinematic tales has been highly praised. The depth and richness that Zimmer adds to his compositions are frequently emphasised by critics, who also point out his commitment to study and his partnerships with artists from many cultural backgrounds.

Zimmer's work has been the subject of in-depth scholarly analysis, with critics praising his careful orchestration, creative sampling methods, and cultural awareness. They applaud him for incorporating traditional music aspects into the story and character development, rather than just using them as decorative features Verrips, (2022). Film music schools now use Zimmer's compositions, especially from films like The Lion King, Gladiator, and The Dark Knight Trilogy, as case studies to show how world music can be successfully incorporated into mainstream productions.

The influence of Zimmer's work is further demonstrated by the prizes he has garnered. His compositions, which incorporate elements of traditional world music, have brought him numerous nominations and victories for Academy Awards. His blending of classic themes improves the movie experience and resonates with both audiences and prize committees, as seen by the Oscar-winning soundtrack for The Lion King and the critical acclaim for Gladiator.

Honours

With his compositions that incorporate elements of traditional world music, Hans Zimmer has been recognised with multiple prizes and distinctions, solidifying his reputation as a trailblazing cinema composer. These honours not only highlight his creative and technical genius but also highlight how important it is for the cinema and music industry to embrace a variety of musical traditions.

1) Academy Awards:

Thanks to his skilful incorporation of traditional world music elements into his songs, Zimmer has been nominated for and won multiple Academy Awards. Notably, he won the Academy Award for Best Original Score for his work on The Lion King (1994). In addition to enhancing the story's emotional depth, the film's musical integration of African rhythms and melodies established a precedent for the inclusion of diverse cultural components in mainstream motion pictures Zheng and Negus, (2023). With his Oscar for The Lion King, Zimmer established a precedent for cinematic compositions by emphasising the value of authenticity and cultural depth.

2) Grammy Awards:

The music industry has praised Zimmer's inventive approach to film scores, especially his blending of classic and modern musical components. He has won numerous Grammy Awards, including one for his contributions to *The Dark Knight* (2008) music. The film's impact was increased and the characters' depth was increased by Zimmer's skilful incorporation of Arabic and Asian influences into the soundtrack. His Grammy awards serve as a testament to the industry's recognition of his distinctive musical style and his contributions to the field of cinema music.

3) Golden Globe Awards:

At the Golden Globe Awards, Zimmer's compositions with elements of traditional world music have also won awards. His work on films such as *The Lion King* (1994) and *Gladiator* (2000) earned him nominations and victories for Golden Globes Imdb.com, (2023). These honours highlight how Zimmer's music resonates with listeners around the world and crosses cultural barriers. The Golden Globe Award acknowledgement of Zimmer's ability to bring cultural authenticity into movie storytelling is indicative of the broad appreciation for his work.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of these prizes in the history of cinema music. Zimmer's acceptance at esteemed events such as the Golden Globes, Grammy Awards, and Academy Awards illustrates how the field of film composing is changing. It encourages composers to investigate and celebrate a variety of musical cultures and represents a break from traditional Western orchestration Godsall, (2020). Thanks to Zimmer's success, many composers will be able to embrace cultural authenticity and enhance the global cinematic experience.

Hans Zimmer's influence on the cinema music industry is demonstrated by his nominations and awards for compositions that use traditional world music elements. These honours acknowledge not only his extraordinary talent but also the role that cultural variety plays in influencing the emotional tone of films. In addition to receiving praise from critics, Zimmer's ability to unite people through music has made a lasting impression on the film industry by setting the bar for inclusivity and authenticity in film scores.

Influence on the Film Industry: Pioneering a Global Musical Language

The film business has been forever changed by Zimmer's inventive approach to fusing traditional world music elements, which has served as inspiration for a new wave of composers and directors Kirby, (2021). Filmmakers are now more inclined to embrace the diversity of the world's musical heritage as a result of his success, which has destroyed preconceived ideas about the viability of other musical traditions.

1) Motivational Composers:

Composers all across the world have been inspired to investigate their cultural roots in their compositions by Zimmer's groundbreaking work. These days, aspiring young musicians feel more comfortable incorporating aspects of their ancestry into their scores, which gives their work more depth and genuineness Oup.com, (2023). Zimmer's influence can be heard in scores from many different countries since traditional melodies and instruments are increasingly being incorporated into modern film music.

2) Cultural Authenticity in Filmmaking:

Outside of music, Zimmer's impact has influenced a more significant change in how other cultures are portrayed in movies. Thanks to Zimmer's success, more filmmakers are devoted to telling true stories and respectfully and truthfully portraying many cultures. This movement encompasses not just the musical portion of cinema but also the storylines, characters, and visual effects Li and Song, (2023). Because of Zimmer's approach, discussions concerning cultural appropriation versus appreciation have become more prevalent in the industry, and narrative is becoming more complex and sensitive to cultural differences.

3) Global Collaborations:

Zimmer's efforts to collaborate with musicians from different cultural backgrounds have established a standard for cross-cultural collaborations in the film business. To promote a worldwide flow of musical ideas, filmmakers are now actively seeking out partnerships with indigenous musicians and composers Kirby, (2019). These partnerships not only improve movie soundtracks but also give traditional artists a stage on which to perform for a larger audience, encouraging respect and understanding of different cultures.

4) Elevating Global Cinema:

Zimmer's influence is felt in international cinema as much as in Hollywood. International filmmakers are showcasing their cultural history on a worldwide scale by including traditional music aspects in their works Ajalloeian *et al.* (2022). The global exchange of musical cultures has improved film music quality globally, giving audiences access to more culturally diverse and immersive cinematic experiences.

The way that the film industry views diversity and cultural authenticity has changed as a result of Hans Zimmer's creative approach to incorporating traditional world music elements. A new generation of composers has been encouraged to investigate and appreciate their cultural heritage by his pieces. Furthermore, Zimmer's impact extends beyond music, encouraging more attentive to cultural differences in storytelling and character development in movies. As a pathfinder, Zimmer has improved the state of filmmaking and cleared the path for a more diverse and culturally conscious industry in the future McGlynn, (2022). Through his imaginative work, he has accomplished more than just writing music; he has brought together a harmonic celebration of international cultures, bridging the gap between the traditional and the modern, and enhancing the global cinematic experience.

7. Conclusion

Hans Zimmer has left a lasting impact on the vast tapestry of cinema music that cuts over boundaries and time. His unmatched skill at fusing traditional world music components has completely altered what cinematic storytelling is all about. By the time this investigation of Zimmer's compositions comes to an end, we will have immersed ourselves in a universe in which the echoes of many cultures blend to vividly depict common human experiences.

Through the blending of Middle Eastern mysticism, Asian subtleties, and African rhythms, Zimmer has transformed films into profoundly emotional environments rather than just decorative pieces. While the haunting melodies of the Middle East mirrored the depths of Maximus' soul in *Gladiator* the primordial pulses of Africa pulsed through Simba's heart in *The Lion King*. The martial accuracy of Asian themes has highlighted Batman's unshakeable resolve in *The Dark Knight Trilogy* resulting in characters that have a universal appeal.

When we consider Zimmer's musical odyssey, we see that it is a celebration of the enormous mosaic of humanity rather than just a voyage through notes and rhythms. His works depict the collision and fusion of cultures, paving the way for harmony and understanding. The deepest representation of our common human tale may be found in the harmonies of diversity, as Zimmer's legacy continues to live on in the hearts of viewers everywhere. His compositions serve as living proof of the infinite potential of music and demonstrate how, when diverse cultures come together, they not only produce music but a global symphony.

Link to access:

“KungFu Panda” scene:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzXq_nmNdT0&t=1s

Start from 2:32-4:44

“KungFu Panda” soundtrack:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6u4YxDvL8k>

“The Burning Bush “from “The Prince of Egypt” sound track

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QsKuotiv7LA>

The Burning Bush scene: start from 0:55

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ds9y3lJGig>

The Last Samurai “Idyll’s end” soundtrack:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1wTdFSYK9c>

The Last Samurai “Idyll’s end” scene: start from 1:09:42

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9XjHMT-Lqw>

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