



Understanding the Leitmotif: From Wagner to Hollywood Film Music

Matthew Britzner-Stull

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The musical leitmotif, having reached a point of particular forcefulness in the music of Richard Wagner, has remained a popular compositional device up to the present day. In this book, Matthew Bribitzer-Stull explores the background and development of the leitmotif, from Wagner to the Hollywood adaptations of *The Lord of The Rings* and the *Harry Potter* series. Analyzing both concert music and film music, Bribitzer-Stull explains what the leitmotif is and establishes it as the union of two aspects: the thematic and the associative. He goes on to show that Wagner's Ring cycle provides a leitmotivic paradigm, a model from which we can learn to better understand the leitmotif across style periods. Arguing for a renewed interest in the artistic merit of the leitmotif, Bribitzer-Stull reveals how uniting meaning, memory, and emotion in music can lead to a richer listening experience and a better understanding of dramatic music's enduring appeal.

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