

Culminating experience:

Sound guide and analysis of the movie How to Train your Dragon

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Introduction:

How to Train Your Dragon is an American 3D computer-animated action-fantasy film released in 2010 by DreamWorks Animation. The film was directed by Chris Sanders and Dean DeBlois, produced by Bonnie Arnold and Scored by John Powell. The script and context of the movie are loosely based on the British book series of the same name by Cressida Cowell.

The story of How to Train Your Dragon takes place in Berk, a fictional island where a tribe of Vikings is settled down. These Vikings have been in fighting the constant raids of the dragons for generations.

Hiccup, a young Viking and son of the tribe's chief, dreams with killing his first dragon, to earn the respect of his fellow villagers; but, when he manages to capture his first dragon and has the chance to do kill it, he finds that he no longer wants to do it and instead, befriends with the dragon, which leads him towards learning more about these creatures and discover how his tribe have been misjudging the dragons.

The movie was a commercial and critical success, earning nearly 500\$ million worldwide and being awarded with multiple prizes, including 10 Annie Awards and two nominations to the Academy Awards.

The score of the movie is a wonderful example of how to create, work with and develop different musical motifs.¹ It is also a great example of orchestration and integration of non-traditionally orchestral instruments (electronics, electric guitar, as well as many instruments associated with the Celtic² culture, such as fiddle, bagpipes, dulcimer and whistles) in an orchestral context; all this making it a perfect educational material, apart from a wonderful piece of art on its own.

¹ Or themes.

² The Vikings aren't technically considered as a part of the Celtic culture, they were part of the Scandinavian or Nordic culture instead. That said, it's true that Vikings attacked many times the coasts of England and Scotland, so they could have been in direct contact with Celtic instruments.

As a side note, maybe the use of traditional Finnish instruments would have been a more accurate choice, as Christian Clemmensen (founder of Filmtracks.com) commented.

Composer's Bio: John Powell

Born in East Sussex (England) in 1963, John Powell is one of the most renowned composers of our time. He is known for his work in action thrillers (The Bourne Identity, The Bourne Supremacy, The Bourne Ultimatum...) and animated movies (Shrek, Bolt, Rio...), being this last genre his most prolific to date.

Powell started his musical career as a violin player when he was 7, but his father, who was a tuba-player with the Royal Philharmonic, always encouraged him to not to be a player: to be a composer. In an interview, Powell confessed that he was a "classical musical posh" his early ages, and didn't become interested in pop until his teens.

After graduating at the London Trinity College of Music, he worked as a tape operator, at Sir George's Studio, in London. He tried a career as a classical concert music composer, but soon saw that this way he could not make a living. His first paid work as a composer came from ad jingles.

Since his very beginnings as a professional composer, he embraced computer composition, and was in part thanks to this that he was recommended to Hans Zimmer in the mid-1990s. Under Zimmer's mentorship, he earned his first two feature film gigs: Face/Off (1997) and Antz (1998).

From that point, his career skyrocketed and, since then, he has been nominated and awarded on multiple occasions, including more than 20 ASCAP awards and one Academy Awards' nomination for his work in the Dreamwork's animated movie "How to Train Your Dragon".

After almost 20 years working in Hollywood, Powell has taken a sabbatical to work on a 45-minute Oratorio commemorating the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War.

Synopsis of the film:

How To Train Your Dragon is the story of Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III, a 14-year old Viking from the Tribe of the Hairy Hooligans, and how he met and became friends with Toothless, a Night Fury, one of the strangest and most intelligent Dragon species.

The story takes place in the village of Berk, a small village that, following Hiccup's directions, is located twelve days North of "Hopeless and few degrees South of "Freezing to Death", located solidly on the Meridian of Misery. There, Hiccup, a skinny, small but inventive guy, tries to join his town's fight against the dragons that constantly raid it, but his father, the village's chief Stoick the Vast, will not allow Hiccup to do so. Despite that fact, Hiccup manages to sneak into the battle and down a "Night Fury" (one of the most mysterious species of dragons) with an artifact of his invention but, when the moment comes, he cannot bring himself to kill it. Instead, Hiccup and the dragon, whom he names Toothless, become friends allowing Hiccup to learn about the dragons and how him and his fellow villagers have misjudged them.

ALL THE TIMMING ARE DONE CONSIDERING THAT THE MOON OF THE DREAMWORKS LOGO APEARS AT 00:00:02

Themes:

Theme 1: **BERK**



Theme 2: **DRAGONS!**



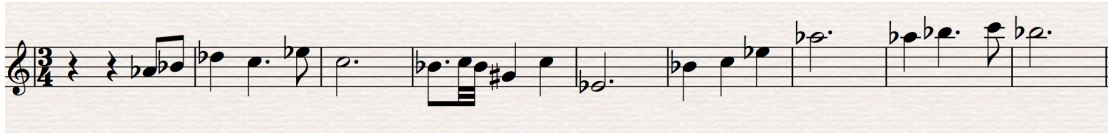
Theme 3: **WARRIORS**



Theme 4: **STOICK THE VAST**



Theme 5: **LOVE THEME**



Theme 6: **EVIL DRAGONS**



Theme 7: **HICCUP**



Theme 8: **FIGHTING DRAGONS**



Theme 9: **DISCOVERY**



Theme 10: **TOOTHLESS**



Theme 11: **TRAINING WITH DRAGONS**



More than an actual theme, it is a recurrent accompaniment motif that appears several times throughout the soundtrack

Theme 12: **FORBIDDEN FRIENDSHIP**



Cue 1: This is Berk

00:00:02 - 00:04:02

This cue serves as an introduction to both: the movie and some of the main themes/characters that are appearing in the movie. It can be roughly divided in two big sections, "Intro-section" and "Fight-section" (listed as "Introduction" and "This is Berk" respectively in the expanded score album), being the second one the largest (starting with the transition that can be heard from 00:01:00).

The whole cue is done in such a way that describes what is going on in the picture, while still having a very strong musical direction/drive. The sync points are done in such a way that they sound as a part of the natural development of the musical phrase, in a very elegant way.

The main sync points that we find are the following:

-00:01:10 Introducing the theme **DRAGONS!** Just with the cut.

-00:01:46 Introducing the theme **STOICK THE VAST**, synced with the move of Stoick's head.

-00:02:07, after they yell "Hoist the torches", the music modulates up, following the movement of the torches in the picture.

-00:02:44 as in 00:02:07, the music gets higher, increasing the tension.

-00:02:55 Introducing the **LOVE THEME** as Astrid turns around. The strongest option for this sync point would have been the fireball at 00:02:53, but the sound effects would have clashed with the music.

-00:03:23 when Gobber says "you can't swing an axe", the music gets a "cowboy-music" flavor.

-00:03:30 the music stops as the catapult projectile is accidentally fired.

The choice of instrumentation for this first cue is Grand Orchestra, with choir and tin whistle. The cue starts with a brass chorale, followed immediately by a melodic section in which the woodwinds take the lead and, after that, a full-orchestra section that keeps going pretty much until the end of the cue.

This choice of Brass->Woodwinds->Strings/Full orchestra, is somehow peculiar, especially if we keep in mind that we are speaking about the intro of the movie. Maybe, a more logical approach would have been choosing exactly the opposite order for introducing the instruments (going from those capable of playing with the least intensity to those able to be the loudest in the whole ensemble).

That said, it is true that the cue works very well and, its peculiar way of introducing the colors of the orchestra, gives it an extra flavor that maybe could have not been achieved with a different approach.

We can find the following themes in the first Cue:

Theme	Time	Description
Berk	00:00:02	Slow chorale with brass. Works as an intro.
Dragons!	00:00:25	Slow with woodwinds, choir and strings. Has a magical and Celtic flavor that helps to locate the story.

Dragons!	00:01:10	Normal tempo. Much faster than previously and with an action-oriented approach. The use of big unisonos an low choir, gives a “primitive feeling” to it that emphasizes the feeling of being in the middle of a battle. The melody is spread all around the orchestra, with a mix of strings, woodwinds, brass and choir.
Warriors	00:01:24	As a opposition to DRAGONS! , this theme makes a bigger use of an accompanied texture, giving the melody to the lower section of the orchestra, predominantly brass, while the higher instruments play an accompaniment. There is not a significant change in the mood.
Dragons!	00:01:32	This is just a continuation of the previous segment that works mostly as a transition until the next significant change. One thing that is worth highlighting is how the instrumentation gets smaller by the end of this transition (going from full orchestra to woodwinds with some light accompaniment), which helps to emphasize the character of the next theme.
Stoick The Vast	00:01:47	Mainly characterized by the use of the choir as the leading instrument, this is by far the most Epic of the themes presented, emphasizing the fact that Stoick a great warrior and a hero for his village.
Dragons!	00:02:07	At this point the score modulates one step higher. This happens at the same time in which the torches are elevated in the picture, making this modulation a sort of sync point. Besides that, the orchestration is quite similar to one used in the previous presentations of the theme, until 00:02:14, where it becomes much lighter, giving the leading melody to the whistles and flutes, while the brass almost disappear and the rest of the orchestra work as a light accompaniment.
Fighting Dragons	00:02:22	The leading melody appears in the horns while the rest of the orchestra play a light “wavy” accompaniment. At this point, this theme is used almost as a joke (since appears when Hiccup mentions that he is “way too muscular” for the dragons) and works as a bridge until the next tutti.
Warriors	00:02:37	At this point the orchestra plays a powerful tutti, giving the main melody to the low brass and the male voices of the choir, while the strings and woodwinds have a more-secondary

		role, while playing a “wavy” accompaniment, quite similar to the utilized in previous sections of the piece.
Love Theme	00:02:55	The two most noticeable changes that occur at this point are the orchestration changes (the violins, woodwinds and horn play the leading melody) and the meter change, from a binary to a ternary feeling.
HICCUP	00:03:11	The theme can be heard starting from the point in which Hiccup says “I need to make my mark”, and it’s light orchestration resembles the sound of those old cartoons, where one character is trying to sneak around a forest. The character of the music changes drastically at 00:03:22, where it becomes a clear tribute to the music utilized in Westerns.
Fighting Dragons	00:03:54	At this point, the theme is presented in such a way that it sounds epic and dreamy at the same time, pointing out the fact that Hiccup yearns to fight a dragon, but it is impossible at the same time.

Cue 2: Dragon Battle

00:04:04 – 00:05:50

This second cue can be divided in two main sections: from 00:04:04 to 00:05:07 and from 00:05:08 until the end of the cue. The first of these sections, widely characterized by the use of the theme **EVIL DRAGONS**, work as a description of what is going on in the picture, accompanying and putting the mood to the moment, without being too intrusive. It basically works as a description of the environment at that point of the movie.

On the other hand, the second section has a more psychological approach, serving to represent the mood of Hiccup.

The beginning of the cue is synced with the moment in which Hiccup leaves the sword mid-air to fall over the whetsone. The music is based mostly in two themes: **EVIL DRAGONS** and **FIGHTING DRAGONS**.

This cue is full of soft sync points, where some actions take place in time with the musical tempo being the following the most noticeable:

- 00:04:14 the bite of the dragon.
- 00:04:20 the door breaking.
- 00:04:31 the dragon being hit but the boulder.
- 00:04:34 the off-screen explosion.
- 00:04:40 the appearance of the head of the dragon through the flames.
- 00:04:44 the hit on the head of the dragon.
- 00:04:47 the movement of the eyes of the dragon.

-00:04:48 the movement of the dragon (jumping off the screen).

-00:05:39 the opening of the catapult-box.

-00:05:22 the movement of Hiccup through the crowd is on sync the music. This fact is enhanced with the cymbal. Another interpretation for this would be that the instrument is used to cover a tempo change of an edit at that point (even when none of them are really noticeable), or maybe it is just used to emphasize the change of musical material (introducing the **FIGHTING DRAGONS** theme).

The list of themes utilized in this cue is the following:

Theme	Time	Description
Evil Dragons	00:04:12	The theme starts sounding after a brief introduction by the low brass and percussion. It is characterized by having the melody in the brass and being constantly accelerating. All this is done over an almost unalterable continuous, characterized by the use of brass and percussion, specially the Anvils.
Evil Dragons	00:04:40	This is pretty much a repetition of the previous section of the cue, with some variations: on this occasion, the melody sounds slightly lighter and appears accompanied by some basic counterpoint in the strings.
Fighting Dragons	00:05:07	The theme, which has an inherent heroic feeling, starts sounding just after Hiccup mentions that he will be the first person to hunt a Night Fury. This makes us believe that the music at this point stops describing what is happening in the village and focuses on what happens inside the mind of Hiccup, thus the heroic mood despite the fact that the whole village is being destroyed by the attack of the dragons. Instrumentation-wise, probably the most noticeable aspects are the fact that the Anvils stop sounding and the cease of the use of counterpoint in the melody.
Evil Dragons	00:05:22	At this point, the music is still focusing on Hiccup's mood but, at the same time, starts describing once more what is going on in the village. That's why, despite using the EVIL DRAGONS theme, it sounds triumphal, instead of menacing. This done by changing the harmony and putting the melody in a higher register than previously.

Cue 3: Did Anybody See That?

00:06:07 – 00:07:06

This cue works as a closure of the whole introduction and dragons'-attack episode. It keeps the tension going until the end and finishes quite abruptly when the torch falls at 00:06:57.

Musically-wise, probably the most remarkable thing is the fact that, for the first time in the whole soundtrack, we can clearly hear electronic sounds (at the very beginning of the cue, mixed with acoustic instruments). Apart from that peculiarity, the instrumentation of the Cue is not far from the used in the previous 2 Cues.

This cue has several sync points, despite some of them being hard to notice:

-00:06:07 the harp creates a soft sync point with the movement of the eyes of Hiccup while, at the same time, makes the camera cut feel less abrupt.

-00:06:30 the Bass Drum is synced with the movement of Hiccup, when he hides behind the torch.

-00:06:33 the movement of Hiccup's head is in sync with the music and emphasized with the cymbals.

-00:06:39 there is a strong sync point when Stoick's feet land on the earth and the theme **DRAGONS!** start sounding. This is further accented by the cymbal that can be heard at this same point.

-00:06:56 the percussion at the end follows the movement of the falling torch.

This cue utilizes several themes, even when all of them appear slightly or heavily modified.

Theme	Time	Description
HICCUP	00:06:11	This theme appears briefly (around 4 seconds) at the beginning of the cue. It sounds as a fanfare, with the melody in the trumpets, the snare drum and all of that layered over runs in the accompanying piccolo flute. At this point , this theme is used to emphasize the triumph and happiness of Hiccup, after successfully downing the Night Fury (even when this happy moment is soon interrupted by the appearance of the Monstrous Nightmare).
WARRIORS	00:06:20	Despite the shouts from Hiccup and all the sound effects that are being used, if we listen carefully we notice that the theme WARRIORS , with its characteristic low brass and choir, is sounding underneath the whole action that is happening. This might be considered as some sort of joke, since Hiccup is running for his life, instead of fighting the dragon.
STOICK THE VAST	00:06:33	This theme is briefly presented (quite

		modified) seconds before the appearance of Stoick to face the dragon. At this point, the music is anticipating what is going to happen in the picture but is not really a great spoiler, since the theme is modified to make it sound menacing, which could perfectly fool the audience, making them think that the music is representing the intentions on the Monstrous Nightmare, instead of the movement off-screen of Stoick to defend his son.
DRAGONS!	00:06:39	Despite the fact that the theme DRAGONS! is the one that is being played at this point, the orchestration utilized is closer to the one originally used in WARRIORS . This might be considered as some sort of fusion between both themes. Another remarkable aspect is the fact that the theme is played slightly faster than on its previous appearances.

Cue 4: War Room

00:08:55 – 00:09:31

The whole cue is basically a modified (softer and slowed down) version of the theme **WARRIORS**. That said, the cue works mainly as a background sound, setting an after-the-battle mood, but without any major role. Even so, there are some elements that are synced:

-00:09:00 the change of the music from a minor, almost nostalgic, horn line to a happier woodwind melody is following the movement of Hiccup through the house and his immediate escapade.

-00:09:04 the percussion enhances the cut of the camera while helping to cover the change of mood of the music.

-00:09:31 the tension that has been created by the underscore below the speech of Stoick, drives to the point in which all the Vikings rise their hands.

Cue 5: The Downed Dragon (in the movie, the cue starts around its 50th second)

00:10:48 – 00:14:09

This cue appears as “The Downed Dragon” in the soundtrack and as “Out there” in the expanded score Album, but, in both cases, there is around 50 seconds at the beginning that are missing in the movie.³

³ This makes us think that we are facing a last-minute change, where the producer or the director decided that the fragment of the movie from 00:09:31 to 00:10:48 didn’t need music.

The cue is full of elements that could be considered as almost a tribute to Hans Zimmer and the time that John Powell spent working with him. The low brass + percussion + electronics (00:11:36), the string ostinato (00:12:43) and the use of an electric guitar mixed with orchestral instruments (00:13:54) are some techniques often associated with Zimmer's style.

In any case, this cue (especially its ending) has a very distinctive tone that makes it stand out over the rest of the soundtrack.⁴

Sync Points:

-00:11:36 when the trail of the downed Night Fury appears on camera.

-00:11:51 the music emphasizes the moment when Hiccup hides after seeing the dragon instead of remarking the moment in which he actually see it. This might have been done to not to anticipate Hiccup's reaction to the audience.

-00:11:55 the music follows the movement of Hiccups head, making it a soft sync.

-00:11:58 the bass pad/drone appears following the movement of the camera, as soon as the dragon is visible. Once again, this could be considered as some sort of soft sync.

-00:12:08 the bass drum and the harp are synced with the moment in which Hiccup lands. The descending arpeggio in the harp might be understood as a way to emphasize the movement of Hiccup.

-00:12:14 the sync here appears when the whole dragon is on camera, the rock (lower right corner) disappears and the camera movement starts lowering down.

-00:12:24 this sync point is, at least, strange. The most logic point to put it would have been at 00:12:23 (when the dragon moves its paw), and, since the music "stinger" is predominantly high-pitched, it shouldn't clash with the low-frequency sound effects that are being used at that point. Even so, the composer decided to emphasize the moment in which Hiccup hit the rock instead.⁵

-00:12:36 the cymbal follows the movement of the camera and enhances the vision of the open eye of the dragon.

-00:13:10 the cut and the presentation of the theme **TOOTHLESS** are synced.

-00:13:45 the movement of the dragon's pupil, highlighted by the Bartok pizzicatti in the strings, restarts the flow of the music which had briefly stopped at 00:13:44.

-00:13:51 the jump of the Night Fury is emphasized by the fast run in the woodwinds, leaving room for the sound effects to enhance the collision of Hiccup's head against the rock at 00:13:52.⁶

-00:13:54 the cut of the camera and the beginning of the theme **TOOTHLESS** are synced, once more.

⁴ Even if not as the "best" cue, yes as one of the most unique.

⁵ It Works perfectly fine, but, from an analytic point of view, it doesn't make too much sense.

⁶ This is a procedure that we can find many times throughout the whole soundtrack.

The list of themes used in this cue is the following:

Theme	Time	Description
HICCUP	00:10:48	The melody in the bassoon and the sustained notes in the strings give to this slowed-down version of HICCUP 's theme a warm and affective color, helping the audience to understand that Stoick is not just a fearsome warrior, but also a father that worries about his son.
DISCOVERY	00:11:03	This theme appears in the woodwinds and strings, with some light string accompaniment in the form of sustain and pizzicatti notes, which confers to it a casual and easygoing mood.
TOOTHLESS	00:13:01	Even when the panting and growling of the dragon cover the entry point of the theme, we can still perceive it. The said, the fact is that, at this point, the theme is used as a bridge by the strings, more than as an actual theme.
TOOTHLESS	00:13:10	This is the first "real" appearance of this theme, dramatically played in the strings over a timpani roll. At the same time, the tempo accelerates, which increases the tension even more.
BERK	00:13:27	The theme is utilized slowed down a lot and "minorized", conferring an almost funeral mood to it (as if all Hiccup's dreams of glory died at that point)
TOOTHLESS	00:13:54	As a contradistinction to the previous times, this time around the theme has menacing mood emphasized by the use of an electric guitar combined with a fiddle, both of them layered over the orchestra.

Cue 6: Bread-making Vikings

00:14:34 – 00:14:52

This is an extremely short cue based entirely on the materials from the theme **EVIL DRAGONS**. Consists on a single musical phrase (the beginning of the theme) orchestrated mainly with strings and horns, with some sustained notes in the low woodwinds and brass, which gives to it a mood that could be associated as a "memory of the recent battle".⁷

⁷ Or at least that is one possible interpretation after seeing the music in its context. In any case, the music is most likely there to fill an empty space, despite all the possible interpretations that could be made about it.

Cue 7: Dragon Training

00:16:12 – 00:19:09 (the music stops briefly between 00:18:49 and 00:18:57, but in the soundtrack everything is listed as a single cue, and so he have done the same in this analysis).

The cue is divided in 5 sections, each one representing a different moment of the training:

Entering to the Arena: 00:16:12 - 00:16:41 this section is characterized by the slow pulse of the music and glorious and Celtic flavor obtained by using choir and bagpipes.

Hiccup's unhappiness: 00:16:41 - 00:17:08 this section works as background music or as a transition. The instruments used are mainly a combination of strings and horns.

Preparing to the Battle: 00:17:08 – 00:17:36 this section is a basically a continuous increment of tension obtained by the repetition of an ostinato and the transposition of it (from low to high strings).

Surviving!: 00:17:36 – 00:18:49 this section is orchestrated in such a way that it reminds the music used in adventure movies.⁸

End of the Lesson: 00:18:57 – 00:19:09 this section is mainly compound of a low sustained note and serves to close this “episode” of the movie.

-00:16:12 the beginning of the cue is synced with the movement of the Arena door.

-00:16:30 the aerial view of the full Arena is emphasized with the cymbals and the crescendo in that starts at around 00:16:17. The choir enhances the idea of “glory” that represents fighting in the Arena for the young Vikings.

-00:17:40 the dragon hitting the wall is in time with the music.

-00:17:47 the music is synced with the cut. There is also a change in the music at this point.

-00:18:12 the change in the music is synced with the cut.

-00:18:45 at this point (where Hiccup is trapped between the dragon and the rock wall) we can listen a tremolo in the brass. This might be there to represent Hiccup's fear.

About the thematic materials that can be found in this cue:

Theme	Time	Description
FIGHTING DRAGONS	00:16:12	The tempo is slowed down in comparison with previous appearances of the theme. The orchestration is also quite different, using mainly horns and choir for the melody and adding a bagpipe pedal and whistles a little bit later. All these elements confer a epic (almost

⁸ More specifically like those moments in which the Hero is successfully escaping from a trap.

		glorious) yet Celtic flavor to it.
FIGHTING DRAGONS	00:17:47	After the cymbal roll, the music starts utilizing elements from the theme, but the theme itself doesn't appear clearly until 00:18:07 in the trumpet.
EVIL DRAGONS	00:17:57	Here happens something similar to what happened in the previous case: the musical material is based in elements from EVIL DRAGONS , but the whole theme itself doesn't appear. Compared with the first time in which this theme was presented (in the 2 nd Cue), this time it sounds more "casual" and, definitely, less wicked. The rest of the Cue (until 00:18:49) is a mix of elements from FIGHTING DRAGONS and EVIL DRAGONS .
EVIL DRAGONS	00:18:28	At this point the theme recovers its original "evil" sound but the tempo and orchestration remains similar to the one that have been used until this point.

Cue 8: Wounded (Based almost entirely on a "faery" version of "Berk")
(00:19:51 – 00:21:10)

The most interesting aspect of this cue is the instrumentation and how it changes when we compare it with previous appearances of the materials that are being used in the Cue.

The female voices and choice of harmonies, combined with the long notes in strings and horns and the little "sparkles" in the woodwinds and percussion, confer to this cue an ancient/exotic, almost magical, taste.

Also, the staticity of the music enhances the idea of a pause in the course of time, as is everything else had stopped and we were looking at a frozen scene.

This cue has several sync points, although some of them are quite subtle:

-00:19:51 As it happened several times before, the music is not synced with the strongest point (the dragon), but with a softer one (Hiccup's fall), avoid a clash between music and SFX.

-00:20:11 we can feel a soft sync point but it is hard to tell if the music is pointing out the fall of the dragon or the rise of Hiccup's head.

-00:20:33 when Hiccup removes his hand from the notebook and we can see the sketch of the dragon without half of its tail.

-00:02:53 the modulation in the music when both, the dragon and Hiccup, become aware of the presence of the other one. This modulation appears together with a change in the instrumentation which serves to take the audience away from the "dreamy" atmosphere that was established by the first part of the cue.

This is the list of themes used in this cue.

Theme	Time	Description
BERK	00:20:03	We can listen to it in the choir. This choice of instrumentation makes it sound exotic and magical.
BERK	00:20:53	The thematic materials used are the same, but reorchestrated and in a lower tonality, making it sound more serious and solemn, in comparison with the “faery” taste of the rest of the cue.

Cue 9: The Dragon Book

(00:22:18 – 00:24:29)

This cue feels as a direct continuation to the previous one, musically-wise speaking, since it starts with the same thematic materials and with a (somehow) slightly similar orchestration.⁹ One of the main differences while comparing with the previous cue is that this time around the music is constantly evolving and increasing it’s tension, while in the previous cue the music was more static.

This cue has one main sync point at 00:23:22, with the appearance of the Night Fury in the Dragon Book:

-00:22:57 after the thunder, the musical materials change from **BERK** to **EVIL DRAGONS**.

-00:23:22 we can listen to a wicked version of the theme **TOOTHLESS**.

-00:23:42 there is a soft sync between the music and the moment in which Hiccup drops his notebook, although this could be understood as a preparation for the cut and the ships’ scene.

-00:24:08 the music changes from the more “introspective” and “landscapy” feeling to an almost military-march sounding music.

-00:24:28 here we found one case in which the music and the sound effects are hitting the same point simultaneously.¹⁰

The list of themes that we can find in this cue is the following:

Theme	Time	Description
BERK	00:22:18	The choice of instrumentation in this case (harmonics in the violins and voices for the melody and electronics + orchestra as accompaniment) make this cue sound mysterious and menacing,

⁹ Understanding by that, that the music is orchestrated as a thin and mysterious melody over a mattress of sustain notes.

¹⁰ As we have previously seen, in many occasions the composer decides to avoid a clash between sound effects and music.

		while sounding fascinating at the same time.
EVIL DRAGONS	00:22:57	The theme is used mainly as a continuation for the cue, as it keeps increasing the tension.
TOOTHLESS	00:23:22	This time around, the theme is orchestrated ¹¹ to sound wicked and menacing, in contrast with the voice of Hiccup, who cannot believe what he is reading in the book.
WARRIORS	00:23:51	The theme sounds as a sailors' melody, while sounding sad, nostalgic and Celtic at the same time. This feeling happens because of the main melodic line being assigned to the fiddle.

Cue 10: Focus, Hiccup! 00:24:40 – 00:26:35

We can find the following sync points:

-00:24:40 the beginning of the Cue is not exactly synced with the picture (once more, the beginning of the music is slightly late to leave room for the sound effects).

-00:25:02 at the point in which they find the “blind spot” of the dragon, the music suddenly stops.

-00:25:12 the music keeps going with the dragonfire.

-00:25:17 at the point in which Hiccup asks more information about the Night Fury, the music follows this isolation from the battle, pointing out the fact that Hiccup is not really focused (as the Cue name mentions).

-00:25:26 the movement of Hiccup is synced with the cymbal.

-00:25:30 the music changes when the cut shows Astrid's face, following the psychology of this character instead of narrating the context (something similar to what happened earlier, at 00:25:17).

-00:25:35 the music changes in the moment in which the dragon notices Hiccup, going back to use the music to describe the environment.

-00:25:56 once more, at this point the music stops as it follows Hiccup, instead of the actual battle with the dragon.

-00:26:16 the music movement stops as Astrid hits the dragon.

List of themes used in this cue

Theme	Time	Description
EVIL DRAGONS + TRAINING WITH DRAGONS	00:24:40	This is the first point in the movie in which we can find an overlap of two different themes, even when TRAINING WITH DRAGONS could be considered more as a recurrent motif than as an actual theme. The combination of percussion and short notes in the strings recreate an

¹¹ This is the first time in the movie that we can clearly listen to the harpsichord, which appear combined with harp, brass, stings and percussion.

		“action context”, while the melody in the brass makes the overall result sound epic.
TRAINING WITH DRAGONS	00:25:12	Here the theme sound lighter as the instrumentation changes and the music modulates up.
WARRIORS	00:25:30	We can hear a light and faster version of the theme WARRIORS , as if the music was sneaking around (following the movement of the characters).
FIGHTING DRAGONS	00:25:47	We can briefly listen this theme in the horns, on top of all the orchestral movement that is taking place.

Cue 11: Offering

(00:26:36 – 00:27:21)

The beginning of this Cue is overlapped with the ending of the previous one. The whole Cue is done as an “indefinite” background, as the audience doesn’t know exactly what is going to happen.

-00:26:55 we find a soft sync when Hiccup takes the fish.

-00:27:03 there is another soft hit, as the Night Fury appears in the screen.

-00:27:10 the music changes, following the story more than hitting one specific point. Even so there is a noticeable change.

The themes that we can find in this Cue are the following:

Theme	Time	Description
BERK	00:26:36	The theme appears very distorted, recreating an (almost) “scary-moviesque” context.

Cue 12: Forbidden Friendship

(00:27:52 – 00:31:48)

The beginning of this Cue is quite peculiar since the music suggests a hard Sync Point (which in this case would be the bite), and it starts instead on a softer Sync Point (the moment when Toothless pulls his head back). This was done to let room for the sound effects and avoid a clash between these and the music.

This cue could be roughly explained as a huge crescendo (build over an ostinato) from the bite at 00:27:52 until the point in which Hiccup realizes that the Dragon is behind him (at 00:31:12). From there, and until the end of the Cue, the music changes drastically to a more “faery” style, which serves to emphasize the magical moment that is happening in the picture while, at the same time, helps releasing all the tension accumulated by the previously mentioned crescendo.

The sync points that we can find are the following:

-00:27:52 the beginning of the Cue. It has some peculiarities, as mentioned earlier.

-00:29:07 when Hiccup tries to touch the Dragon and the music changes as it does the dragon's mood.

-00:29:25 the harp, representing the idea of flying (and traditionally associated with thinking and memories in the movies), can be heard as the dragon watch the bird flying, sounding somehow magical and bittersweet at the same time.

-00:31:12 the music changes following the movement of Hiccup's shoulders as he notices that the dragon is behind him.

Themes used:

Theme	Time	Description
TOOTHLESS	00:29:01	We can hear the theme in the vibraphone, as another element of the huge build up that is in fact this Cue.
FORBIDDEN FRIENDSHIP (only the second half)	00:29:52	This is the first time in the whole soundtrack in which we can hear this theme, more specifically, it appears in the whistle at this point.
TOOTHLESS + BERK	00:30:06	The vibes play the theme TOOTHLESS , while strings and female voices are playing the theme BERK , layering both themes.

Cue 13: New Tail

(00:32:53 – 00:35:29)

This Cue is divided in three main parts:

-The first part, while Hiccup is creating the new tail for Toothless, vastly dominated by the theme **DISCOVERY**.

-The second part, less defined thematically-wise, from 00:33:43.

-The third part starts at 00:34:47, when Toothless notices the new tail.

There sync points that we find in this Cue are the following:

-00:33:07 the end of the pickup bar of the theme **DISCOVERY** and the movement of the book in the picture are synced.

-00:33:55 the music is following the movements of Toothless, as he notices the smell of the eel.

-00:35:29 the Cue ends as Hiccup falls into the water, syncing the splash with the cymbals.

Theme	Time	Description
DISCOVERY	00:33:06	We can listen to the theme, first as a solo line in the whistle, and

		immediately after that, orchestrated with a full orchestra.
BERK	00:33:47	The theme is not presented literally, but the entire segment from 00:33:47 to 00:34:47 is based on materials from BERK .
DRAGONS	00:34:49	We can heard the theme, first in the whistle and, immediately after that, fully orchestrated (something similar to what we found at the beginning of this cue with the theme DISCOVERY).

Cue 14: Teamwork

(00:35:39 – 00:36:14)

Probably the most interesting aspect of this Cue, mechanically-wise, is the fact that the music starts before the actual scene, but unlike other examples, this time around, the music starts with energy from the very beginning (making its entry point feel much more noticeable, at least when compared with other cases).

This Cue has only one clear sync point, at 00:36:14, when they throw the bucket of water.

The only theme that can be heard in this Cue is the following:

Theme	Time	Description
TRAINING WITH DRAGONS	00:35:41	The theme starts sounding at this point in the piano and strings, but is barely audible due to the sound effects.

The rest of the Cue is mostly ambience music, recreating the sound of an Amazonian jungle,¹² which is quite far from the sound of the rest of the Soundtrack, making it a risky choice.

¹² Or at least, the sound that usually is associated with them in films.

Cue 15: Charming the Zippleback

(00:36:57 – 00:37:18)

This cue is very similar to the **Cue N°9: Wounded**, to the point that it almost feels as a music edit of the same materials.

There aren't many thematic elements used in this brief cue, which (as **Wounded**) is made over a variation of the theme **BERK**.

There is some sort of soft sync at 00:37:01, where the music changes, following the picture and at 00:37:14, where the trumpet point out the fear that produces the eel in the dragon.

Cue 16: See you Tomorrow

(00:37:28 – 00:41:11)

The cue begins as a traditional pennywhistle Irish song and slowly evolves, adding materials of different themes as the story is narrated by the picture.

The sync points that can be found in this Cue are the following:

-00:37:48 the music follows the movement as Hiccup raises his arm, provoking his fall.

-00:38:28 the cut and the cymbals are synced.

-00:38:48 the music enhances the moment in which Hiccup finds the correct spot to scratch and the dragon falls asleep.

-00:39:05 the music stops expectantly, waiting for the picture to keep narrating the story.

-00:39:10 there is a hit (done by sound effects) immediately followed by the music.

-00:39:29 the music anticipates the static pose of Astrid.¹³

-00:40:44 the end of the Cue "jumps" to the next scene of the story, helping to understand the connection between two completely different scenes.

This cue is based almost entirely in three themes:

Theme	Time	Description
TOOTHLESS	00:37:39	The music doesn't show the theme, but it is clearly inspired by it.
DISCOVERY	00:38:01	The theme starts sounding as Hiccup discover the fact that the grass tame the dragons and make them playfull.
TOOTHLESS	00:38:35	The theme appears in mayor mode, fast and orchestrated in a way that resembles the sound of marching music (mainly due to the combination of high woodwinds and snare drum)

¹³ Or, in other words, is hitting a little bit early.

DISCOVERY	00:38:53	The theme isn't pointing out anything specifically. It is just a coherent continuation of the musical structure of the cue.
TOOTHLESS	00:39:43	The theme is slowly presented, first shyly in the harpsichord, and progressively in the rest of the strings. It is interesting the fact that it is presented initially as melody, but shortly after that, it becomes an accompaniment.
BERK	00:39:47	The theme appears in the horns, layered over the theme TOOTHLES (in the strings)
DISCOVERY	00:39:57	As it happened earlier (at 00:38:53), the theme is used as a natural continuation of the cue. This time around, the melody is assigned to the string section, and becomes progressively thinner, to the point in which it stops at 00:40:26.
WARRIORS	00:40:44	The theme appears slowed down, in the bassoon, over a mattress of sustain notes in the strings. The overall combination creates a feeling of defeat.

Cue 17: Test Drive

(00:41:41 – 00:44:03)

In this cue we can hear for the first time a complete version of the theme **FORBIDDEN FRIENDSHIP**. This might done be to point out the fact that the relation between Hiccup and Toothless is growing as they are becoming close friends.

The overall structure of the Cue is A-B-A', being the middle section the point in which Hiccup and Toothless are separated mid-air (and the music changes drastically).

The main sync points that we find in this cue are the following:

-00:42:38 there is a hit (slightly anticipated by the woodwinds) as Toothless hits the rock.

-00:42:59 the music changes as Hiccup loses the paper.

-00:43:38 the theme **FORBIDDEN FRIENDSHIP** starts sounding following the movement of Hiccup's foot.

The themes used in this cue are:

Theme	Time	Description
TOOTHLESS	00:41:45	The theme is presented in the bagpipes, which combines with the landscape and the fact that they are flying. All this is strong enough to take our attention away from the cliché of thinking about “Scotland” when we hear bagpipes. ¹⁴
BERK	00:42:03	The theme shows up in the horns, over the theme TOOTHLESS (which at this point is being used as a continuum).
FORBIDDEN FRIENDSHIP	00:42:19	The theme appears complete for the first time (as the friendship and connection between Hiccup and Toothless is consolidated), over an accompaniment that is made as a result of a variation of the theme TOOTHLESS
BERK	00:42:42	This time, the theme evolves slightly (becomes slightly more developed by adding more notes to it).
TOOTHLESS	00:43:30	Once more, the theme is used as an accompaniment in the strings
FORBIDDEN FRIENDSHIP	00:43:38	This time the orchestration is more developed (there is much more movement, turning the music into a more action-oriented Cue).

Cue 18: Not So Fireproof

(00:44:46 – 00:45:14)

This short cue is the result of a combination of elements from two different cues:

-The beginning is a strongly varied version of **EVIL DRAGONS** (sounding definitely more casual and playful than evil)

-At 00:45:00 we listen the second half of the theme **FORBIDDEN FRIENDSHIP**.

Cue 19: This time for sure

(00:47:37 – 00:48:14)

This short cue is almost a condensed version of the second half of the first cue of the soundtrack, as we find almost the same themes and the orchestration is identical at many points. In fact, from 00:48:03 until the end of the cue, the instrumentation used is the same that we could listen in the first cue.

¹⁴ The reiterate repetition of the theme with slight changes in the instrumentation vaguely reminds the orchestration of the main theme of Chariots of fire.

We find sync at three points in this Cue:

-00:47:37 the beginning of the Cue is synced moment in which Stoick closes the door.

-00:47:50 as Astrid pulls down Hiccup's shield, the music also "goes down" (becomes lighter both in dynamics and orchestration).

-00:48:03 the appearance of the theme **WARRIORS** is synced with the movement of Astrid.

Even when the Cue is short, many themes are being used:

Theme	Time	Description
DRAGONS!	00:47:45	The orchestration is quite similar to the one utilized for this same theme in the first Cue of the soundtrack.
FORBIDDEN FRIENDSHIP	00:47:50	We can only hear a varied version of the tail of the theme, but is clear enough to point it out.
DRAGONS!	00:47:53	The theme appears in the stacatti of the oboe, and then, progressively, in the rest of the woodwinds and orchestra.
WARRIORS	00:48:03	-
DRAGONS!	00:48:10	-

Cue 20: Astrid finds Toothless

(00:49:50 – 00:50:21)

This Cue is a combination of the themes **TOOTHLESS** (which has the leading role) and the second half of **FORBIDDEN FRIENDSHIP** (as accompaniment at some points). The orchestration resembles the one used in **The Downed Dragon**, and the theme **TOOTHLESS** sounds menacing once more (at least at the beginning). From that point, the rest of the Cue is a series of variations of the same theme.

Cue 21: Astrid goes for a Spin

(00:51:22 – 00:52:00)

At 00:51:37 we can listen one of the melodies that were used in the Cue **See you Tomorrow**.¹⁵ Apart from that, the Cue is mainly built using the theme **DRAGONS!**, which we can listen at 00:50:22 and 00:51:50.

The only sync point that is being used is found at 00:51:37, when the previously mentioned melody "emerges" as they emerge from the water.

¹⁵ It hasn't been classified as a theme because it only appears in these two points.

Cue 22: Romantic Flight

(00:52:02 – 00:53:48)

This Cue is made with a lot of musicality, without following frame-by-frame what is going on in the picture (which means that there are not too many sync points), but, even so, it works beautifully.

The structure of the Cue could be roughly explained as a continuous build up and then a tail to release the tension.

We find two sync points:

-00:50:50 there is a soft sync as the theme **TOOTHLESS** appears, following the movement of the camera.

-00:52:57 the cut is synced with the cymbals.

About the themes used, they are the following:

Theme	Time	Description
LOVE THEME	00:52:02	The theme is presented isolated, as a solo line on the violin, and is progressively coated by the harmony
LOVE THEME	00:52:23	This time, the theme appears in the Horns, but it is played soft and carefully, over a light accompaniment.
TOOTHLESS	00:52:50	The theme appears adapted to the romantic context, with varied rhythms and with a lovely-major melody that hardly reminds the first appearance of the theme.
LOVE THEME	00:53:10	At this point the Cue reaches its thickest orchestration, its climax, so to call it. The whole orchestra is playing, making it sound thick and glorious.

Cue 23: Dragon's Den

(00:55:47¹⁶ – 00:56:19)

This Cue is quite different from previous Cues. Here the composer opted for a textural approach, but using primarily orchestral instruments and little-to-no electronic sounds.

Even when this is primarily a textural Cue, the number of sync points that we find is smaller than what we could think.

-00:55:27 the cymbals and the movement of the wings of Toothless are synced.

-00:56:10 the appearance of theme EVIL DRAGONS is synced with the bite.

-00:56:19 the ending of the Cue is synced with the cut.

¹⁶ The beginning of this Cue is really hard to perceive, because of all the sound effects that are being played at the same time

We find the following themes as well:

Theme	Time	Description
EVIL DRAGONS	00:55:09	The theme appears slowed down and with it's rhythm and harmony changed, but is still recognizable. It sounds imposing and astounding thanks to the slow tempo and the instrumentation.
BERK	00:55:35	The theme appears shyly with some variations in the melody.
EVIL DRAGONS	00:56:10	The theme is used primarily as a Coda, the close this chapter of the story.

Cue 24: The Cove

(00:56:30 – 00:57:27)

This short as smooth Cue is based entirely on materials from two themes. There aren't noticeable sync points, even when there is a change in the music as the context changes (at 00:56:58). Apart from that, the Cue is just a simple and beautiful peace that works as a "calm in the middle of the storm" kind of Cue.

Theme	Time	Description
BERK	00:56:30	The theme is used with truncated rhythm and light orchestration. The overall context creates an atmosphere that suggests "plotting" or "sneaking", as if something not fully legal was being done.
LOVE THEME	00:56:58	The theme starts sounding as Astrid notices that Hiccup is speaking seriously and she discovers her feelings for him. The theme sounds intimate and also has some nostalgia feeling, as if the music was reviving stories from the past.

Cue 25: The Kill Ring

(00:58:03 – 01:02:18)

This Cue is heavily inspired in the music from action/war movies as it combines epic elements with textural/rhythmic elements. That said, it doesn't have too many sync points for a Cue of its nature:

-00:58:43 there is some sort of soft syncing at this point, as Hiccup enters in the Arena.

-00:59:14 the point in which the doors are broken are enhanced by the cymbals.

-00:59:54 the music stops as Hiccup throws his helmet.

-01:00:27 the theme **EVIL DRAGONS** start sounding. It is worth saying that the theme is following the actions that are taking place off-screen at this point, making it an interesting choice.¹⁷

-01:01:49 the music stops as Toothless stops when Hiccup shouts.

The theme that can be found through this Cue are the following:

Theme	Time	Description
HICCUP	00:58:09	The slow “path-ed” melody in the horns, the light accompaniment and the reharmonization of the theme make it sound Epic, resembling the sound of some Cues traditionally found in the American war-movies.
BERK	00:58:43	The theme doesn’t appear in its full “natural” form, but this passage is clearly based on materials from BERK, although heavily distorted at some points.
-		We cannot find any recognizable theme in this passage. That said, there are some elements with theme-like characteristics (for example at 01:00:04 the melody in the trumpet or at 01:00:17 the melody in the strings). The whole passage has primarily a textural function and is steadily modulating the level of tension.
EVIL DRAGONS	01:00:27	The theme appears briefly, as Toothless is trying to scape from the hole to help Hiccup.
TOOTHLESS	01:00:38	The theme appears heavily distorted in the strings, modulating every 4 notes, oozing anxiety, as Toothless runs to save his friend.
FORBIDDEN FRIENDSHIP	01:01:14	The theme can be hard split between the instruments of the orchestra (first in woodwinds and strings, and after that in the horns and glockenspiel).
TOOTHLESS	01:01:51	The theme sounds dramatic and sad, with an orchestration that somehow reminds the first appearance of the theme in the 5 th Cue.

¹⁷ An alternative could have been using an anxious version of the theme **TOOTHLESS**, but the composer saved that for later.

Cue 26: You're Not a Viking

(01:02:54 – 01:03:45)

This Cue, as the 5th one “**The Downed Dragon**”, has its beginning cut. When we compare the soundtrack and the movie we find that the Cue starts from the second 35, with all the beginning (based on the theme **EVIL DRAGONS**) removed from the final cut.

The cue has the following sync points:

-01:02:54 as Stoick turns, the music starts.

-01:03:21 the music changes from the continuum to a more dramatic section, as Stoick pushes Hiccup back.

-01:03:41 the melody here is felt synced with the moment where Stoick raises his head and shows how affected he really is.

Apart from the previously mentioned **EVIL DRAGONS**, there are some other themes used in this Cue:

Theme	Time	Description
TOOTHLESS	01:02:54	The theme starts sounding in the harp and harpsichord, and it is used as a continuum as the harmony modulates several steps lower, which helps to increase the tension
WARRIORS	01:03:31	The choices of orchestration, harmony and rhythm here are very similar to the ones that we found at the end of the 9 th Cue “ <u>The Dragon Book</u> ” and at the end of the 16 th “ <u>See you Tomorrow</u> ”, as if this moment were a combination of both; with a mix of feelings of defeat and fear.

Cue 27: Ready the Ships

(01:03:45 – 01:05:05) & (01:05:57 – 01:08:11)

In the movie this Cue appears split in two halves as the part from 01:05:05 to 01:05:57 has been removed from the final cut. There is also a section removed from the end of the cue.¹⁸

Probably the most interesting aspect of this Cue, apart from how beautiful the music is at this point, is the orchestration. It is especially interesting to see how the composer managed to blend the sound of the bagpipes and voices into the orchestra, obtaining an epic, yet dramatic and cohesive sound.

¹⁸ Although it is hard to tell, since the sound effects cover completely the music at this point.

Besides it's beginning, there aren't noticeable sync points in this Cue until the second half:

-01:07:10 as Stoick asks for silence, the music stops, being coherent with the context.

-01:07:21 the movement of Toothless' head and the beginning of the theme **EVIL DRAGONS** are synced.

-01:07:28 the cymbal anticipates and follows the movement of Toothless' head.

-01:07:58 the music (the muted trumpet to be more precise) is synced with the cut, as the context changes.

About thematic material, this is what we can find in this Cue:

Theme	Time	Description
WARRIORS	01:03:50	The theme is used with a slow tempo, making it sound glorious and menacing at the same time. Somehow, it reminds the orchestration from the beginning of the 2 nd Cue, as if the "Evil" ones are now the "Warriors" ¹⁹ instead of the dragons.
FORBIDDEN FRIENDSHIP	01:04:18	The theme is reharmonized, making it sound beautifully sad and epic, reflecting the suffering of Toothless and Hiccup, who is watching helplessly. The choice of a combination of strings and voices for the melody confers to it a more human and distressing mood.
FIGHTING DRAGONS	01:04:47	The theme is used as a closing section, as it dissolves the tension little by little until only one note remains.
HICCUP	01:06:00	At this point, the theme, orchestrated with horns, strings and voices, sounds melancholic, slightly bittersweet.
EVIL DRAGONS	01:06:34	The theme in the voices fuses with the textural sound of the mist ²⁰ , resulting in a textural-yet-thematic section. The rhythm of the melody progressively gets dissolved until it becomes another element of the texture.
EVIL DRAGONS	01:07:21	The theme appears twice in a row with differentiated orchestrations at 01:07:21 and at 01:07:30, being the second one one-step higher: -The first time the melody is in the low

¹⁹ Using this terminology just to follow the names that have been given to the different themes.

²⁰ Meaning by mist the fact that, whenever there is mist in the movie, the choice of music is textural (almost Amazonian, as mentioned earlier).

		brass and choir. -The second time, the melody can be found in the trumpets with some support of the strings.
-	01:07:38	In this fragment he find thematic-alike elements, but none of them is directly related with any of the stated themes.
EVIL DRAGONS		

Cue 28: It Ends Today

(01:08:52 – 01:09:55) The Cue ends early, when we comparing the movie with the soundtrack.

When comparing the soundtrack and the movie, we find that there is some editing done at 01:09:40 (in the soundtrack there is not a pause at this point).²¹ The pause is there (once more) to leave room for the sound effects.

-01:09:25 at the point in which Snotlout smiles, the music becomes “friendlier”.

-01:09:40 the music starts after the sound effects, following the cut.

-01:09:55 the music ends, following the movement of Stoick’s hand.

The only theme that we find in the Cue is **WARRIORS** at 01:09:40. The beginning of the cue has many elements that loosely resemble some themes, but they aren’t defined enough to be considered as part of any theme.

Cue 29: Battling the Green Death

(01:11:15 – 01:17:10)

-01:11:26 the beginning of the theme **EVIL DRAGONS** is synced with the cut that shows the Green Death.

-01:11:53 as Stoick shouts, the music changes abruptly its path (modulates).

-01:12:44 the music stops as the picture shows the dumbfounded face of Stoick.

-01:13:30 the cymbals and the beginning of the theme **HICCUP** are synced with the cut.

-01:15:12 the moment in which Stoick pulls Hiccup back is enhanced by the cymbal.

-01:15:33 the beginning of the theme **BERK** is synced with the movement of Toothless.

-01:16:49 the moment where the came shows Astrid is synced with the beginning of the theme **TOOTHLESS**.

-01:17:10 the ending of the Cue is synced with the moment when the Green Death is hit by Toothless’ flame.

²¹ Since the track was probably recorded in slices, we are going to assume that both are edited, but we will take as “original” the movie version.

Theme	Time	Description
EVIL DRAGONS	01:11:26	The theme appears in with full orchestra with an extremely busy orchestration.
EVIL DRAGONS	01:11:53	The theme here sounds one step higher and the male choir sums to the sound of the orchestra.
FIGHTING DRAGONS	01:12:22	The melody in the brass, with the rhythmic accompaniment, turns the “sacrifice” of Stoick and Gobber into a Epic, almost-heroic, rescue of their fellow Vikings.
HICCUP	01:12:47	The theme appears orchestrated and with it’s rhythm changed in a way that resembles the music of the action movies of the 80’s.
STOICK THE VAST	01:13:01	The theme is used at this point almost as a joke, as Gobber points out the fact that Hiccup is as stubborn as Stoick. ²² The orchestration is similar to the one used the first time the theme was presented (in the 1 st Cue), but it is extended to follow the story.
HICCUP	01:13:30	The melody and the harmony is distorted at this point, but the mood of the music still sounds as in the previous appearance of the theme
TRAINING WITH DRAGONS	01:13:46	-
TOOTHLESS + FIGHTING DRAGONS	01:13:53	The theme TOOTHLESS is used as a secondary melody in the high woodwinds while the theme FIGHTING DRAGONS sound in the horns.
FIGHTING DRAGONS + TRAINING WITH DRAGONS	01:14:03	The melody of both themes is heavily distorted (specially the melody from FIGHTING DRAGONS , in the strings).
FIGHTING DRAGONS	01:14:14	-
EVIL DRAGONS	01:14:32	-
TOOTHLESS	01:15:00	The melody in the strings create the dramatic feeling. The orchestration is similar to the one used in the first appearance of the theme, but without the timpani roll.
TOOTHLESS	01:15:18	The theme in the voices and the changes in the harmony make it feel

²² Another possible interpretation for this would be that the theme STOICK THE VAST is considered as an “adulthood” theme, and at this point Stoick finds that his son is a worthy son and not just a crazy, dreamy guy.

		as if at this point the music is inside the mind of Stoick: he notices that he was wrong about Toothless and, even when he is still not sure about it, he helps him.
BERK + Toothless	01:15:33	The theme TOOTHLESS is used as an accompaniment in the high woodwinds while the rest of the orchestra focuses on the other melody (which appears predominantly in the brass section).
FORBIDDEN FRIENDSHIP	01:15:48	The theme follows BERK seamlessly, creating a whole new entity with the fusion of both themes
BERK	01:16:08	The end of the cue uses all three themes in such a way that they all seem to be part of the same melodic idea, creating a “new” longer theme as a result.
TOOTHLESS	01:16:49	
FORBIDDEN FRIENDSHIP	01:16:53	

Cue 30: That Thing Has Wings

(01:17:11 – 01:18:18)

Even when this Cue is completely action-oriented, there is not any noticeable syncing between the picture and the music. The mc follows the path of the scene, but there is nothing openly synced.

The orchestration, as mentioned, is action-oriented, with a lot of textural elements, but even so, there are some easily-noticeable themes that are being used:

Theme	Time	Description
EVIL DRAGONS	01:17:15	The theme appears in the low section of the orchestra, accompanied with “stabs” made by runs in the woodwinds and violins.
FIGHTING DRAGONS	01:17:34	The orchestration makes it sound epic a triumphal, while not lowering the tension level.
WARRIORS	01:17:47	The theme appears slightly distorted, with a lot of movement in the different layers of instruments. There is also a new element, the echo of fragments between different instruments, which helps to increase the tension even more.
FIGHTING DRAGONS	01:18:00	The theme uses even more repetitions than the previous one and the actual melody is compressed (as almost runs) between these repetitions.

Cue 31: Counter Attack

(01:18:23 – 01:20:05)

This extremely messy Cue is made by combining elements from the themes **TOOTHLESS**, **EVIL DRAGONS** and **HICCUP**. The majority of the cue is based on materials from EVIL DRAGONS, although they are treated freely to create an “alive” orchestra.²³

The Cue starts with a sync at 01:18:23, following the movement of Toothless:

-01:18:25 the theme **TOOTHLESS** start sounding at the same time that the Green Death receives the impact.

-01:18:27 the movement of Toothless is followed by the music. This happens again at 01:18:31.

-01:18:32 the movement of the head of the Green Death is in sync with the music, although since it is a relatively slow movement, is hard to tell.

-01:19:25 the theme **HICCUP** starts sounding just as Toothless turns around.

-01:19:51 the music stops as Hiccup gets hit by the tail of the Green Death.

The themes that appear in this Cue are the following:

Theme	Time	Description
TOOTHLESS	01:18:25	The theme appears in the high-pitched instruments of the orchestra, accompanied with a counter-motive that is the equivalent of the “stabs” heard in the woodwinds in the previous Cue; but this time around they appear in the low-pitched instruments, feeling more like impacts from a huge hammer.
EVIL DRAGONS	01:19:03	The melody, with truncated rhythms and harmony, is suggested split among different instruments (some of them completely covered by the sound effects).
HICCUP	01:19:25	The theme appears briefly, as a fanfare.

Cue 32: Where’s Hiccup

(01:20:43 – 01:23:32)

This Cue starts as a slow and sad choral and is gets progressively happier as Stoick notices that his son is alive. Then the mood keeps evolving following the story:

-01:21:20 when Toothless opens his wings, the music also “opens” changing from a sad sustained mattress to a more vivid and happy accompaniment.

-01:21:32 the beginning of the theme **TOOTHLESS** is synced with a subtle nod of the dragon’s head.

²³ It feels almost like a hive or a swarm of instruments.

-01:21:59 the theme BERK starts sounding at the point in which Toothless' nostrils dilate as he breath in Hiccup's face.
There are two themes²⁴ that can be heard in this Cue:

Theme	Time	Description
TOOTHLESS	01:21:32	The orchestration is similar to the one used in Romantic Flight , but the rhythm is slightly different.
BERK	01:21:59	This is the only time in the whole soundtrack where we can clearly listen to an isolated piano. The composer was probably saving it for this sad-intimate moment where both friends are peacefully together again. The theme is followed seamlessly by FORBIDDEN FRIENDSHIP (both being already fused as a single theme).

Cue 33: Coming Back Around
(01:23:25 -01:25:22)

-01:24:31 the theme TOOTHLESS starts as Hiccup adjusts his peg leg to the saddle.
-01:25:07 the moment when Fishlegs' hit the wall with his dragon in synced with the music. This happens again at 01:25:08.
-01:25:16 the credits hit by the music (of course).

Theme	Time	Description
LOVE THEME	01:23:30	The instrumentation is almost the same that was used in the Cue Romantic Flight , but the rhythm is slightly different. The main difference is
TOOTHLESS	01:23:50	
LOVE THEME	01:24:03	The orchestration gets progressively smaller until reaching a solo violin at 01:24:12. It is interesting how, to follow the path of the picture, two sections of the theme are overlapped at 01:24:10.
TOOTHLESS	01:24:31	All these three themes are used as a steady melody at this point of the movie. The orchestration recreates perfectly a feeling of happy, "almost-perfect", ending.
BERK	01:24:39	
FORBIDDEN FRIENDSHIP	01:24:55	

²⁴ Although **FORBIDDEN FRIENDSHIP** would make the third, it is already fused with **BERK**, making them both the same theme at this point.