

**FANTASTIC MR. FOX
A MUSIC ANALYSIS**

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Thesis Statement

In this Soundtrack Analysis I am going to focus and investigate the film score of animation movie *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, one of the most representative films in stop motion technique, because of its innovative combination of original and pop music as well as the insight it will give my future work as an animation scorer for my Culminating Experience.

Background of the Film and Storyline

Loosely based on Roald Dahl's book, *Fantastic Mr. Fox* brings the viewer into the child-friendly world of an intrepid speaking fox and his plans to live a better life.

The movie starts with Mr. Fox and his wife Felicity assaulting a square farm, when suddenly they fall into a trigger a fox trap and become caged. Felicity tells to his husband that she is pregnant and implores him to find a more traditional life when they get away.

After two years (twelve in *Fox Years*), the Foxes and their teenager son Ash, a typical rebel without cause, are living in a hole. Mr. Fox currently is a newspaper journalist and he wants to move the family into a better home in the base of a tree, which is situated very near to Walter Boggis, Nathaniel Bunce, and Franklin Bean houses, three powerful farmers of the region.

Mr. Fox decides to move, disregarding the warnings of his lawyer Badger about how dangerous the area is for him and his family. Being in the new house, Kristofferson, Felicity's nephew, comes to live with them as his father has become very sick with pneumonia.

Wanting to return to his *wild life*, Mr. Fox persuades to Kylie Sven, an opossum that works as a building superintendent, to steal the resources from the three farms. Boggis, Bunce and Bean, the farmers, resolve to exterminate Mr. Fox and camp out near the family's tree. When Mr. Fox appears, the farmers shoot, but

achieve only to rip off his tail. They then try to dig, forcing Mr. Fox to get out. After bringing down the whole side of the tree, the farmers realize the Foxes have fled digging a tunnel.

The farmers choose to wait at the tunnel entrance that the Foxes will have to surface from, for food and water. Underground, Mr. Fox encounters Badger and many other local animal residents whose homes have also been destroyed. As the animals begin to be afraid of hunger, Mr. Fox leads a digging expedition to tunnel to the three farms, stealing them clean. Whereas the animals feast, Ash and Kristofferson, become friends after Kristofferson defended Ash from a bully, return to Bean's farm, proposing to reclaim Mr. Fox's tail. When they are interrupted by the arrival of Bean's wife, Ash escapes but Kristofferson is captured.

Noticing that Mr. Fox has taken their produce, the farmers inundate the animals' tunnel network with cider. The animals are forced into the sewers, and Mr. Fox knows that the farmers plan to use Kristofferson to trap him into an ambush. Rat, Bean's security guard, confronts the animals. After a fight with Mr. Fox leaves him mortally injured, Rat reveals Kristofferson's location before he dies.

Mr. Fox asks the farmers for a meeting in town close to the sewer hub; he will surrender in interchange for Kristofferson's liberty. The farmers prepare an ambush, but Fox and the others expect it and launch a counteroffensive. Fox, Ash and Kylie slip into Bean's farm. Ash, more mature, liberates Kristofferson and braves enemy fire to release a rabid beagle named Spitz to keep the farmers trapped.

The animals become habituated to living in the drains with others considering moving in. Kristofferson and Ash resolve their differences. Fox leads his family to a drain opening built into the floor of a supermarket owned by the three farmers. Celebrating their new food source and the news that Felicity is pregnant again, the animals dance in the corridors as the film ends.

Not included in the book, in the film Mr. Fox split by his dual nature: on one hand he strives to protect his kin and intends to be the perfect family man yet, on the other, he dreams about the wilderness and fantasizes about the freedom that wolves enjoy. The final scene of the movie depicts a meeting between Mr. Fox and his idealized Wolf, mirroring his final decision of staying with his family, and giving closure to the proposed adaptation.

Wes Anderson adapted the book into a film. This was made using stop-motion animation and features the voices of George Clooney as Mr. Fox, Meryl Streep as Mrs. Fox, Bill Murray as Badger, Hugo Guinness as Bunce, and Michael Gambon as Bean. The film plot emphasizes more on Mr. Fox's relationship to Mrs. Fox and his son, which is opposed against Mr. Fox's wish to rob chickens as a means of feeling like his natural self. "The movie adds scenes before Mr. Fox attacks the three farmers and after their bulldozing of the hill, as well as a slightly altered ending and more background on Mr. Fox's past life as a thief of food".¹

¹ (Wikipedia 2014)

² (Weintraub 2009)

Music Analysis and correlation with the Image

1. Opening Title

In the beginning of the movie the music starts with an introduction composed by Desplat, based on the intro of the song: "The Ballad Of Davy Crockett", performed by The Wellingtons. This short intro accompanies the presentation of the film, where it's established that the film is based on the original tale.

It's interesting as this small piece of music is converted from background music to source music, becoming the music the Mr. Fox is listening on his radio.

The piece is written in *crescendo* mode, starting with one instrument and adding a new one every two bars.

2. The Ballad Of Davy Crockett

This cue that is presented as source music, comes connected with previous cue. This song "The Ballad Of Davy Crockett" was composed by George Bruns with lyrics by Thomas W. Blackburn, and was created originally for the fifties' television series "Davy Crockett".

The song's lyric represents rebellion, freedom and wildness of Mr. Fox, and supports the introduction of the main character: "*Born on a mountain top in Tennessee, Greenest state in the Land of the Free, Raised in the woods so's he*

*knew every tree, Kilt him a b'ar when he was only three, Davy, Davy Crockett,
King of the wild frontier"*

The music is interrupted when Mr. Fox's wife coming to talk with him

3. Mr. Fox in the fields

The scene shows the youth of Mr. Fox and his wife Felicity.

The music presented in this scene contains the *leitmotif* of the main character Mr. Fox. It starts with the harmony played by the banjo.



After that we can listen to three different melodies, which will be present in the entire film, the plucked instruments, mandolin and ukulele, perform the first:

The second, more *cantabile*, is played by the cello:

And the last is presented by the celesta.

The strings in pizzicato create the accompaniment with the same syncopation rhythmic formula of the banjo.

4. Heroes and Villains

The music for this sequence is the song “Heroes and Villains”, originally composed by The Beach Boys, and it accompanies three special moments: The first is an action sequence where Mr. Fox and his wife are stealing in a farm, this stops suddenly when Mr. Fox runs into an animal trap and falls in it.

The music returns after Felicity declares to her husband that she is pregnant and his reaction is between happiness and concern. The music stops again when she decides that Mr. Fox should have another type of life and should not continue to steal.

The third segment of the music appears after a leap in time when the film shows the current married life of Mr. Fox. For this part the *rallentando* excerpt is chosen, the last portion of the song, in form of a parody related to the drastic change of Mr. Fox’s life mode, when he has gone from “rebel life” to a “standard” family life.

5. Fooba Wooba John

In this scene the song “Fooba Wooba John” is used like source music on the Fox family radio. This song was composed and performed by Burl Ives, and it appears in the album “Little White Duck” from 1959.

The music doesn’t make reference to the image, is only used for ambience. The image is presented Mr. Fox’s son Ash in a typical family breakfast. The music

stops when Mr. Fox turns off the radio and tells Felicity that he wants to leave his “hole house” to live in a comfortably “tree house”, but his wife reasons with him that they are too poor and can’t get an expensive place. Mr. Fox turns on the radio after telling Felicity that he needs to do something to change their house.

There is a music edition trick, the original music has a length of one minute and seven seconds, but in the total sequence one minute and nineteen seconds of music are used. This happens when Mr. Fox turns on the radio again, and the music starts before that the original off point.

6. Mr. Fox’s theme (2)

When Mr. Fox sees the tree house that he wants, the banjo intro performs for few seconds.

7. Boggis, Bunce, and Bean

Mr. Fox is in the tree house that he wants buy, and suddenly he sees through the windows the houses of Boggis, Bunce, and Bean. At this moment the *leitmotif* of these characters is presented.

The brass, split in a few fragments, plays the first line of the melody,

A piccolo plays the seconds' four bars.

The plucked instruments: banjo and guitar perform the harmony in a *tango* rhythm escorted with a snare drum.

8. Boggis, Bunce, and Bean (2)

Mr. Fox is speaking with Clive Badger, a real estate lawyer responsible for selling the house. Clive tries to deter Mr. Fox from buying the house, explaining that Boggis, Bunce, and Bean live nearby and they are very dangerous.

The Boggis, Bunce, and Bean theme plays again, while Clive describes each one of the characters, but this time the music works like a variation: the tuba starts with the melody seconded by a muted trumpet, after that the French horns take the melody and returns again to the tuba. The melody ends with a military melodic phrase performed by the trumpet.

While the banjo plucked strings in *arpeggiato* formula create a harmony accompanied by the glockenspiel, the other plucked strings make the accompaniment in syncope with the percussion.

9. Boggis, Bunce, and Bean chorus (3)

Clive turns on a tape recorder and shows Mr. Fox the “Boggis, Bunce, and Bean” theme sung by kids. The lyrics, like a child derision, describe the characters: *“Boggis, Bunce, and Bean One fat, one short, one lean. Those horrible crooks so different in looks are nonetheless equally mean”*

About of the origin of the song, the director Wes Anderson comments in an interview given to the Collider online cinema magazine: “That was working with Alexandre Desplat our composer. I said, “You know,” it was literally this. “Okay, so I’m going to come back on Tuesday. Oh, by the way, see if there’s like a tune for this farmer’s song. These are the words here.” Ba ba ba ba bum and he hummed it immediately using a theme he’d already written for the farmers, and within 20 seconds he had the song and that was that. Which I will say is exciting if you have somebody who’s that kind of talented and versatile who can just adapt the thing you’re talking about immediately. The next thing we knew we were kind of expanding it into this whole song for this showdown scene.”²

² (Weintraub 2009)

10. Jimmy Squirrel and Co.

This scene shows the moving to the tree house, and the background music helps create a fast movement feeling.

The mandolin plays the melody accompanied in harmony by the guitar. Then the recorder plays the same phrase and the orchestration increases with the introduction of the glockenspiel in broken chords. After that, the melody is played again, but this time for the string section in pizzicato, a counterpoint melody appears which the cello plays.

At the end of this cue, when Kristofferson appears, the music changes and the glockenspiel performs the leitmotif of this character.

11. Love

While the Fox family and their nephew, Kristofferson, enjoy of a typical family rest day the song "Love" is played in a turntable. This song was written by Floyd Huddleston and George Burns and sung by Nancy Adams, and was composed originally for the animation film of 1959 "Robin Hood".

12. Kristofferson's theme

Mr. Fox and Kylie contemplate the night landscape and Mr. Fox ponders about his own natural animal behavior. The music attached for this meditation moment is the Kristofferson theme, which begins with a string pizzicato making the

harmony. The melody, a small pattern in *ostinato*, is played a few bars after by the glockenspiel,



This is accompanied by a long notes phrase performed by viola and the bassoon. After this, the melody returns but this the time, besides the glockenspiel, the plucked strings are included and the bassoon with cello replaces the viola in the harmony because the tessiture is lower now.

13. Buckeye Jim

This song, performed by Burl Ives, which appears in the same album “Little White Duck” works as source music while Ash and Kristofferson argue because Kristofferson wants to have a better place to sleep and Ash refuses.

14. High-speed French Train

Ash turns on his toy train to comfort Kristofferson, who is crying because of their discussion. In this moment the previous music (Buckeye Jim) fades out while the music of the train starts. Suddenly, the image changes to a panorama view of the Boggis, Bunce, and Bean houses where a real train is crossing, the source train music switches to background music, becoming louder and making the music more present.

The glockenspiel creates the melody followed by a march rhythm in the percussion, tuba and plucked strings.

15. Mr. Fox's master plan A

Mr. Fox explains his master stealing plan to Kylie, and persuades him to work together. While Mr. Fox explains the plan, an action music performed by a low drum and a ukulele is played.

The scene has many interruptions: images of Mr. Fox developing the plan are interjected with Kylie and Mr. Fox's conversation. The music always joins in the developing of the plan images.

16. Mr. Fox's master plan Boggi's chicken house (2)

Mr. Fox and Kylie carry out the plan to steal Boggi's chickens. In the background the previous music sounds again, this time the percussion is increased with a snare. In the end the whistle plays the melody that is escorted by snaps.

The sequence has several pauses, which occur when Mr. Fox and Kylie find trouble in their plan.

17. Mr. Fox stealing chickens (Plan B music)

Mr. Fox throws a blueberry with sleeping powder to Boggi's beagle, and immediately a melody in the best Bluegrass style starts. The main melody is

performed by the mandolin and accompanied by the banjo, guitars, bass, drums, even a jew's harp.

In this long sequence the action music and the Bluegrass theme appear simultaneously, credited as Plan B in the album: *Fantastic Mr. Fox (Additional Music from the Original Score) [The Abbey Road Mixes]*

18. Horn Concerto No 4 in E Flat Major – III Rondo

Mr. Fox and Kylie steal in Bunce's refrigerated smokehouse and Bounce doesn't realize because he is distracted listening through his headphones the Third Movement of Mozart's Horn Concerto No 4 in E Flat Major.

19. Whack-bat Majorette

Kristofferson receives instructions from the coach to play Whack-bat and replaces Ash on the playing field. The music that accompanies the scene is a theme performed like a school marching band melody.

The music is performed as if a school band was rehearsing. When Kristofferson makes a great move the drums escorts him.

20. The Grey Goose

The Fox family and Kylie are having dinner and the source music is the song “The Grey Goose” performed by Burl Ives, included in the album “Little White Duck” as the rest of the songs of this artist used in this film.

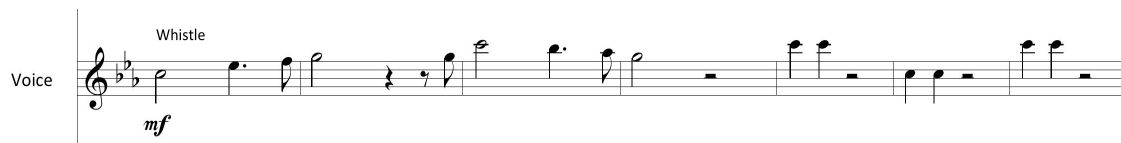
21. Mr. Fox Master Plan A (3)

This time the music appears in an action sequence played by the drums. The scene shows Mr. Fox, Kylie and Kristofferson trying to steal in Bean’s secret cider cellar.

22. Bean's Secret Cider Cellar

Mr. Fox, Kylie and Kristofferson get in to Bean’s cellar; the security Rat gets in their way trying to stop them from stealing. The music in this scene reminds us of the most popular western films, as Laurence Mc Donald describe in his book *The Invisible Art of Film Music: A Comprehensive History* “The high trumpet and whistled tones in the score evoke the sounds of Ennio Morricone’s music for Spaghetti Westerns”³.

The plucked strings and low drums accompany in a strong pattern rhythm, while the whistle performs the main melody:



A musical score for a whistle melody. The notation is on a single staff in G minor (one flat). The melody begins with a half note G4, followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note Bb4, and a quarter note C5. The second measure contains a quarter rest, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. The third measure consists of a half note F5. The fourth measure has a half rest. The fifth measure contains a quarter note G5, a quarter note A5, and a quarter note Bb5. The sixth measure has a half rest. The seventh measure contains a quarter note C6, a quarter note Bb5, and a quarter note A5. The eighth measure has a half rest. The ninth measure contains a quarter note G5, a quarter note F5, and a quarter note E5. The tenth measure has a half rest. The eleventh measure contains a quarter note D5, a quarter note C5, and a quarter note Bb4. The twelfth measure has a half rest. The piece concludes with a quarter note G4. The dynamic marking *mf* is placed below the first measure. The word "Whistle" is written above the staff.

³ (McDonal 2013)

The jaw harp appears again on that music. Later the banjo plays a second melody



followed by the flute.

23. Looking for cider

Boggis, Bunce, and Bean make an emergency meeting to talk about of Fox's theft in their farms. A march, like funeral pomp, escorts the scene. This music is part of the Additional Music album.

The melody starts with tuba, and this is based on the Boggis, Bunce and Bean theme:



24. Three Farmers

Mr. Fox and Kylie leave Mr. Fox's house, but they don't expect that Boggis, Bunce, and Bean are waiting outside to shoot them. After the shootout Mr. Fox and Kylie are alive, but Mr. Fox has lost his tail.

The music in the background is Three Farmers, which it appears in the album *Fantastic Mr. Fox (Additional Music from the Original Score) [The Abbey Road Mixes]*. This theme is based in the Boggis, Bunce, and Bean music, but with a slower tempo closer to a funeral march.

25. Family digging (Plan B Music)

Mr. Fox and his wife are talking in bed when they realize that the house is being demolished. Together with their family, they decide to dig to save their lives.

The music that escorts the scene is Plan B, which it appears again with a drum intro and is followed by a bluegrass pattern.

26. Une Petite Ile

Felicity argues with Mr. Fox because of the recent events, she is upset because Mr. Fox has failed to fulfill his promise to not steal anymore.

The music used to accompany is “Une Petite Ile”, it was composed by Georges Delerue for the Francis Truffaut movie: “Lex deus anglaises et le continent”, it was called “Two English Girls” for the American audience.

27. Street Fighting Man

The Fox family must dig deeper because Boggis, Bunce, and Bean decide to find them at all cost.

The background music used for this scene is “Street Fighting Man” composed by Rolling Stones, song that appears in the album “Beggars Banquet”, released in 1968.

28. The siege begins (Three Farmers music)

Boggis, Bunce, and Bean are looking for Mr. Fox desperately, for that reason they design an exhaustive search.

The last part of the music Three Farmers, included in the album *Fantastic Mr. Fox (Additional Music from the Original Score) [The Abbey Road Mixes]*, appears accompanying this fragment. The melody is alternated between the different brass instruments and the plucked strings and mallets present the harmonic rhythmic pattern.

29. New friends in the hole

Clive the lawyer and other neighbors appear in the same hole that Mr. Fox and his family are.

Desplat uses a suspense music for this segment, instrumented by the Jew harp and strings, using extended techniques in harmonics.

30. Mr. Fox Master Plan A (4)

In this sequence several events happen; the most important is Kristofferson defends Ash in a fight.

The music used to escort is the long drum pattern, which has been presented before.

31. Mr. Fox in the fields Medley

Being in the hole, Mr. Fox has an idea to escape the Boggis, Bunce, and Bean chase. The music used for this scene is Mr. Fox in the fields, but this time Desplat uses a variation on tempo and orchestration.

32. Digging – One human Hour Later (Plan B music)

Mr. Fox and his neighbors are digging again, following Mr. Fox's plan. The background music for this fragment, as usual, is the Bluegrass of the Plan B music.

The music starts again when Mr. Fox arrives to Boggis' henhouse.

33. Fantastic Mr Fox AKA Petey's Song

Mr. Fox celebrates having reached to Boggis' henhouse turning on the radio, the source music on the radio becomes a real performance by Petey and his band.

Jarvis Cocker, the famous Rock Star front man of British band “Pulp”, becomes the character Petey. The song is a short story about the Mr. Fox chase: *Bout a handsome little fox Let me sing you folks a yarn Hey, diddle-dee, duddle-da, doddle-do, doodle-dum*

‘Twas a splendid little fella Full of wit and grace and charm Say zippy-zee, zappy-za, yappy-yo, goggle-gum. Well, like any little critter needing Vittles for his little-uns Well, he stole and he cheated And he lied just to survive. With a doodle-dum, diddle-da, duddle-diddle-doodle-dum With a zippy-zo, zippy-zay, zippy-zappy-zoopy-zee. Oh, doo-dah, doo-dah, day! Let me take a little tick now To color in the scene ‘Cross the valley lived 3 yokels Name of Boggis, Bunce and Bean. Now these 3 crazy jackies Had our hero on the run Shot the tail off the cuss With a fox-shooting gun But that stylish little fox Was clever as a whip Dug as quick as a gopher That was hyperactive. Now those 3 farmers sit ‘Twhere there’s a hole ‘twas once a hill Singing diddle-dee, duddle-da, doddle-do, doodle-dum. And as far as I can reckon They’re sitting up there still Singing zippy-zee, zappy-za, yoppy-yo...

34. Night and Day

Phil the mole plays the popular tune “Night and day” on the piano while the rest of the animals celebrate the robbery in the Boggis, Bunce and Bean properties. Cole Porter originally composes this song and the instrumental version played in the movie is by Art Tatum, the famous pianist.

This melody was recorded in 1946, and was released in the album “Master of Jazz” of 1984.

35. Adagio

Clive is preparing to give a speech when Mr. Fox interrupts him. The source music used in this scene is the Adagio composed by Georges Delerue, that it is originally for “Comptes à Rebours” the French – Italy movie of 1970 directed by Roger Pigaut.

36. Master Plan (5)

Ash and Kristofferson come into Bean’s kitchen to rescue Mr. Fox’s tale. As usual, the suspense music used by Desplat is the long drum pattern, intercalated with different percussion instruments and varying the dynamics in order to increase the tension.

37. Adagio (2)

Mr. Fox continues with his speech and Delerue’s Adagio appears again. The music stops suddenly and Mr. Fox, worried, asks about Ash and Kristofferson.

38. Une Petite Ile (2)

Mr. Fox is pondering about his own acts close to a waterfall that falls into the pipeline, when Felicity comes to him. In this moment of closeness between Mr. Fox and his wife, the music “Une Petit Ile” sounds again. It was used before in a

similar context, as a leitmotif of Mr. Fox and Felicity in their moments of thoughtfulness and privacy.

39. Kristofferson theme (2)

Mr. Fox approaches Ash to tell him that he is very proud of him. The music that accompanies the scene is the Kristofferson theme.

It is interesting that the music used is only the first part of the entire melody. The decision for this long cue was to restart the initial melody instead of using the full theme.

40. Rat Fight

The Rat gives Clive and the others the farmers' message where they say that they have Mr. Fox's son. After that, a fight starts where Rat, Ash, Felicity and Mr. Fox are involved.

The music for this long sequence is based on the Rat theme, presented before in the Bean's Secret Cider Cellar cue. The music is included in the album *Fantastic Mr. Fox (Additional Music from the Original Score) [The Abbey Road Mixes]*.

41. Death of Rat

Rat is dying after the fight with Mr. Fox. Desplat uses the Rat theme to create this musical section, but this time with a slow tempo and an arpeggio as accompaniment in the glockenspiel.

The melody is included in both albums: *Fantastic Mr. Fox* in the last part of the track *Just Another Dead Rat in a Garbage Pail (behind a Chinese Restaurant)*, and also in the album of the Additional Music.

42. Le Grand Chorale

Mr. Fox turns on his radio and starts his speech to the animals to rescue his nephew. The source music is “Le Grand Chorale” composed by Georges Delerue. This music was written originally for the film of 1973 “Day for Night”, directed by the French filmmaker François Truffaut.

43. I get Around

The animals are agreed to help to Mr. Fox in the rescue of his nephew. The background music for this scene is “I get around” the famous song performed by The Beach Boys.

This song is originally included in the album “All summer long” of 1964.

44. Great Harrowsford Square

Mr. Fox makes his plan, writing a letter to Boggis, Bunce and Bean. The music that accompanies this long sequence is based on the Boggis, Bunce and Bean theme: the banjo plays the accompaniment with a slow rhythm pattern with the timpani; the tuba shows the melody in a very slow tempo



The music continues but with different changes, a whistle solo, accompanied in the rhythm by footsteps like a march, interprets the second part.



The theme is developed and the trumpet performs the melody.



A new element appears in the melody, which is performed by the plucked strings. In the background of the music we can listen to the a voice speaking *Boggis, Bunce, Bean, one fat, one short, one lean*".

The entire atmosphere reminds us of the *western movies*; like in a cowboy duel, Desplat manages to synthesize the whole environment in his music.

The music changes radically when Mr. Fox and his friend attack the city with burn seeds, thenceforth the boys voice choir appear singing the Boggis, Bunce and Bean theme in a faster tempo.

It interesting that the music converts in source music in certain point and backs again to background music.

45. Le Grand Chorale.

Mr. Fox and Kylie emerge from the pipeline in a motorcycle. Le Grand Chorale music, composed by George Delerue, appears again, but this time as background music.

46. Rescuing to Kristofferson

Mr. Fox, Kylie and Ash get in to the Bean Annex, to rescue to Kristofferson. Desplat writes the music for this scene, which stars with a rhythm pattern syncopated performed by snaps. The melody is performed by the timpani in the very beginning.

The melody turns in different instruments, like voices, banjo, the woodwinds and the glockenspiel; a roll in the drums alternates the rhythm pattern, but the snap is sustained in the whole fragment.

47. Stunt Expo (First Part)

Mr. Fox, Kylie, Ash and Kristofferson is trying to scape from the Bean Annex, suddenly they encounter to Boggis, Bunce, Bean and their chase group.

Desplat wrote a music for this scene based in the countermelody of the Boggis, Bunce and Bean choir theme. The strings play the melody, while the snare in a march roll makes the rhythm and the brass perform the harmony.

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with the following parts from top to bottom:

- Horn in F:** Treble clef, playing a series of whole notes (F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F).
- Trumpet in Bb:** Treble clef, playing a series of whole notes (F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F).
- Tbn. (Tenor Trombone):** Bass clef, playing a series of whole notes (F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F).
- Tuba:** Bass clef, playing a series of whole notes (F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F).
- Timpani:** Bass clef, playing a series of eighth notes (F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F).
- Snare:** Bass clef, playing a series of eighth notes (F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F).
- Percussion:** Treble clef, playing a series of eighth notes (F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F).
- Violin I:** Treble clef, playing a series of eighth notes (F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F).
- Violin II:** Treble clef, playing a series of eighth notes (F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F).
- Viola:** Bass clef, playing a series of eighth notes (F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F).

The score is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic throughout. The percussion part features a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and sixteenth notes.

Afterwards, the plucked strings join to brass in to the accompaniment.

On the second part of the music we can listen clearly to the Boggis, Bunce and Bean melody played by the brass.

Horn in F *mp*

Voice *mp*

Afterwards, the harmony adds up other orchestral instruments. Finally, the music ends with the boy voice solo again.

50. Oi, Man River

The animals are shown into their new home, after the chase to which they have been subjected.

The music chosen to accompany this scene is the song “Oi, Man River” composed by Jerome Kern, with lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein, in the The Beach Boys’ version. This music was part of the compilation album “Hawthorne” of 2001.

However, the second part played when Mr. Fox opens the sewer cover, is the version of the remastered album “Friends” of 2001, with guitar accompaniment.

51. Mr. Fox in the fields (2)

Felicity lets Mr. Fox know that she is pregnant again. Desplat uses the music of Mr. Fox in the fields again; as he used in the beginning, now he uses it for the end.

The scene is long, for that reason the music starts again in this cue.

52. Let Her Dance

Mr. Fox finishes his toast and Ash turns on his radio. The music for the end is the song "Let her Dance" performed by The Bobby Fuller Four. This song belongs to the homonymous single of 1965.

53. Music on the credits:

Fantastic Mr Fox AKA Petey's Song, instrumental version by Jarvis Cocker

High-speed French Train – Alexander Desplat

Side Car Escape – Alexander Desplat

Orchestration and Instrumentation Resources

“Anderson instructs Desplat to veer away from conventions for a more reflective, personal score. On *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, the director suggested that since it was a stop motion puppet movie, the orchestra should be puppet-size. ‘I shrunk a string orchestra to five musicians and the brass to one of each. All of the other instruments were micro instruments: mandolins, little banjos, little toys, a glockenspiel’.”⁴

This way, Desplat wrote for a reduced orchestra: one musician for every instrument, achieving more intimate and closer sound, but with the idea to have all the orchestral timbre in the soundtrack.

In addition to those instruments, Desplat utilized the traditional instruments of bluegrass, an American folklore genre of the fifties, in order to create in his music an ambience of this style. For that reason he used banjo, ukulele, steel guitar, mandolin and Jew harp.

The result is a mixture of a condensed orchestra with a bluegrass band. Desplat was interviewed by Todd Martens, for Los Angeles Times, and he expresses in this interview: “It’s (the soundtrack of the film) instrumentation you’d use in bluegrass or country music,” Desplat said, “but I think I twisted it by adding

⁴ (Patches 2014)

instruments that would not be a part of the usual instrumentation for this kind of music.”⁵

Desplat was assisted for the orchestration by Jean-Pascal Beintus and Sylvain Morizet, with whom he had worked before in films like “The Twilight Saga: New Moon” and “Un prophète”, among others. Additionally, his sister Marie-Christine Desplat also worked as an orchestrator for the film. A list of the entire instruments and the musical crew is annexed on the end of this document (see: *Annex Music Department Crew*)

⁵ (Martens 2009)

Conclusions

Fantastic Mr. Fox Soundtrack is a well achieved combination between folk music and orchestral music, including romantic intimate music and suspense music with a great reminiscence of spaghetti westerns; all of this with an acquired reference of the popular American music of the middle of the twenty century.

The intention of Desplat in his score was very pragmatic and at the same time ludic. Thereby, the music is used a little more playfully than in the other films: for example, “Anderson pauses the music twice as Fox stops to listen while running through the wheat field en route to the first break-in”.⁶ Desplat creates this “dialogue” leaving spaces in the music and image to emphasize the film events and get a stronger dramatic effect.

“At times, folksy and often referencing rootsy Americana sounds, Desplat's score contains flashes of Ennio Morricone as well as playful riffs on hillbilly music. Yet it's not completely old-school. Banjos and mandolins give way to a "minuscule orchestra" of five string players, and minimalist keyboard and percussive patterns throw off any sense of time or place”⁷.

Todd Martens, in the interview made to Alexander Desplat, makes an accurate description about Desplat’s score: “Not quite Western and not quite orchestral, perhaps a better word to describe Alexandre Desplat's score for Fantastic Mr. Fox is *fragile*. Like the meticulously detailed stop-motion creatures that populate

⁶ (Browning 2011)

⁷ (Martens 2009)

the Wes Anderson film, Desplat's score is one that's finely drawn, with each pluck of a banjo or flicker of a harp clearly audible.

For *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, Desplat was thinking small, so small that he wanted the music to sound as if it were being performed by the foxes, badgers and rats that inhabit the world of the film: 'I just felt that if we found a sound that would belong to these little puppets, it would make them come alive,' Desplat said. 'I suggested to Wes that we do a sort of puppet orchestra. I wanted to make everything sound like they were playing. I wanted little things the mandolin, the banjo, the whistle, the recorder and all these little families of instruments. They weren't toys but kind of toy-ish instruments'."⁸

The other important point is the use of leitmotifs during the entire film: "there is a feeling of Sergey Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* (1936) in Desplat's composition of themes for different animal characters, which are then modulated according to circumstances"⁹. For example, "the score's principal theme is introduced when Mr. Fox is warned about the three farmers through a song the local children sing, the theme returns in cues that also feature trumpet and drums; a whistled version is included when Mr. Fox, along with Ash and their opossum friend, rescue his nephew"¹⁰.

Another example of the importance between characters and distinctive instruments can be observed in the "Rat's theme, it is full of bravado when he

⁸ (Martens 2009)

⁹ (Browning 2011)

¹⁰ (McDonal 2013)

first confronts Fox with dramatic drums, Spanish-style guitar, pipes and whistles, all creating evocations of Ennio Morricone's score for Sergio Leones's Dollars trilogy, *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964), *A Few Dollars More* (1965), and *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966). As Rat's fortune change and he is about to die, a more melancholic version is heard with the glockenspiel and bells sounding his death knell, to be replaced by a single voice accompanied by a horn effectively singing his requiem".¹¹

Fantastic Mr. Fox Soundtrack has a peculiar particularity, it is eclectic from different points of view: first, the timbre turns between orchestral and pop music; second, the different dramatics genres approach: romantic, suspense, action and playful; and lastly, it also includes pre-existing music as part of the soundtrack, becoming even more varied, because includes different references from pop, folk and going through other films' soundtracks.

Observing the incidence of the popular music, Mark Browning describes about: "the retro rock is less intrusive in *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, possibly because there it always appears combined with original music (composed by Desplat). It also seems to be strongly motivated from within the action and the time when the movie is set: that is, not sandpapering over emotional cracks. Instead, it marks a hedonist action, such as the dance at the end, or Jarvis Cocker's 'Petey's Song', an excuse for a gag about improvisation"¹². However, in the pre-existing music,

¹¹ (Browning 2011)

¹² (Browning 2011)

there are several references of the groups of the middle of the twenty-century like The Beach Boys, Rolling Stones, The Wellingtons and The Bobby Fuller Four.

All these popular music references reinforce the idea that the film is possibly set in a scenario close to the American fifties; even jazz is present with the music of Cole Porter, performed by Art Tatum, and most of the other recursive elements are a selection made by Anderson of several songs from the children oriented album “Little White Duck” from 1959, performed by Burl Ives.

In the pre-existing music, Anderson also uses different pieces of other soundtracks, for example “ ‘Love’ by Floyd Huddlestone and George Burns which lightly accompanies the dividing scene and belongs to *Robin Hood* (a Wolfgang Retherman film, 1973), in which the central couple, Robin and Marian, coincidentally, were also both foxes”¹³.

The use of other soundtracks sources become much more evident with the appearance of several compositions from Georges Delerue for different movies: “Two English Girls” (François Truffaut, 1971), “Comptes à Rebours” (Roger Pigaut, 1971) and “Day for Night” (François Truffaut, 1973). It seems that Anderson is influenced by Delerue’s music.

¹³ (Browning 2011)

Annexes

*Annex A: Music Department Crew*¹⁴

Piers Adams	Musician: Recorder
Richard Addison	Musician: Woodwinds (Clarinet)
Jim Anderson	Musician: Brass (Tuba)
Wes Anderson	Song: Music And Lyrics By
David Arch	Musician: Celeste
Chris Baron	Musician: Percussions
John Barrett	Pro Tools Operator
Jean-Pascal Beintus	Orchestrator
Richard Berry	Musician: Brass (French Horn)
Dave Bishop	Musician: Saxophone
Dudley Bright	Musician: Brass (Trombone)
Nicholas Bucknall	Musician: Woodwinds (Clarinet)
Peter Clarke	Music Editor
Paul Clarvis	Musician: Percussions
Peter Cobbin	Score Recording Engineer
Jarvis Cocker	Song: Music And Lyrics By
David Coulter	Musician: Petey's Band (Mandolin, Ukulele)
Mitchell Dalton	Musician: Guitars (As Mitch Dalton)
Gordon Davidson	Assistant Score Mixing Engineer
Philippa Davies	Musician: Woodwinds (Flute)
Alexandre Desplat	Composer / Conductor / Orchestrator
Marie-Christine Desplat	Orchestrator
Jessica Dolinger	Music Clearance And Licensing
Andrew Dudman	Score Recording Engineer
Jim Dunbar	Music Coordinator
Richard Edwards	Musician: Brass (Trombone)
Tracey Edwards	Musician: Brass (French Horn)
Xavier Forcioli	Music Production Coordinator
Rod Franks	Musician: Brass (Trumpet)
Tristan Fry	Musician: Timpani
David Fuest	Musician: Woodwinds (Clarinet, Bass Clarinet)
Grégoire Garrigues	Musician: Petey's Band (As Gregoire Garrigues)
Nigel Gomm	Musician: Brass (As Nigel Gomme)
Isobel Griffiths	Musicians Contractor
Stephen Henderson	Musician: Percussions

¹⁴ (International Movie Database 2009)

Mike Hext	Musician: Brass (Trombone)
Helen Keen	Musician: Piccolo/Recorder Musician: Woodwinds Piccolo Flute
Jill Kemp	Musician: Recorder
Gary Kettel	Musician: Percussions
Andy Kitchen	Pro Tools Operator
Annabel Knight	Musician: Recorder
Christopher Laurence	Musician: Double Bass (As Chris Laurence)
Dominique LeMonnier	Musician: Traffic Quintet (Violin)
Bill Lockhart	Musician: Percussions
The London Oratory School Schola	Musician: Boys Choir
Jean-Yves Lozac'h	Musician: Petey's Band (Banjo And Pedal Steel Guitar)
Sara Matarazzo	Music Clearance And Licensing
Glyn Matthews	Musician: Percussions
Gerard McCann	Supervising Music Editor
Tristan Montroco	Pro Tools Operator
Christophe Morin	Musician: Traffic Quintet (Cello)
Maurice Murphy	Musician: Brass (Trumpet/Piccolo Trumpet)
Anna Noakes	Musician: Woodwinds (Flute)
Philippe Noharet	Musician: Traffic Quintet (Double Bass)
Sam Okell	Score Recording Engineer (As Sam Ockell)
John Parricelli	Musician: Banjo/Ukulele/Guitar/Mandolin
Randall Poster	Music Supervisor
David Pyatt	Musician: Brass
Frank Ricotti	Musician: Keyboard Percussions / Musician: Percussions
Nina Robertson	Musician: Woodwinds (Flute)
Claude Romano	Music Preparation
Ralph Salmins	Musician: Drum Kit
Owen Slade	Musician: Brass (Tuba)
Jean-Pierre Sluys	Music Recordist: Petey's Band
Darren Smith	Musician: Brass (Trombone)
Alison Stephens	Musician: Mandolin
Dave Stewart	Musician: Brass (Bass Trombone)
Jamie Talbot	Musician: Saxophone
Phil Todd	Musician: Saxophone
Jean Touitou	Musician: Petey's Band
Norbert Vergonjeanne	Music Preparation (As Norbert Vergonjeanne)
Anne Villette	Musician: Traffic Quintet (Violin)
Estelle Vilotte	Musician: Traffic Quintet (Viola)
Sam Walton	Musician: Percussions
Lee Ward	Choirmaster
Felix Wareing	Musician: Solo Boy Vocalist
Richard Watkins	Musician: Brass (French Horn)

Lucy Whalley
Nigel Woodhouse
Robert Houston
Sylvain Morizet

Assistant Musician Contractor
Musician: Guitars/Banjo/Mandolin
Additional Music Editor (Uncredited)
Additional Orchestrator (Uncredited)

Annex B: Cue Sheet

Cue #	Time	Image Reference	Music (name OST)	Composer	Use	Length
1	0:01:04	Open Titles	American Empirical Pictures	Alexandre Desplat	Main Title	00:15
2	0:01:20	Mr. Fox close to a tree	The Ballad Of Davy Crockett	The Wellingtons	Source Music	00:36
3	0:01:59	Mr. Fox's Wife comes to the tree where Mr. Fox is	Mr. Fox in the fields	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	01:00
4	0:03:03	Mr. Fox and his wife are stealing in a Farm	Heroes And Villains	The Beach Boys	Background Music	00:43
	0:04:11	Felicity confesses to Mr. Fox that she is pregnant	"	"	"	00:20
	0:04:33	The Fox's hole house	"	"	"	00:26
5	0:04:56	Family Fox breakfast	Fooba Wooba John	Burl Ives	Source Music	00:42
	0:05:58	Mr. Fox. turns on the radio and finishes his breakfast	"	"	"	00:37
6	0:06:36	Mr. Fox sees the tree house that he wants to buy	Mr. Fox in the fields	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:12
7	0:07:26	Mr. Fox sees Boggis', Bunce's, and Bean's houses from the window	(Based on Boggis, Bunce, and Bean) not included	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:27
8	0:08:25	Clive describes (in off) Boggis, Bunce, and Bean	Boggis, Bunce, and Bean	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:48
9	0:09:16	Clive plays the tape recorder	(Chorus sings Boggis, Bunce, and Bean) not included	Alexandre Desplat	Source Music	00:10
10	0:10:00	Fox family moving	Jimmy Squirrel and Co.	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:42
11	0:10:48	Kristofferson arrives to Fox house	Love	Nancy Adams	Source Music	01:40
12	0:12:31	Mr. Fox and Kylie contemplate the night landscape	Kristofferson's theme	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:36
13	0:13:07	Ash and Kristofferson in Ash's room	Buckeye Jim	Burl Ives	Source Music	01:06
14	0:14:13	Ash turns on his toy train	High-speed French Train	Alexandre Desplat	Source Music	00:15
	0:14:28	Boggis', Bunce's, and Bean's houses night panorama, train is crossing	"	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:07
15	0:15:08	Mr. Fox. explains his plan to Kylie	Mr. Fox Master Plan A - not included	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:09
	0:15:32	"	"	"	"	00:07
	0:15:42	"	"	"	"	00:05
16	0:17:01	Mr. Fox and Kilye try to come into Boggis' farm	Mr. Fox Master Plan A - not included	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:28
	0:17:35	"	"	"	"	00:08
	0:17:55	"	"	"	"	00:25
17	0:18:24	Mr. Fox throws a blueberry to Boggis' beagle	Plan B *	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:50
	0:19:15	Mr. Fox and Kylie throw several blueberries to Boggis' beagles	Mr. Fox Master Plan A - not included	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:17
	0:19:37	Mr. Fox and Kylie are jumping the fence	"	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:17
	0:19:58	Mr. Fox and Kylie are running from Boggis' house	Plan B *	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:10
18	0:20:52	Mr. Fox and Kilye steal at Bounce's refrigerated smokehouse	Horn Concerto No 4 in E Flat Major – III Rondo - not included	Mozart	Source Music	00:19

19	0:21:25	Ash and Kristofferson play Whack-bat	Whack-bat Majorette	Alexandre Desplat	Source Music	00:29
	0:22:01	"	"	"	"	00:32
	0:22:44	"	"	"	"	00:42
20	0:23:27	Fox family are having dinner	The Grey Goose	Burl Ives	Source Music	00:29
21	0:24:58	Mr. Fox, Kylie and Kristofferson try to steal in Bean's cellar	Mr. Fox Master Plan A - not included	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:20
22	0:25:47	Security Rat interposes in the theft	Bean's Secret Cider Cellar	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	01:22
	0:27:29	Bean's wife goes downstairs	"	"	"	00:27
	0:28:11	Bean opens the cellar door	"	"	"	00:10
23	0:28:27	Boggis, Bunce, and Bean in a emergency meeting	Looking for cider *	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:42
24	0:30:15	Boggis, Bunce, and Bean start a shootout to Mr. Fox and Kilye	Three Farmers *	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:45
	0:31:05	Bean takes Mr. Fox's tail	"	"	"	00:15
25	0:32:37	Fox Family digging	Plan B *	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:47
26	0:33:53	Felicity discusses with Mr. Fox	Une Petite Ile	Georges Delerue	Background Music	00:55
27	0:35:10	Fox family digging	Street Fighting Man	Rolling Stones	Background Music	01:14
28	0:38:27	The siege begins	Three Farmers *	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:28
29	0:39:11	Clive and the neighbors appear in the hole	Suspense Music - not included	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:17
30	0:39:40	Clive is upset with Mr. Fox	Mr. Fox Master Plan A - not included	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	01:10
31	0:41:05	Mr. Fox has an idea to scape of the Boggis, Bunce, and Bean chase	Mr. Fox in the fields Medley *	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:48
32	0:42:14	Mr. Fox an his neighbors digging	Plan B *	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:18
	0:42:43	Mr. Fox calls the others animals to rise the henhouse	"	"	"	00:08
33	0:42:55	Mr. Fox turns on the radio in Boggis' henhouse	Fantastic Mr. Fox AKA Petey's Song	Jarvis Cocker	Source Music	01:18
34	0:45:31	Phil the mole plays the piano	Night and Day	Cole Porter / performed: Art Tatum	Source Music	01:21
35	0:47:15	Clive is preparing to give a speech	Adagio - not included	Georges Delerue	Source Music	00:27
36	0:47:51	Ash and Kristofferson come in to Bean's kitchen	Mr. Fox Master Plan A - not included	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	01:32
37	0:49:23	Mr. Fox continues his speech	Adagio - not included	Georges Delerue	Source Music	00:22
38	0:51:55	Mr. Fox close to a waterfall into the pipeline	Une Petite Ile	Georges Delerue	Background Music	01:30
39	0:53:29	Mr. Fox approaches Ash into the pipeline	Kristofferson's theme	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	01:12
40	0:55:11	Rat gives to Clive and the others the farmers message	Rat Fight *	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	00:35
	0:55:50	Rat attacks to Ash	"	"	"	01:15
41	0:57:21	Rat dying	Death of Rat	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	01:08
42	0:58:48	Mr. Fox turns on his radio and starts his speech to the animals	Le Grand Chorale	Georges Delerue	Source Music	01:04
43	1:00:09	Mr. Fox asks to the animal their specialties to rescue his nephew	I Get Around - not included	The Beach Boys	Background Music	01:05
44	1:01:32	Mr. Fox tells to Felicity "Paint a X"	Great Harrowsford Square	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	02:51
	1:04:24	TV shows the animal attack	"	"	Source Music	00:14

	1:04:39	TV shows Bean on fire	"	"	Background Music	00:09
45	1:04:50	Mr. Fox and Kylie emerge from the pipeline in a motorcycle	Le Grand Chorale	Georges Delerue	Background Music	00:57
46	1:06:43	Mr. Fox, Kylie and Ash get in to the Bean Annex	Rescuing to Kristofferson - not included	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	03:42
	1:10:35	Ash is apologizing with Kristofferson	"	"	"	00:20
47	1:11:36	The chase group comes to Bean Annex	Stunt Expo	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	01:14
48	1:12:59	Ash screams "Hot Box"	Stunt Expo	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	01:15
49	1:14:36	The wolf appears on the mountains	Canis Lupus	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	01:12
50	1:16:14	Camera shows the animals new home	Ol, Man river	Kern - Hammerstein/ performed: The Beach Boys	Background Music	02:00
51	1:18:30	Felicity confesses to Mr. Fox that she is pregnant again	Mr. Fox in the fields	Alexandre Desplat	Background Music	01:16
52	1:20:02	Ash turns on his radio	Let Her Dance	The Bobby Fuller Four	Background Music	02:31
53	1:22:38	Credits	Fantastic Mr. Fox AKA Petey's Song - instrumental version	Jarvis Cocker	Music on Credits	01:31
	1:24:12	Credits	High-speed French Train	Alexandre Desplat	Music on Credits	01:22
	1:25:36	Credits	Side Car Escape *	Alexandre Desplat	Music on Credits	01:07
					<i>Total</i>	00:45

* Included in the Album Fantastic Mr. Fox (Additional Music from the Original Score) [The Abbey Road Mixes]

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