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Soundtrack Analysis of thematic material

Gladiator (2000)

*Extended edition*

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## Introduction

When I was 11 years old, Gladiator came out into the cinemas. I remember going to watch it with my brother and father and it immediately became one of my favorite movies. The soundtrack of Gladiator was the first ever soundtrack CD I have ever bought (I bought it as a present for my brother). Since then, I have listened to the soundtrack many times and watched the movie over 10 times, yet I am always impressed and am struck by, how it makes me emotional even after seeing it so many times.

Part of the success of the movie is definitely in its music. In this analysis I will try to uncover the emotional content of the thematic material and how the thematic relates to the picture and how it is used, to get the most out of the film's dramaturgy.

### 1. Important information

**Director:** Ridley Scott

**Writers:** David Franzoni

John Logan

William Nicholson

**Actors:**

Russell Crowe, Joaquin Phoenix, Connie Nielsen, Ralf Möller, Oliver

Reed, Djimon Hounsou, Derek Jacobi, John Shrapnel, and Richard Harris.

**Producer:** Douglas Wick

**Production house and Distribution:** Universal Pictures, DreamWorks

**Music by:** Hans Zimmer

Lisa Gerrard (Additional music)

Klaus Badelt (Additional music)

**Orchestra recorded at:** Air Lyndhurst Studios

**Orchestra Conducted by:** Gavin Greenaway

**Music production:** Alan Mayerson and Hans Zimmer

**Musicians:** Air Lyndhurst Orchestra

Djivan Gasparyan-duduk, Jeff Rona-flute (gamshorn), Tony Pleeth-cello. Lisa Gerrard-vocals & Yan Ching, Heitor Pereira-guitar

**Soundtrack released by:** Universal, Decca

**Movie release date:** May 5<sup>th</sup> 2000

**Runtime:** 2h 43min

**Production Budget:** \$103 million

**Box office in first weekend:** \$34,819,017

**Total box office:** \$187,705,427

Released in the United States on May 5, 2000, *Gladiator* was a box office success earning, receiving positive reviews, and was credited with rekindling interest in the historical epic. The film was nominated for and won multiple awards, notably five Academy Awards in the 73rd Academy Awards including Best Picture and Best Actor for Crowe. The Score won the **Las Vegas Film Critics Society Award 2000**, **Broadcast Film Critics Association Award 2001**, **ASCAP Film and Television Music Award 2001**, **Golden Globes Award 2001**. The album won the Golden Globe

Award for Best Original Score and was also nominated for the Academy Award and BAFTA Award for Best Score ("Anthony Asquith Award for Film Music"). The score was also nominated for the Grammy award, **Online Film Critics Society Award, Chicago Film Critics Association Award 2001, Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy & Horror Films, USA 2001, ARIA Music Award 2001, BAFTA Award 2001**. The original soundtrack album was a huge success for Universal and Decca, selling platinum in sales and prompting multiple album releases in the future. The **Gladiator** score goes without saying among **Star Wars, Titanic & Lord of the Rings** as one of the most important in the modern age of soundtracks, bringing recognition to the genre of soundtrack music to the masses and has influenced many young composers of our generation.

## 2. Synopsis

Crowe plays the fictional character who was a family man and farmer from Spain, yet becomes a loyal **Roman** general Maximus Decimus Meridius, who is betrayed when the emperor **Marcus Aurelius**'s ambitious son, **Commodus**, murders his father and seizes the throne and orders the execution of Maximus, since Marcus Aurelius was very fond of Maximus and wanted to crown him the next Emperor. Maximus manages to escape his death but discovers, that Commodus killed his son and wife and burnt his farmland. Wounded and emotionally drained, Maximus collapse in front of his brunt corpses and house of his family.

A Moroccan merchant and ex-gladiator **Proximo** takes him as a slave and makes him fight as a gladiator. With his army skills he ends up winning several fights in the small

Moroccan gladiator arena. As a new Emperor Commodus re-opens the Roman Coliseums for months of gladiator games. Proximo takes his best gladiators to Rome to fight in the big Roman Coliseums. Because of Maximus's superior fighting and leadership skills, Proximo's gladiators win their first match in the Colosseum as the Barbarian Horde. Maximus instantly wins the loyalty of the crowd (the mob as it is called in the film by the roman senators). Commodus now wants to meet the new gladiator celebrity and is shocked to realize it is Maximus. Commodus yearns to kill Maximus on the spot, yet he cannot because doing so would cause the watching crowd to see him as merciless and develop distaste for his leadership, since the crowd loves Maximus.

He makes Maximus fight in the arena again against Tigris of Gaul, a former champion gladiator who has never been defeated and thus earned his freedom. Tigris was joined in the arena by the Coliseums staff who unleashed hungry tigers upon Maximus. Against all odds, Maximus won the match and decided to spare Tigris's life defying the will of Commodus, yet again and winning even more appreciation from the crowd who now called him "Maximus the Merciful".

Maximus is then escorted back to the gladiator's quarters; his former servant Cicero approaches him and says that Maximus still has the loyalty of his army. Commodus's sister Lucilla and the senator Gracchus secure a meeting with Maximus, and Maximus obtains their consent to rejoin his army, topple Commodus by force, and hand power over to the senate. Commodus, however, suspects a plot against him, and forces Lucilla to confess it by threatening to kill her son. Maximus is captured. Commodus decides to fight Maximus in the arena himself and thus restore his glory as an emperor. Before the match he wounds Maximus with a dagger, so he would have an advantage in the fight.

Despite the odds of Maximus being weak, delirious and wounded, he still manages to kill Commodus, yet falls to the ground fatally wounded himself. In his last breaths, Maximus gives power back to the senate.

### 3. Broad view on the overall score

It is well known, that Hans Zimmer was one of the pioneers of synth programming and using sampling techniques and samplers in the creation of film scores. He is known for his hybrid sound (combining live orchestra and other instruments with samplers and synthesizers), which he has been perfecting throughout his career that contributed to his worldwide success. As Zimmer states in his interview about Gladiator's score with Ian Lacey for the Film Music on the Web: *"I have to say that I did not want to turn into a musical anthropologist, to research ancient Roman music [as Miklos Rozsa did for his Ben-Hur and Quo Vadis scores]. But at the same time I wanted to have a sound that was not contemporary to today."* We can see, that Zimmer made a conscious choice of creating a sound for this movie, which would transfer the viewer of the film to the Roman times. With the extensive use of the German medieval instrument the gamshorn, which plays the Progeny theme (T1), the more than 3000-year-old Armenian instrument Duduk, played by master duduk player Djivan Gasparyan, a very rare dulcimer-like hammered string instrument Yang Ching, performed by Lisa Gerrard, Lisa's beautiful eternal-ethnic like vocals with a combination of solo cello, trumpet, orchestra, ethnic Arabic percussions, synth percussions and synth arpeggiators, pads and stabs, Zimmer achieved in creating a very fresh sound that evokes the past, yet is very modern and emotional. Zimmer points out in his interview with Ian Lacey: *"World*



*music has become the "in-thing" just now but I believe I have contrasted that sound fairly well with the use of such an enormous orchestra. I've always wanted to write for Djivan Gasparyan. I think he is one of the most amazing musicians in the world. He creates a sound that has a lonely yet haunting quality and is thousands of years old - ageless.*" Many music critics argue, that Zimmer should have approached the score from a more accurate historical representation of the music the ancient Romans used, yet I disagree with the critics in this point, since film music is not always supposed to accurately represent the time and era the film portrays, but is more of a 3 person narrator of the story, emotions and scenery. Gladiator's score is pure of emotion and drama and it engulfs the viewer into the picture and, in my opinion, blends perfectly with the way the film is shot and the colors of the picture. In an interview about Gladiator's soundtrack, Ridley Scott says: *"The music puts on a fourth dimension. The music plays what you cannot see, the music plays when you are in the room it plays the world around you, outside, and the environment outside and the world you have entered."* Zimmer and his crew have thus created a new dimension for the film. Zimmer also stated in an interview: *"It felt like such a boy's movie and my ambition was to make it romantic. To have not a single women get out of her seat or be bored or be put off by it. Contextualize in a way the violence of the story through the music. So It is not just blood, guts and gore, because it is exciting, but actually make it a very much part of this idea of the simple man, the farmer, who looses his family, who looses his voice. He does not hardly speak in the second act. Thus the music has to speak for him. I managed too tell a story without getting caught at it, I managed to keep things emotional in its own way and I managed to contain the heroics and not make them just cheap*

*heroics.*” This score could have easily turned out completely different if Zimmer and Ridley would have decided to take an alternative, less romantic and more action approach on the score. But we must know, that Gladiator is primarily not an action movie, but a fictional historic drama. I believe that Zimmer’s choice in what way to compose the music had a big impact on the big success the movie had around the world.

#### 4. Broad Theme analysis

In Gladiator we find 16 different themes and motives 11 different motives most of which are reoccurring. It is hard to point out which theme is “the overall main theme”, but the Earth theme (as named by Zimmer and Ridley themselves), which is related to the protagonist Maximus is definitely most prominent and important for the protagonist. As Zimmer states in an interview with John Pattyson: *“The thing that became the main theme, Lisa kept calling it the "Earth Theme". The first time I played it to her, she absolutely got what I was going after, which is actually this very, very beautiful theme. But I can turn it on its head, and before a battle scene hear it down in the basses, and it's very threatening. And at the same time it becomes the kiss. It becomes the figurines. It becomes the thing about family. But it really is about this personal life of this character. And what was fun was to take this very humble theme and turn it into a thousand different emotions just the way it would be. Really, it's about danger. At the same time it's about peace.”*

The different themes in Gladiator have a role of emphasizing the emotional context of the drama. As contrast to the very emotional themes like the Earth theme (which is divided in to two sections) we have many battle, heroic and action motifs and themes.

In the next section I will dive more deep into the analysis of the Earth theme throughout the movie. But first lets look at the 12min long intro od the film. Why this is important I will explain later on.

## 5. Overture

*Note: I divided thematic material on themes and motives. I put thematic material under themes, if the material is usually played in its full length and motives as material, that is often changed and is not necessarily played in its whole length.*

The first 14min of the film is almost like a musical overture to the whole score. Zimmer showcases the main thematic material and sets the mood for the film. I am going to give an in-depth analysis of this overture since the themes and motives are so well transmitted. Analyzing this first segment is very important, so we can then look at the themes used here further on in the movie and see how they transform. The score starts with the T1 (Progeny theme) *\*next chapter of sheet music\** which is played by a medieval wind instrument, made out mounting goat horn, called the Gamshorn. It sets the tone of the movie perfectly since we are immediately transported to a different time and we sense, that this is not going to be a typical action movie. The theme is simple yet very emotional and dark. T1 is later on in the film used mostly for Commodus.

T1 transforms into T8 (Commodus theme), which is one of the main themes for Commodus and his sinister nature. The film is called Gladiator, yet Zimmer decided to start the movie with the two themes, that are mainly related to Commodus. The music

then goes into M6 (which I call the rhetoric theme), that is played by what sounds like 2 delayed acoustic guitars with beautiful duduk improvisations on top and strings bourdon. Again Zimmer transports us back in time. The next theme we hear is T2 (Wheat theme) beautifully sung by Lisa Gerrard, that overlays images of a hand touching fields of wheat. We also hear children singing in the background and we get a sense of nostalgia and calmness. The wheat fields give way to an image of the face of Maximus. Acoustic guitars start playing M5 again while Lisa is still singing the T2. This glues both images together and we know, the hand we saw in the golden wheat fields was Maximus's. Maximus rides of onto the battlefield with his horse and we hear the epic T3 (Maximus theme) in the horns, which are accompaniment with choirs, strings and strumming guitars. We finally get both sides of the Maximus character; He is a farmer at heart (T2) yet a general in the roman army (T3). At 00:04:10 the mood changes when the barbarians start screaming chants. We hear the guitar danger motif (M4). At 00:05:00 we see a very important scene in the movie, that repeats several times in different contexts; Maximus bends down, picks up some soil and smells it. We here T6 (Earth theme B) playing slowly in the cello and the bases in a very ominous nature. This is what Hans Zimmer says about this scene in the interview "Making of Gladiator". Zimmer visited Ridley on the shooting of the beginning battle scene in England, before he starter writing the score. Quote: *"I remember sitting there with Ridley in this muddy field. Because I had suddenly been shifted from the 20<sup>th</sup> century to somewhere else, I remember reaching down and taking up a clump of earth and sort of, suddenly I was in the movie."* At 00:05:52 after Maximus says: "Strengths and honor" and prepares his troops for battle we hear a short brass stab, followed by M1 (battle motif1) starts playing

on acoustic guitar followed by staccato strings. M1 follows by M2 in the brass and orchestra. Maximus rallies his horseman in the forest and has a speech, while variations of M1 play in the background. When Maximus finishes his famous speech, that ends on: "What we do in life, echoes in eternity", the images shifts to the archers preparing for battle and a augmented variation of M1 plays in the low brass and strings (M1,1). We see images of soldiers loading up catapults and the heroic T6 plays in the brass, giving us a sense of power of the Roman legion. The catapults are loaded and the music becomes more calm and creates a feeling of anxiousness and suspense. We hear T14 playing in the basses while the trumpets are playing M8 (Mars motif), which immediately reminds us of Holts's Mars – The Bringer of War (more about this subject later). At 00:07:40 we see the roman horseman slowly starting to move in the forest, while archers strain their bows on the battle field. We hear M1 to start to play again in the strings. At 00:07:48 the catapults release their fiery charges and M1.1 plays in brass while M1 goes on in the strings. After we hear yet another variation on M1 in staccato brass while WW and Strings provide marcato accented stabs. 00:07:55 we here M9 play for the first times. While some barbarians get killed in the onslaught of catapults and arrows, they still chant and cheer as-though nothing has happened. At 00:08:15 Zimmer plays us an augmented version of the ominous M2, to let us know, that the Barbarian horde is still strong and that the battle is far from over. While M2 plays with an accompaniment of M7 in the trumpets, the legion foot troops finally move into action, while catapults and anchors are still blasting away at the Barbarians. At 00:08:44 we get an image of Maximus and his horseman galloping through the woods towards the Barbarians. Maximus screams: "Hold the line!" to rally his troops together. Zimmer

enhances this scene with his very characteristic “Zimmeresc” T7 (Heroic theme – one of the most notable themes from Gladiator) in the brass and strings. The Barbarians and Romans finally start to fight sword on sword and in 00:09:21 we hear the M2 motif playing again now in an even bigger orchestration with trumpets doubling the horns in octaves. At 00:09:25 we see Maximus’s dog jump through the fire, followed by Maximus and his troops. The music transforms in to a marcato and syncopated version of M1. This was a very wise decision from Zimmer’s side, since although we have a lot of SFX playing (explosions, swords, other war noises) the music cuts through the mix very well with its stab-like nature. The orchestration is full powerful. At 00:09:46 we see the Barbarian leader killing Roman soldiers and Zimmer accompaniments him with the ominous M6 motive in the strings, while the brass keeps on playing shorts stabs. We see Maximus on his warhorse galloping into the battle at 00:09:56 and the orchestra starts playing M2 again for a couple of seconds. Maximus get hit and falls of his horse and M8 starts playing in the low brass with trumpets blasting away M7. This gets followed by a big percussion section, that rises up from p – mf, while Maximus lies on the flore and fights a Barbarian. This section feals almost like it was edited in, since it kind of creeply and wierdly fades in. It is followed by M6 in the strings. At 00:10:26 Maximus almost sticks a sword into a friendly soldier and Zimmer enchances this moment with an augmented and sustained version of M2 in brass, strings and choir. At 00:10:28 we see the Barbarian leader still alive all well and fighting. The theat of the Barbarians winning is still there so Zimmer uses M8 again in fortissimo brass with M8 in the trumpets. At 00:10:43 Maximus get attacket and thrown on the floor yet again, by a burning solider and we hear M6 in the strings, with brass stabs and rythmic percussion

ensemble. Maximus gets saved by a friendly horseman and at 00:11:00 and the dramatic music gives way to slowmotion shots with the Victory theme (T15) playing. The slow adagio music with warm strings really gives a great mood to the filmography and edits. The cue finally ends at 00:12:25 and gives way to the sound of the approaching carriage of Commodus and his sister.

As we see the first cue, that is 12min 25s long really has an immense amount of thematic and motivic material in it (T1, T2, T3, T5, T6, T7, T14, T15, M1, M1.1, M2, M4, M5, M7, M8, M9). What is curious is, that the T4 (Earth theme A) does not appear in the overture. T5 (Earth theme B) does, but only in an augmented form and in the low register. Zimmer thus sets a pallet of themes for the movie, that he can use in later scenes, yet he leaves room for important new material, that he can show and use later on in the movie and so create contrast.

## **6. Use of thematic material**

### **1. Maximus**

As the protagonist Maximus has a lot of thematic material, which is linked specifically to him, yet is often use with association with other characters as well.

**T2** (Wheat theme) is used in context with his family and nostalgia for his lost homeland. It is linked to Maximus as a farmer and humble man.



**T3** is used to describe the solid and heroic side of Maximus. We first hear it at 0:02:45, when we first see Maximus. T3 and T2 act as contrast to each-other and show us both sides of Maximus.



**T4 and T5** (both themes, that make the overall Earth Theme) are also closely linked to Maximus and his nature.

**T4** is a loving theme, that is first linked to Marcus Aurelius, yet later on translates to Maximus's affection towards Aurelius and his affection to Lucilla. We Later on hear the theme play when Lucilla and Maximus first talk. It is used to enhance the emotional context, when Maximus talks about his family. It also appears in Cue 37 when Lucilla comes visit Maximus in his cell. The theme is pure and soft. It has a very strong tonal center and thus gives us a feeling of security.









orchestration and develops slowly through the film, T1 stays pretty constant and uses similar orchestration throughout. It is usually combined with long sustained string bourdon notes, voices and the dulcimer like instrument yan ching. The theme usually played by gamshorn, but in some cues the violins play it in a slightly augmented version. Yet the theme itself is very simple, in my opinion, it is the most emotional theme of the film. It really portrays and catches the essence of the personality of Commodus. Commodus is a character, that just wants to be loved and approved of and the audience cannot help but feel pity for him. As a viewer of the film, you feel sorry for him, yet you are scared of him and hate him at the same time. T1 helps with this a lot, since the theme itself is very pure and soft, but still it evokes fear and uncertainty.

**T8** is the next most important theme for Commodus. It is often used after the pure and soft T1. T8 is primarily played by cello solo or the cello section with no real big orchestration. It portrays the pure evil side of Commodus. It enhances the scary and eerie side of T1 with its haunting nature. As T1, we also hear T8 it appear in 9 cues and this just confirms that Zimmer is showing the same amount of attention to both main characters.



**T10** I named Commodus's power theme although it first appears in cue 14 together with T8 (the Moroccan theme). This is strange, since this scene has nothing to do with



Commodus. Maybe Zimmer was trying to add subtext saying, that Maximus is in the position he is in at the time because of Commodus. T10 really strikes deep in Cue35, one of the most emotional parts of the film, when Maximus reveals himself to Commodus as the gladiator. We hear T10 in the low strings right before Maximus turns to Commodus without his helmet. I believe the T10 is hear meant to portray the anger Commodus has towards Maximus, since Maximus turned his back on him and you should never turn your back towards the Cesar. It also portrays Maximus's fear at the time and creates a very tense atmosphere. The theme is lastly heard at the end of cue51 after Commodus stabs Maximus in the back. It creates a feeling of doubt, defeat of Maximus and the power Commodus has at the time.

**T11** (Commodus the merciful) is the most striking theme, or better to say a collection of themes of the film. It is orchestrated in string orchestra only and is very counterpointal. The first 4 notes are an inversion of T10, so the themes are connected with each other. It is first used in Cue 38, in the scene, that is only in the extended version of the film, where Gracus, a general, that was order to execute Maximus, but failed at the task, has to now order the execution of two soldiers in the presence of Commodus, to prove his loyalty to the new Cesar. It is very apparent, that the whole cue was just copied from Cue51, the famous "Am I not merciful" Scene. As Zimmer points out in his interview in "Making of Gladiator": *"You get a completely new theme, because it feels like all bets are off now. Everything is just raw emotions. He lost his mind finally. He will do crazy things about passion and I felt like I could turn everything upside-down on its head and go for this very, very dark stuff... It is those kinds of things where you surprise the audience by not doing the obvious, going against type and actually in a funny way, what*

*you do as a composer, is you forever expose yourself in this sort of emotional way, where you let them see into your deepest, darkest secrets.”*

In the non-extended version T11 really appears for the first time in Cue51 and has an even more shocking effect on the audience. Although I really like the scene in cue38 I think, other music should be used for that scene. Although it works great, it ruins the surprise to come at cue51, since you have already heard the music prior in the film. Cue38 is probably work of a music editor.



**T12,T13** are the themes that appear in cue8 where Commodus murders his father. This deeply sad and emotional themes, yet has a very passionate character to it, which makes sense, since Commodus killed his father, because he knew, he would never have named him the new emperor of Rome. They are orchestrated with string orchestra with romantic period harmony.



### 3. Battle Themes and motifs

We have several battle related themes and motives. **M1** is a motive of approaching danger, usually orchestrated with acoustic guitar or string staccatos. **M1,1** is a derivative of M1 and is used in the same way orchestrated in low strings. **M2 and M3** are used in the heat of battle and are usually orchestrated with heavy brass. **T6** is a theme that

often appears in heroic moments during battle scenes. **M4** if used for moment of anticipation of an upcoming event. Similar to **T6**, **T14** and **M8** is also used during battle orchestrated in octaves in brass. It is usually combined with **M7** (staccato trumpets). **T15** is used at times of victory. We hear it at the end of the battle at cue1 and end of the battle at cue34. All battle themes and motives are very brass, string and percussion heavy. It is really the sound, that Zimmer is most known for and masters very well. It is not orchestration, that would work in a real orchestra scenario, but Zimmer's recording and mixing techniques made this sound very popular in modern film scores.

I must point out, that all battle themes/cues are written in a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time signature and Zimmer calls them Battle Waltzes and states, that they are based on the Viennese Waltz. This is how he explains his decision in the interview in Making of Gladiator: “So much of what we perceive as beauty and culture and great architecture is build on blood, guts and gore of other people. Musically, how can I reflect the architectural beauty, the architectural symmetry of the Rome? And I was thinking: “What was the



most beautiful form of music? The Viennese Waltzes.” Because we look at these sculptures and we say “Oh isn’t this beautiful!”, but we forget that it is death and destruction and savagery that brought them to us. So I decided to write all the action sequences in waltzes. And just used the waltz and turn it head and show its bloody underbelly.”

T15 Victory theme

**Adagio**  
*espressivo*

T14

M1 Battle motif

*f*  
 $\text{♩} = 160$

M2 Battle motif 2

*f*

M1,1 battle motif augmented

*mf*

M3 Battle motif 3

*ff*

M4 Anticipation motif

M7 Mars motif

*mp*

M8

#### 4. Other thematic material

One of the most scenically beautiful scenes in the movie is when we first see Rome and its Coliseum (Cue17). This is the only time we hear **T16** (the Glory of Rome). It is orchestrated with a large standard orchestra with choir and crash cymbals for accents. Harmonically it is romantic/post romantic The glory of Rome. The music portrays the absolute majestic scenery of the beauty of the city, while Commodus rides through the street on his carriage and people scream disapproving taunts at him which makes for a great contrast. When the picture shows Luciose's face we hear a short flute solos (panned all the way to the right, what is very weird). We have a sudden cut to next cue at 1:04:33 with an abrupt end.



The Moroccan theme **T17** is only once heard in its full version in Cue11. It is orchestrated with Guitars, percussions, strings, shvi flute, duduk, yan ching and of course has a very Arabic feel too it. Zimmer points out in his interview in Making of Gladiator:” *Once we are Morocco, I wanted to make it dirty, tribal and gritty.*”





**M10** is the motif used at the start of the gladiator games in the Roman Coliseum and is always played by trumpets (doubled with horns). They are part of the source music, since we see the fanfare players in the picture several times. The motif repeats in several cues. It appears for the first time in cue19 where we have an “airplane shot” over the Coliseum.

We have to also note, that Zimmer always uses very dense dissonant, almost atonal harmony, orchestration and texture whenever we see the Coliseum. This is done, so we really get the feeling, that the Coliseum, although beautiful on the outside, is a very terrifying place.



## 7. Conclusion

First off, I would like to point out, that during my analysis I realized, that there is a lot more thematic material in Gladiator as I previously thought. There is music almost throughout the movie and there are only a couple of scenes, where there is no music.

The thematic material is very well thought out and we can see that Zimmer spends a lot of time and care with his themes to make them perfect for the characters and scenes. Because the movie is very character driven the thematic material corresponds with the protagonist and antagonist. Zimmer decided to use more than one theme for each of the main characters and thus he opened up for himself more options.

I find it very smart, how the first cue of the film showcases several important themes of the film and immediately imbeds them into the viewer's mind, before they even know, who the themes relate too and why they are there.

As I pointed out in the previous section, themes related to Maximus change through time and are given different instrumentation versions to portray the emotional transformation of our protagonist. On the other hand Commodus's themes get very little change. He does not change much through the film and Zimmer just wants to portray him as a mentally and emotionally challenged individual, who rises to power, yet does not learn and change for the benefit of himself and the people he rules.

The music and orchestration of the battle scenes creates nice contrast to the sensual thematic material of our main characters. Zimmer successfully caught both sides of the film; drama on one hand and action on the other. I think this very much contributed to the success of the film.

We must also note, that all the melodies Zimmer wrote are very catch and are easily recognizable. This is extremely important, since you want the viewers of your film, to leave the movie theater with the themes of the movie stuck in their heads. Since Zimmer wrote so many themes, many of which are extremely catchy, and repeats them often, viewers of the film are bound to leave the theater with whistling at least one of them. This of course also helped with the Soundtrack CD sales. The soundtrack albums of Gladiator are still one of the most successful soundtrack album releases ever.

In conclusion, I think the score of Gladiator is a masterpiece and deserves all the recognitions it has gotten throughout the years.

## 8. Phone Call with Hans Zimmer

As part of my research process of my CE, I contacted Hans Zimmer, if he could answer a few questions about the score of Gladiator for me. He invited me, to have a phone conversation. We ended up talking for about an hour. For obvious reasons I did not record the conversation. In this section I will write in an interview format, although I will use my own words in Zimmer's responses. At this point I would like to give a big thank you to Mr. Zimmer to take the time to talk to me.

### **Q: Can you tell me how it was working on the film? How was your relationship with Ridley and the team?**

Hans explained to me, that they were a very close team and that he was writing music in the same building as Ridley and his team were cutting the film, so they had constant interaction between each other. Many cues in the film ended up being reused by the edit team and many scenes in the film ended being cut to the music, what is very interesting. An example of this is Cue34 which uses exact music from Cue1 and the editors cut the scene to the music of Cue1.

Hans said, that it was great working in this kind of team. He also pointed out, that he loved working together with Lisa Gerrard and Djivan Gasparyan and just "jamming" and improvising to picture with them in his studio. A lot of these improvisations ended up in the movie. Since Djivan does not speak a word of English, Hans said, that the only way they could communicate was through music and that that was really special.

### **Q: How was the thematic material used in the film. How did you choose what theme goes where?**

As I pointed out earlier in this paper, there is a lot of thematic material in the film. Hans pointed out, that all these melodies "just kind of happened" and were not meant to be like light-motifs. Only later in the production, some themes got attached to certain characters like T4 to Maximus and T1 to Commodus. He also said, that the first cut of the film was almost 4h long and that that is the reason why all the themes are so long.

### **Q: How come there are abrupt endings of cues in the film (example Cue 17)?**

The film had undergone many changes and cuts, so we had to make changes on the fly. That is probably the reason why there are abrupt cuts of cues.

### **Q: In one of your interview you state, that the Commodus the Merciful scene has its very own music (T11), which appears only once and thus comes as an surprise to the audience, yet in the extended cut of the movie, we here this theme in Cue38.**

Hans replied, that must have been work of a music editor and that he never really scene the extended version of Gladiator and he did not know this cue was used in Cue38.

## Q: How come Cue10 uses so many mockup-ed instruments?

Hans told me, that this was one of the last scenes they have gotten and they actually gotten and it had to be done in great haste. He sais he recored a lot of guitar for this scene with guitarist. Heitor Pereira. He imagined almost, that he was writing a little guitar concerto for him.

## Q: Did you record the strings and brass separately?

Strings and brass were recorded separately at AirStudios. The first reason for that was, to give more room for mixing purposes and the second reason Hans pointed out was, that the brass parts were very intense and hard to play, so in order to make the players more comfortable. Since strings and brass were recorded separately he could rehears with the brass and let them take pauses, without making the strings players just sit and wait.

## 9. Cue Sheet

CUE	Start	End	Type	Function	Instrumentation	Themes / Motifs
Cue 1	0:00:02	0:12:25	score	Dramatic enhancement and story telling. Setting the tone for the whole movie. Laying down thematic material.	Borduna & modes, ethnic flute (gamshorn), acoustic guitar, Lisa Gerrard (voice), yan ching ,tension with rhythmic elements amd building orchestration. Emotional adagio ending.	T1, T2, T3, T5, T6, T7, T14, T15, M1, M1.1, M2, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8
Cue 2	0:12:59	0:15:26	score	Sense of evil in Commodus's nature (T1, T8). Story telling (M6)	Bordun strings. and gamshorn (T1) Brass chord as glue to T8. Solo cello (T8). Acoustic guitar, duduk (M6). At 00:15:00 Commodus rides into the scene. Big brassy ominous chords	T1, T8, M4, Other
Cue 3	0:16:35	0:20:44	score - scored	mood (Cesar's sadness and disappointment towards Commodus). War aftermath and Maximus's longing for home. T1 makes sense of Commodus's presence	Yan ching, Vvoice, ethinc winds and percussions for source music	T1, Other
Cue 4	0:20:44	0:22:28	score	Cesars's love towards Lucilla, Maximus's soft side.	Duduk solo for Cesar, trumpet solo for Maximus. Sustained strings	T4 (Earth Theme)
Cue 5	0:25:20	26:10	score	Maximus's nostalgia for his home and family.	Sustained strings	T2
Cue 6	0:27:23	0:28:10	score	Tension yet trust. When Cesar starts speaking about Commodus the music becomes more tense, yet goes back into a more relax stile after.	Sustained bass strings. Duduk solo, acoustic guitars	M5
Cue7	0:29:25	0:31:22	score	Love and respect between Lucilla and Maximus. Maximus's love towards his family.	Duduk solo, oboe solo and sustains strings, soft acoustic guitars	T4, T5 (Full earth theme)
Cue 8	0:33:40	0:37:30	score	Creating tension, yet an eerie feeling. Creating a feeling of sorrow, sadness, disappointment. One of the most emotional cue	String orchestra	T12, M10
Cue 9	0:37:45	0:38:40	score	Tension, suspense, sorrow, fear	Chang Ying, Voice.	Variation of T2

Cue 10	0:42:00	0:47:30	score	Action, drama. At 0:44:47 there is an accelerando (time is running out to save his family)	Synth percussions, strings, guitars, synths. Everything except the acoustic guitars sound like they were mockuped. yan ching. Vocal	Other, T5 (augmented), T2
Cue 11	0:48:15	0:50:26	score	Set up of new environment. Morocco.	Guitars, percussions, strings, shvi flute, duduk, synth bass	T17
Cue 12	0:51:26	0:52:00	score	Set up of new environment. Morocco.	Guitars, percussions, strings, shvi flute, duduk, yan ching	Variation of T17
Cue 13	0:52:40	0:55:46	score	Tension (first part), false sense of calmness (T9)	Guitars, percussion(beginning), vocal, cello, duduk, strings	M4, T9
Cue 14	0:55:46	0:56:50	Source/score	Setting a festive mood with a gory, wrong feeling. (weird cut at 0:56:14)	Ethnic strings, percussions, zurfa, strings, duduk	Mix between T10 and T8
Cue 15	0:57:36	1:00:03	Score/source (SFX)	Tension. People screaming "Kill, Kill" and the sound of the hammer hitting the anvil help with the tension	Zurna, string bourdon, strings, percussions. Good incorporation of SFX with the music	Mix between T10 and T8, T5 augmented
Cue 16	1:00:03	1:02:22	score	Creating a feel for the action scene. The music slowly gets faster and faster.	Zurna, ethnic voices (sustained and chants), fast percussion, rhythmic synth bass, rising string lines, brass chords	Other
Cue 17	1:02:22	1:04:33	score	The glory of Rome. The music portrays the absolute majestic scenery of the beauty of the city, while Commodus rides through the street on his carriage and people scream disapproving taunts at him. When the picture shows Luciose's face we hear a short flute solos (panned all the way to the right?). Sudden cut to next cue at 1:04:33	Large standard orchestra with choir. with romantic era harmonies and voice leading.	T16
Cue 19	1:07:26	1:08:46	score	Commodus ambitions and dark nature. Mightiness of the coliseums	Gams horn, solo cello, strings, bourdon 1:08:27 start of orchestral atonal buildup to show to mightiness of the coliseums	T1, T8,M10
Cue 21	1:09:57	1:11:52	score	Setting mood for action, anticipation and danger	Percussions, ethnic vocal chants, ethnic winds, orchestral bass motif, bass drums hit (more of SFX)	Other
Cue 22	1:11:52	1:12:3	score	Feeling of victory but, sadness	Strings Bordun, yan ching, Horns, strings	T5
Cue 23	1:13:24	1:16:06	score	Passion of Proximo towards his years of being a Gladiator.	Strings, horns, bass hits, trumpet	T9
Cue 24	1:16:05	1:17:20	source	Feeling of nostalgia	Bordun, voice, percussions	T2
Cue 25	1:17:20	1:19:15	Score	Feeling of happiness and adventures, then feeling of power. T8 for Maximus knowing he is getting near to his goal of killing Commodus	Strings, horns (fanfares when we see the coliseum), percussions. Atonal Orchestration again for the Colloseum	Other, T8
Cue 26	1:19:15	1:20:07	score	Commodus's dark nature as he watches Lucius sleep	Gamshorn, strings	T1
Cue 27	1:20:40	1:21:50	score	Commodus trying to defy his fathers wish of giving power to the senate. Commodus's anger	String orchestra, solo violin.	T12,T13
Cue 28	1:24:21	1:25:34	score	Lucilla's fear of Commodus	Gamshorn, strings	T1, T8
Cue 28	1:25:34	1:26:28	score	Gladiators have arrivrs	Strings, horn. Atonal orchestra for Coliseums,	T9, M10

Cue 29	1:27:05	1:27:45	source	Street music	Ethnic winds, percussions	Other
Cue 30	1:27:45	1:28:27	score	Lucius reminds Maximus of his son. Nostalgia	yan ching, voice, strings	T2
Can 31	1:28:27	1:30:31	score	Maximus realizes Lucius is Lucilla's son. Gladiators enter the Coliseum for the first time	Strings, brass horns. Trumpets (very Mars like)	M2 augmented, M7 (different version)
Cue 32	1:30:31	1:30:50	source	Announcement of the beginning of the games	Roman fanfares, percussions	M10
Cue 33	1:31:19	1:32:25	score	Enhance the storytelling. T5 for Maximus leadership skills	Percussions, brass for the Barbarian horde	Other, T5 (augmented)
Cue 34	1:32:25	1:36:50	score	Entrance of the chariots, Battle, Themes follow the turning point in the battle.	Orchestra, percussions	M7, M8, M2, M1, M6, T6, M3, T7, T15,
Cue 35	1:36:50	1:41:03	Score/source	Feeling of great tension	Acoustic guitars, strings, percussions, Roman fanfares, Orchestra	M4, M11, T10, Other, T5 (in its full glory for the first time)
Cue 36	1:44:25	1:45:40	score	Commodus's anger and disappointment	strings	T1 (augmented)
Cue 37	1:48:24	1:49:15	score	Love, sadness	Strings, duduk, oboe	T4
Cue 38	1:48:15	1:52:00	score	Fear towards Commodus, power of Commodus	strings	T11
Cue 39	1:53:30	1:54:24	source	fanfares	Roman fanfares, percussions	M10
Cue 40	1:55:08	1:55:30	source	fanfares	Roman fanfares, percussions	M10
Cue 41	1:56:00	1:56:50	source	fanfares	Roman fanfares, percussions	M10
Cue 42	1:59:26	2:00:31	score	Creating tension	Strings, brass (sounds mockup)	Other
Cue 43	2:00:49	2:02:00	score	Creating tension	Strings, percussions	M4

Cue 44	2:00:03	2:03:45	score	Nostalgia, sadness	Voice, Strings bourdon, yan ching /percussions, strings, brass	T2,T3
Cue 45	2:03:45	2:04:42	score	Nostalgia	Strings, voice	T2
Cue 46	2:05:10	2:08:15	score	Commodus's anger and frustrations. Planning...	Percussions, gamshorn, low strings	T11 (variation), gimps of T1, M9
Cue 47	2:11:19	2:18:40	score	Sense that everything is going to plan..., tension	Strings, percussions, detuned voices, yan ching	T9, M9, T1
Cue 48	2:19:34	2:20:50	score	Passion, love, loneliness	Strings, choir, plucked instrument	T5 (soft version)
Cue 49	2:21:22	2:24:17	score	Betrayal, fear	Synth pads, voices, ethnic flute, strings, brass pads	T1,T8
Cue 50	2:24:17	2:28:56	score	Action (seems to be a music edit of the beginning Battle scene.	Brass, strings, cymbals, guitars	M6,M2,M3,T5,T7, other
Cue 51	2:28:58	2:35:49	score	Disappointment, anger, craziness of Commodus.	Strings, gamshorn, solo cello/Choirs, brass for T10	T11,T1,T10
Cue 52	2:37:00	2:37:40	score	Delusional state of Maximus	Synth pads, strings, Yan Ching	Other
Cue 53	2:38:47	To credits	score	Maximus is dying. He is going to his afterlife, to his family	Pads, voice, strings, tumpet, brass,	"Now we are free". T5,

## 10. List of references:

- Gladiator: Extended edition, Paramount Pictures, released in 2001
- Gladiator (film, 2000): [http://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gladiator\\_\(film,\\_2000\)](http://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gladiator_(film,_2000))
- Hans Zimmer - Interview on Gladiator soundtrack: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goafUm5cDbo>
- Making of Gladiator/ interview with Hans Zimmer: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_JAIOTI84yc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_JAIOTI84yc)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGPoJvQhhKk>
- An interview with Hans Zimmer: [ptless.org/hzimmer/gladiator.html](http://ptless.org/hzimmer/gladiator.html) by John Pattyson
- <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0172495/>