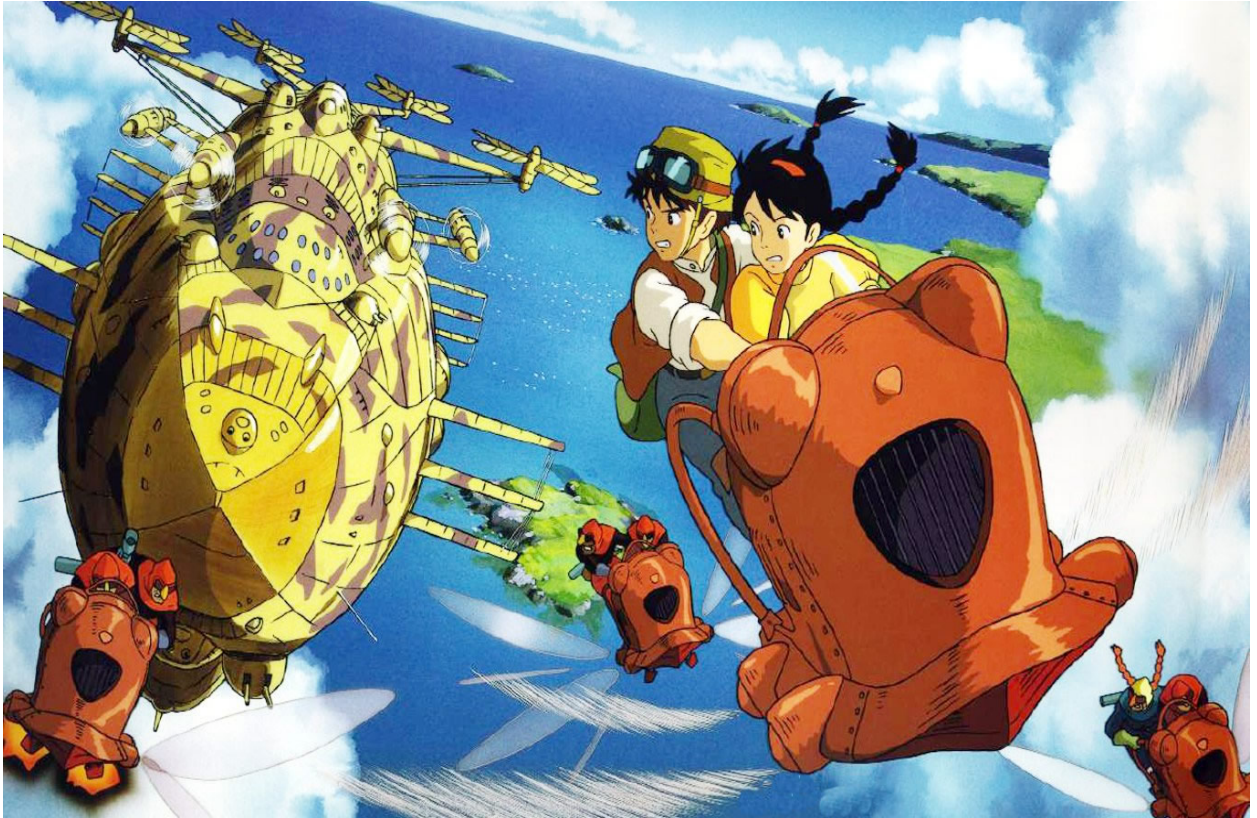


# Castle in the Sky Film Score Analysis



Brought to you by:

**Lawrence Lee**

## Preaface

The multi-award-winning Japanese animated film: “Laputa: Castle in the Sky”, originally titled: “Tenku no shiro Rapyuta”, written by Hayao Miyazaki, was released in Japan in 1986. Streamline Pictures distributed an English dub in 1989 and the Disney Production released in 2003. It was released under the name “Castle in the Sky” in the United States because apparently the word “Laputa”, which has no meaning in Japanese, is the word for “ the whore” in Spanish. And for the United States having Spanish as the 2<sup>nd</sup> most common spoken language, the changes obviously have taken place and was released under the title: “Castle in the Sky”.

Joe Hisaishi is the composer and arranger for the score to “Castle in the Sky”, having studied composition at Kunitachi College of Music in '69, starting his career as a composer in the early 1970's. He teamed up with filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki in the early 1980's and composed his first score for him in 1984 for the title Nausicaa, followed by Castle in the Sky in 1986 along with many to come as the years went.

In comparison to the Japanese 1986 release versus the 2003 Disney dub release, quite a lot of changes have taken place regarding the movie's score as well as the overall audio production and even the storyline to a mild extent (bits and pieces tweaked in specific scenes), meanwhile the original story of Castle in the Sky has remained unchanged. The score was originally composed primarily with synthesizers and, accumulating a total time of 37 minutes of music in the film. In 1999, Hisaishi rescored the film with live symphonic orchestra, extending

the amount of music from 37 minutes of synth music to 90 minutes of symphony orchestra, being able to meet the standards of the score to Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*, also recorded with full symphony orchestra.

The rescore to *Castle in the Sky* in comparison to the original, fills in empty spaces from scene to scene, creating a stronger interaction with the audience, ultimately increasing and strengthening the film's emotional impact. At least to me, the original score was "too" minimalistic, whereas the rescore feels more complete and a lot more seamless with the increased amount of music used. This may have something to do with the differences between musical and cultural differences of American Hollywood cinema composition to the techniques of East Asian cinema, or simply the techniques of Joe Hisaishi himself.

In an interview with *Keyboard Magazine Japan* for the August 1999 issue, Hisaishi has commented on the rescore to *Castle in the Sky*. Here's what he had to say:

"According to Disney's staff, non-Japanese feel uncomfortable if there is no music for more than three minutes. You see this in the Western movies, which have music throughout. It's the natural state for a (non-Japanese) animated film to have music all the time. However in the original *Laputa*, there was only one-hour's music in the 124-minute movie. There were parts that don't have music for seven to eight minutes. So, we decided to redo the music as (the existing soundtrack) will not be suitable for markets outside Japan."

"If we just add new music, it won't go well with the music made in 14 years ago. So we completely re-recorded everything. Of course, we cannot demolish the melody of *Laputa*, so I changed the arrangement of it while keeping its integrity.

"The American way of putting music in a movie is basically very simple. They just match the music with the characters. For example, when the army shows up on screen, you hear the army's theme. The music explains the screen images--that is the point of Hollywood music. Until this time, I avoided such an

approach, as I felt that it would make music dull, although I understand such an approach. But when I redid (the music of Laputa this way), I learned a lot.

Now, myself being so used to the sound and atmosphere of American Hollywood cinema, where I would clearly have a bias for Hollywood scores, based on the comments of Hisaishi's interview, it turns out that we have complete opposite opinions on how the final results would turn out to be dull or not depending on the approach taken. However, despite the different approaches utilized, I really did feel a bit of emptiness and wanted to hear more of the score when I watched the original version. I am very used to the score taking the role as narrator, having it carry me through the film like a ride on a rollercoaster, common in Hollywood style scores. The original version contained thematic material, however the storyline was the primary driving force of the film's impact whereas the score was serving as supportive accompaniment. Secondly, I was expecting thematic material musically to appear whenever someone/something new was introduced or re-introduced on the screen, which virtually defines the traditional Hollywood approach of film scoring; where themes and motifs were essentially married to the characters, geographical locations and time periods. Once it has appeared on the screen, the score immediately gives a direct narration through a theme or motif.

The rescore transitioned from cue to cue nearly immediately in segue, whereas the original contained gaps minutes at a time during cue transitions, which made the film lose its momentum for me, despite both films being equivalent in length. In regards to the use of thematic material, the initial scope of

the canvas hasn't changed, but rather the tools have; upgrading the pallet from minimal orchestra and synths to full symphony orchestra and minimal synths, just like a computer monitor being upgraded to display at higher resolution than before, covering the same amount of surface area with smaller sized pixels in larger quantity, dramatically increasing the quality.

To quickly go over the animated film's plot and background, it takes the genres of fantasy, science fiction and adventure. The film takes place in what seems like to be a blend of America and Europe. Not only are there geographical blends, but cultural and technological blends are taking place as well. You see the technologies nineteen and twentieth centuries as well as futuristic science fiction blended together, ranging from it's vehicles, architecture, weapons, and wardrobe. Pretty much put all of that into a mortar or crucible and that's what you get. Some examples being that military and commercial airships operate on helium, jet power and propellers all at once, which most are all powered by steam engines. To complete the science fiction picture, that world also contains, or rather contained an ancient civilization that had superior technology to the point that they could have towns and castles airborne and travel in the sky, (hence the name "Castle in the Sky").

The initial story of "Castle in the Sky" is about a boy from a mining town named Pazu (one of our main protagonists) see a girl (Sheeta, our other protagonist) falling from the sky, or rather floating from the sky. Sheeta owns a crystal that contains an extreme amount of power, which legend says that the people of the ancient civilization of "Laputa" used to power their kingdoms and

keep them in the sky. Meanwhile, Sheeta is an escaped abductee of the government, led by a corrupt government official named "Muska". She is also trying to evade from the local pirates as well, also known as the Dola Gang. They both want to steal her crystal and utilize it's awesome power for their own selfish, personal gains. As for Sheeta and Pazu, they are both highly motivated to find out the truth about the kingdom of Laputa. As we learn in the film, Pazu's father claimed that he saw the kingdom and none of the townsfolk believed him. Now, Pazu wants to restore his father's name and find it himself in order to prove to everybody that the legend was true and not just a myth. Whereas Sheeta is in fact the descendent of royal ancestry to the Laputan kingdom, she yearns to learn about her family's past. Both of their endeavors sharing the same goal, they both decide to team up and go on a quest to find the lost kingdom of Laputa, and that's how our story begins.

At times, the original score contains some common qualities of a traditional Hollywood film score in terms of thematic material for characters, locations and time periods, whereas the re-score contains many. Each character, location and time period contain their own musical theme or motif that we can easily associate with, which serves as an effective aid in creating the identities of its characters and locations. Not only do the main characters contain their own identifiable motif/movement, they also contain specific orchestration as well. As for the characters and locations that possess such motifs, I have them contained in the following list below:

-Sheeta/Laputa Theme

- Main Title Theme
- Gondoa Theme
- Pazu's Fanfare Theme
- Dola Gang/Pirate's theme
- Robot Soldier's Theme
- Muska/Army Theme

Each of those motifs, are often recycled and you can hear them reoccur often as new orchestrations for different cues. It was able to fill in the majority of the emptiness in spots where the 1986 release did not have music at all. The differences are so great due to the sparseness in the original score, that it has nearly changed my entire perception on the film as I watched both all the way through. I would guess the most difficult part of the whole thing was to create more music to simultaneously keep the initial integrity of the original score so that all the cues would congeal and all sound like random cues just placed into a scene.

This did not just apply to the score, but the same applied for the English dialogue versus the Japanese dub, which contained more dialogue and vocal gestures, such as breaths and grunts from running, climbing, jumping, falling, essentially during any sort of physical action. And whether it would be the townsfolk, or battalions of soldiers, the re-release production also covered the ambiances of mass crowds and mobs whereas the original version pretty much missed the majority of it. And ultimately, I was captivated by the power of a live symphony orchestra in comparison to synthesizers and small ensembles. It may however have been either Miyazaki's creative vision to use synth for the original version, or possibly not having the finances and resources to record a full-scale

symphony orchestra at the time. Another fact to take into consideration is that Hisaishi's composing was different in the 80's than what he was doing in the late 90's early 2000's based on the technologies available and the latest trends at the time. However they both do have one important thing in common, despite the differences in compositional approaches. It's that they both contain vital thematic materials: A global theme (the main title) and three sub-category themes, which are character themes, geographical location themes and time period themes.

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## Prologue/Dola & the Pirates Theme

Here is where the movie opens up, showing the open skies and introduces to the characters, so far (in order of appearance), the Dola Gang/Pirates, Sheeta and Muska), and the opening scene is of the pirates raiding Sheeta's airship. As Sheeta attempts to make her escape, she knocks out Muska with a wine bottle as he is signaling for reinforcements during the firefight between the Dola Gang and Muska's henchmen and retrieves her crystal from his coat pocket. Meanwhile, it is absolutely clear that Dola and the gang are after her crystal. As she makes her escape, Sheeta falls out of the airship (nearly about 30,000 in altitude), and ends there, making us believe that she has fallen to her death.

The original score begins with the Pirate theme within 01:25 into the film and then abruptly stops when Dola's gang of pirates, come into contact with the main antagonist, Muska. The 2003 release on the other hand, opens up with a brief horn intro, followed by a melody played on the quena, accompanied by orchestra, to which later on becomes the motif for Sheeta's hometown on earth, Gondoa. The orchestration of that motif then slowly thickens with lower frequencies and fades out into a crescendo, followed by the full orchestral movement that identifies the Dola Gang/Pirates once they commence their raid upon the airship. The Pirate theme in the 2003 release is pretty much the exact same starting point of the original 1986 release. The Dola Gang theme is not exactly melodic by definition, but rather extremely identifiable rhythmic movements in exchange. The movement's orchestration contains lots of staccato strings, brass and woodwinds, accompanied with various melodic and

rhythmic percussion instruments. The strings contain movements of 4-note scales moving up and down and arpeggios of the root, fifth and octave, probably illustrating the motion of the Flaptors (the flying vehicles/planes the pirates yield) going up and down, virtually exactly like a plane would flying in the air. As the film's pace slows down, transitioning into a different area of the scene, you get a brief hint of Muska's theme with the low "eerie" strings and snare ensemble. There's also a hint of Sheet's theme or the initial Laputa theme; the melody being played on the piano, followed by the Dola Gang theme finishing the development of the cue.

The main difference between the two scores is that they have swapped roles with each other, the original score supporting the narration of the story, whereas the re-score "is" the narrator. In the re-release, the newly recorded sound design and additional dialogue (including main and ambient dialogue), also contributes to increasing the general impact of the film, working together with the re-score seamlessly. The re-release literally spells it out for you, introducing the characters to you one by one, and a very typical Hollywood American technique. The original has the cue only beginning at the raid, adding to the emotional weight to increase the storyline's impact. Aside from the cue identifying the pirates, it does not tell you who the characters are, and neither does the dialogue. You don't even learn everyone's until a bit later into the movie, whereas the re-release dialogue tell you everyone's names on the spot. It makes me question how the pirates knew everyone's names, but lets realign my tangents and move on.

## **The Girl Who Fell from the Sky (Main Title) & Reprises**

This is where the main title sequence is introduced, following the line of major credits and such, giving a sneak peak of what the ancient kingdom of Laputa was like, showing the ore of the crystal being mined and seeing islands and other castles flying together in flocks. The main theme starts out with an introductory piano movement, then crescendos into full strings with timpani, followed by a filler woodwind movement that segues into the main theme. The violins play the main melody, whereas violas play in counterpoint to the violin melody as the cellos and basses hold the bass. The brass play a counter melody to the main violin melody as the theme develops. Then the roles of melody and counter-melody are briefly switched as a developmental episode takes place. The woodwinds play a new melody and the violins play the countermelody. Then, the cellos take over the melody role and repeat the main theme line, violins supply accompaniment. The scene then cuts back to Sheeta falling out of the sky. The pace of the orchestra slows down not in tempo but by meter change, legatos strings taking the foreground and the harp transitioning from arpeggios to glissandos. The orchestra then builds up into a large crescendo, hitting on a downbeat in tutti when Sheeta's crystal lights up and breaks her fall. However, the sync point hit does not take place in the original version, which dramatically diminishes the impact in my opinion. Without the sync point hit, the flow of the scene did not feel so fluid. It just feels like a beat has been missed, though Hisaishi's intentions at the time were not of employing

Hollywood techniques. Therefore, sync point accuracy for this film may have been a low priority. Having that sync point hit where the crystal lights up really makes a difference in the fluidity of the scene. As the scene ends, the original version stops right before it cuts to the mining town. The re-release tails well into the cut of the mining town and stops right about where you hear Pazu utter his first line in the movie. The only thing that the two versions have in common is that they both portray the main theme holding the same role. They're both grand, large in size, both cues feel like you're in a large space, which matches all the visuals in the main theme where most are in full scale zoom and both slow down at the end as Sheeta's fall from the sky is broken. Again, the sync point accuracy serves as a major contribution to the impact in the re-release, as well as the expansion of the live orchestra also adding to the dimensional increase in sound, reflecting the scope of the general canvas in each cut of the main theme.

There are countless cues throughout both versions of the score where all thematic material of characters, geographical locations and time periods are reused and re-orchestrated, transforming them into new, stand-alone cues. This especially happens for the Main Title Theme, which you hear everywhere in the film in as reprises in many variations of orchestral arrangement. There are exactly seven reprises in the original score and eleven reprises in the rescore.

- 1.) (Main Title)

- 2.) In the re-release, Pazu catches Sheeta (explained further in next chapter)

- 3.) In the scene where Sheeta and Pazu officially meet and make their introductions, the motif of the main theme reoccurs. This scene marks where our main protagonists pair up for the first time consciously, highlighting their union with the main theme is very appropriate. Some differences are there though. The melody in the original score is played by a crystal pad synth and the rescore is played by flute. Chordal harmonies are also played with a synth string pad in the original and live strings and harp in the rescore. The general narration of both versions, are the same here. The same story is being told through the same medium, but through different voices.
  
- 4.) Before the Laputa theme at Pazu's house, the intro of the Main Title is used as the intro for the Laputa theme. (Piano and strings)
  
- 5.) The theme returns again here in both scores. While Sheeta and Pazu are falling into the mine, the crystal's power comes to life and breaks their fall. The crystal theme serves as an intro into this variation. The original score is played on synths, melodically and harmonically. The rescore is of course with full orchestra and the melodic line falls on the violins. The slowness and fluidity of the arrangement serves as a direct reflection of when the two protagonists slowly and safely float down into the mine, almost like a dance, hence the waltz rhythm. The pace of

the cue remains the same for both versions, but the rescore modulates into a different key when the reprise of the main theme occurs, the original score stays in the original key of the main title sequence.

6.) Only in the re-release, this scene takes place back at Pazu's house, where the local pirates ambush him. When Dola enlightens Pazu that Sheeta made a risky deal with the army to spare his life, the main theme reprises in the form of a harp movement when Dola explains to her sons the origins of her wisdom, serving as a psychological function of underscore, being "mushy and sensitive", which is the literal dialogue of Dola as the theme is playing in the background. This theme in the harp arrangement really illustrates the similarities in personality between Sheeta and Dola.

7.) As a transitional bridge, the main theme motif occurs here, being played by the Quena, which you also hear being played for the Gondoia theme. (See Gondoia chapter for more specific details)

8.) When Sheeta and Pazu become members of the pirate's mother ship: Tiger moth, and set sail to intercept Muska's ship, the Goliath, the theme is rearranged in a unique blend: the melodic pitches of the main theme representing Pazu and Sheeta and the rhythmic elements representing the pirates. The first half of the main theme is rearranged

rhythmically by dividing everything in half. Instead of one phrase being two bars, it now completes the phrase in 1 bar. The 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the main title movement shows up when Dola shows Sheeta the galley, not as drastically different than the original orchestration. It has less legato and a bit more détaché, driven mainly by cellos, almost sounding march-like in order to capture the “hard-working & semi-militant, pirate tavern-ish” environment. This cue is included on both versions of the score and virtually no different from each other, aside from recording with a full orchestra. This is also another example of where Dola and Sheeta are represented in this mash-up cue, describing just how similar they are in regards of their intelligence and sensitivity.

9.) When Sheeta joins up with Pazu while he's on night watch for the Tiger moth, Sheeta confides into Pazu about how she truly feels about what might happen when they reach Laputa. The rescore of the main theme is played on the piano with accompaniment strings, as it develops, woodwinds start to creep in a little bit, eventually playing the melody replacing the piano until the next episode of the cue develops. The intro of the main theme is included to, but used as a developmental episode in the cue. The cue ends with the reprise of the chords from the Laputa theme. Tremolo strings crescendo into a negative accent where the downbeat cuts directly to a full-scale shot of the Goliath directly underneath the bow of the Tiger moth. The original score contains the psychological functions of this cue in terms of narration,

but not so much in terms of physical function where accuracy of sync points seem to be low in priority.

10.) At the Destruction of Laputa scene, this entire cue is a rearrangement of the Main Title in a chorale, sung by the Tokyo Broadcasting Children's Chorus Group for the rescore. The chorale version applies to both versions of the score, though they're both in different keys (Eb harmonic minor in the original and E harmonic minor in the rescore to be exact). Being one of the crucial moments in the film, both versions of the score are sharing the same narration. However, in the original version, the cue simply stops in the middle of the destruction and the cue only consists of the chorus. The rescore in turn develops onward as accompaniment orchestra slowly unfolds till it's full, and then thins out as last piece of the floating island falls into the ocean. The thickening of the orchestra is a dramatic improvement. As the castle begins to really fall apart, till it becomes more of an "earthquake" the orchestra reflects that with increasing amount of lower frequencies. The one and most important part that the two versions both have in common is the somber atmosphere the chorus creates, a dark and eerie atmosphere, matching the reflection of the throne room/tomb of all the royal Laputan ancestors. The chorus starts with "ou" vowels and develops into "aah" or "la" until the castle is completely destroyed. As the remainder of the castle floats into space,



the reprise of the Levitation Crystal theme appears, being that the same kind of Crystal Sheeta has is keeping Laputa floating in the sky.

- 11.) A very common thing Hayao Miyazaki besides to write the script and storyboards for his animations, but is also inspired to write lyrics about his films and include them in the movie, often for the ending credits. For the ending credits, the main title is rearranged in new-age pop and the melody is carried by the vocals with the lyrics in tact that Miyazaki has written. This cue has remained unchanged for the re-release.

(Hopefully the translation is accurate, but this is the best that I could find)

Kimi o nosete (Carrying you)  
"Tenkuu no Shiro Laputa" ending theme (1986)

ano chiheisen kagayaku no wa	The reason the horizon shines
dokoka ni kimi o kakushite iru kara	is that somewhere it's hiding you.
takusan no hi ga natsukashii no wa	The reason I long for the many lights
ano doreka hitotsu ni kimi ga iru kara	is that you are there in one of them.
saa dekake you hitokire no PAN	So, I set out, with a slice of bread,
NAIFU RAMPU kaban ni tsumekonde	a knife, a lamp, stuffed in a bag.

* tou-san ga nokoshita atsui omoi	Father left me his burning desire.
kaa-san ga kureta ano manazashi	Mother gave me her eyes.
chikyuu wa mawaru kimi o kakushite	The earth turns, hiding you.
kagayaku hitomi kirameku tomoshihi	Shining eyes, twinkling lights.
chikyuu wa mawaru kimi o nosete	The earth turns, carrying you,
itsuka kitto deau bokura o nosete	carrying us both who'll surely meet.

\* Repeat

Singer: Inoue Azumi  
Lyricist: Miyazaki Hayao  
Composer/Arranger: Hisaishi Jou

Translation: Theresa Martin (revised April 23, 1993)

### **The Levitation Crystal & Additional Cues**

This cue here is fairly short in the re-release, even shorter in the original version. The original only contains an arpeggiated crystal synthesizer, to highlight the moment where Pazu sees Sheeta for the first time, floating down from the sky with the crystal. The synth slowly dissipates once the light from the crystal fades away, ending the cue.

As for the re-score, it sounds like a completely different cue, still containing the original crystal synth but combined with full orchestra. The synth is playing fifth and ninth chord arpeggios, whereas the horns and strings play supporting harmony and low strings hold the bass. The orchestration widens and thickens as the scene goes from a close to up Pazu to a full-scale shot of the top of the mine. The cue develops in a crescendo as he finally catches her, highlighting that this is a unique moment for Pazu and Sheeta. A sync point is hit with brass, strings and glockenspiel when Pazu nearly drops Sheeta as he catches her. The lightness of the orchestration at that sync point serves as a perfect balance of being taken by surprise in a panicky and playful mood, a close call. What shortly follows is a playful movement of pizzicato strings. The main theme melody is borrowed briefly within the pizzicato strings creating another

audial connection between the audience and the movie. It can also be argued that this particular rearrangement was borrowed from the waltz variant of the main title, which was included in the original score, moving everything from 3/4 to 4/4 and tying off all the loose ends. The cue then tails to an end as one of the steam pipes begins to burst.

There are a couple more cues after this in the re-release where they are nonexistent in the original scores: the elevator scene, and the pirates reprise, which most definitely contain the Hollywood approach of composing, narrating the audience all the way through.

When Pazu runs the elevator pulley, this cue is mostly woodwinds glockenspiel and harp, serving as a working and playful mood during the situation. As the elevator reaches nearly dangerous speed, where his boss is yelling at him to hit the elevator brake, the brass and timpani sections thicken the orchestration in a crescendo to intensify the danger of the situation. At the climax of the crescendo, the orchestration then slows back down to the woodwinds and harp once the elevator has come to a full stop. The reprise of the pirate theme in the next cue is also nonexistent in the original release. The pirate reprise also transitions into the next "morning cue" which I will discuss in the next chapter. The pirate reprise is in place; followed by a brief interlude as Pazu closes up shop, directly in segue to the next cue. Only in the rescore, brass is added into the cue to serve as additional foundation harmonically with the high strings. The reprises of the pirate theme occur often in the rescore with little to no changes in

the orchestration and only occur pretty much whenever they are all in flight on their flaptors (small dragonfly-winged, vehicles).

### **Morning in the Mining Village**

Both the original and re-score of this cue are virtually the same in arrangement, with brief changes in the re-score. It is my guess that these are one of the cues kept for the re-release in order to preserve the integrity of the original score. The same narration is being told here by both versions, but the new version of course shows finer detail in terms of orchestration as well as the quality of the recording.

The cellos contain the melody, tremolo violins hold steady harmonic chords in piano dynamics, the oboes and flutes mimic the sounds of birds by punctuated trills, and both crescendo into full orchestra and modulate from A major to C major as Pazu opens his bird cage and his birds fly out and about, as well as having the trilling flutes and harp painting the back with glissandos.

### **Pazu's Fanfare Theme**

This is also another cue where the original is kept in the rescore to preserve the original score's integrity. Also, here is where in both versions Pazu is given his musical identity. However, a few different things are happening in this particular cue in terms of composition and orchestration. Whereas both versions are driven by solo trumpet, the original version is only portrayed as source music. The rescore on the other hand, becomes a hybrid cue of source music and

underscore, also containing lute for accompanying chords. It also modulates a semitone higher as Pazu finishes playing his fanfare.

Now, I have mixed feelings about this approach. The pros of turning the cue into a hybrid source/underscore, it gives the audience a second perspective to listen from and offers new phrases and further developments to occupy their ears. As for the original, the scene in my opinion does kind of lag a bit. It's already been established that it's source music and everyone can definitely hear him play and it just goes on and on and on. The underscore perspective with the lute, as well as the modulation really helps fill the empty void and makes the cue feel more fluid and lively. Although a part me feels like: "hey, where's the invisible lute player?" it work very well in this particular context. The original score contains two reprises. The first one occurs when Pazu allies himself with the Pirates in order to join up the raid against Muska's fortress so that he can get a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance to rescue Sheeta. The first two bars of the melody are played at a slightly faster tempo, sample trumpets on the original, trumpet and horn with full orchestra in the rescore.

### **Laputa Theme**

Throughout the entire movie, one of the semi-global themes of the film is going back into the past, whether by subject in conversation, pondering thoughts, or expedition. For the most part, when the kingdom of Laputa is being spoken about, it is almost always being talked about in the past tense. It was an older ancient civilization that was much more technologically advanced than the

present time frame. Also, whenever characters are talking about Laputa, this theme occurs most of the time. This theme passes as both a geographical location as well as a time period, but more so of the time period/general past theme.

The melody in the rescore is played on the piano, supported with full orchestra. For the quieter parts of the theme, the violins would support the piano with triadic chords, dynamics form envelopes  $p < mf > p$  as if the cue breathes, or blowing gusts of wind. Then the orchestration would thicken with brass, low strings and percussion, matching the intensity on the screen when Pazu talks about the time his father saw Laputa during one of his flights.

For every reprise of this theme, the orchestration hasn't drastically changed and the melody is always played on the piano.

### **Gondoa Theme**

This theme is interesting. It is first heard in the original score while Pazu and Sheeta talk about Sheeta's hometown of Gondoa. This theme can be also be classified along with the Laputa theme where they both are in the global category of "the past". For both, the mine tunnel scene, and the daydream scene, the melody is played on the flute, accompanied by harp and string section.

Now, for the rescore, the initial arrangement hasn't changed, but the melody is played with the quena instead of a flute. You first hear the first half of this in the very beginning of the movie. Never exactly understood why it was placed there, but then everything started to fall into place once I heard it in the

mine tunnel scene. The quena is a South American flute commonly used by Andean musicians. This in my opinion is a significant improvement. Since Gondoia is a small village up in the mountains, an instrument such as the quena would be a very ideal and appropriate instrument to use for the identity of Gondoia. A reprise of the Gondoia theme with the same orchestration (in both versions), appears when Sheeta dreams about the time that her grandmother taught her a spell that would get her out of trouble. That, and hearing it in the beginning of the movie as well as the instrument used for a variant of the main title, I now understand because of it being a part of the geographical location category, located in the mountains, you can also associate that with being at high altitude. Therefore, having the quena play while high in the sky also come in hand and hand.

### **Muska/Military Theme**

Muska is the main antagonist in the film. Now, he doesn't exactly have a strict melodic motif to identify with, but can be identified with specific orchestration, instrumentation and dark tonal colors. Because of Muska's association with the military, the orchestration often includes horns, snare lines, and low strings with minor chord harmonies and semi-tonal phrasing. Some phrases in the rescore kind of include a "dun dun duunnnn" sort of phrase, but not all too often, just unsettling enough to let us know that they're the bad guys. The original version relies more on the tonal harmonies and dissonances of the

chords to get that point across and not so much on rhythmic movement. The depiction becomes clearer aesthetically with the higher quality of the rescore.

### **Robot Theme**

To describe what a “robot” for the film, it is quite literally a robot. Assuming that the present time is would we would consider to be late 19<sup>th</sup> early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, a robot would be completely foreign to the people and the government. This is pretty much the last theme that is introduced before the film moves on with recycled thematic materials and one-timer themes. Appearing at the first introduction of Sheeta and the Robot at the fortress, the melody is blatantly in the front played by synths in the original version, whereas in the rescore, it is semi-hidden in the low strings of the orchestration. In both versions alike, the theme contains multiple reprises in full orchestra. One reprise appears as the robot comes back to life after Sheeta utters the spell and appear once more when Muska unleashes a mob of robots as he unlocks the power to Laputa. But, the arrangements are slightly different in terms of technical function. The arrangement of phrasings are moderately different from each other but speak the same narration and equally strong in emotional impact. It also carries a similar “dun dun duunnn” phrase in parallel octaves, the higher octave for presence and the lower octave for foundation. The robots are nearly 10 times the size of an



average sized human, setting the tone for low frequencies, and the theme would occur when the robots are engaging in combat.

In conclusion to this film score analysis, the 53 more minutes of additional music, as well as improved sound design and additional dialogue (including translations to match the overall context between English and Japanese), really brings the movie to life in comparison to the original score. Despite the fact that the score was written with two distinctively different approaches, the original approach feels incomplete and unfinished. Not just because of the sparseness between cues, but the cues themselves, being quite short. Primarily at the Destruction of Laputa scene really shows. The original cue feels like it just simply stops dead in the middle of the scene whereas the rescore continues to develop all the way through. Clearly, different priorities were taken into consideration as each score was composed, those priorities shifting in favor of nearly writing music for almost everything you see. Again, as an American used to seeing American cinema, films and animations alike, I guess I am really used to expecting to hear a lot of music in a film, and have it's emotional momentum carry me through the entire movie and having the score reflect directly what is going on in a physical and psychological sense, and at times in a technical sense. The majority of the additional music served in technical function, written as segue pieces into larger cues and to create larger impact in segue to the following scene. I am used to the score taking the active role as narrator and

not as supporter. I mean of course the score is there to support the movie generally, but not in taking a secondary role in the narration process.

# Castle in the Sky

## Main Title

Joe Hisaishi

Violin

6

11

17

23

29

# Castle in the Sky

## Main Title Variations

Joe Hisaishi

### Variation 1

Violin

pizz.

4

7

### Variation 2 Waltz

arco

9

15

### Variation 3A Pirate Unification

Bassoon

21

26

### Variation 3B Pirate Unification

Strings

33

Normal MT phrase divided in half

# Castle in the Sky

Concert Pitch

## Pazu Fanfare Theme

Joe Hisaishi

Trumpet in B $\flat$



# Castle in the Sky

## Gondoa Theme

Joe Hisaishi

Quena



# Castle in the Sky

## Robot Theme

Joe Hisaishi

Cello

The musical score is written on a single bass clef staff in 4/8 time. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of the following notes: quarter note G2, quarter note A2, eighth note B2 with a sharp sign (#), quarter note C3, quarter note D3, eighth note E3 with a natural sign (natural), quarter note F3, eighth note G3 with a natural sign (natural), quarter note A3, quarter note B3, eighth note C4 with a natural sign (natural), quarter note D4, eighth note E4 with a natural sign (natural), quarter note F4, quarter note G4, eighth note A4 with a natural sign (natural), quarter note B4, quarter note C5, quarter note B4, eighth note A4 with a natural sign (natural), quarter note G4, eighth note F4 with a natural sign (natural), quarter note E4, quarter note D4, eighth note C4 with a natural sign (natural), quarter note B3, quarter note A3, eighth note G3 with a natural sign (natural), quarter note F3, quarter note E3, eighth note D3, quarter note C3. The piece concludes with a double bar line. A dynamic marking of *8<sup>va</sup>* is positioned above the staff in the third measure.

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