

**Silent film music composition in a cross-cultural  
context**

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## Abstract

This submission realizes the project *Silent Film Music Composition in a Cross-Cultural Context* through the composition of music for an excerpt from the silent film "Peach Blossom Weeps Tears of Blood" (Shanghai, 1931). The portfolio consists of a DVD of a 58-minute segment of the film with the newly composed soundtrack. Accompanying it is an exegesis addressing the research questions for this project and outlining the process of composition.

The combination of Chinese and Western musical materials in the soundtrack was a major focus of the composition. The music is also designed to explain the rich historical background of the film and is intended to help contemporary audiences, who come from different cultures and age groups, to understand the emotions that are depicted on-screen. The entire score was created on the computer using Logic 9 software. All the instruments used are from the sound library of Logic and the final soundtrack in DVD format has been mastered using Logic.

The accompanying exegesis explains the aims of this research and the questions that are to be answered. Research began with investigation into early film music, paying particular attention to Chinese silent films. Several significant reasons are listed for the choice of a Chinese silent film. In order to give a general idea of the development of the Chinese film industry, this exegesis presents some historical background information. A summary of the plot of the film is given and details of the technology employed. The main part of the exegesis is intended to explain the thought processes and techniques used in the composition of the sound-track. It is not only a descriptive account but also presents more specific analysis of each scene and the methods used in composing. The music is divided into 26 sections corresponding to 26 scenes in the film. To assist in identifying each section, there is a table giving the starting time of each section, and a table listing the main points of synchronization between film and soundtrack. The conclusion describes how the research questions have been answered; it also includes some personal experiences and what has been learned by the author during this project.

NOTE:

DVD containing segment of “Peach Blossom Weeps  
Tears of Blood” with the newly composed soundtrack  
is included with the print copy of the thesis held in  
the University of Adelaide Library.