

10wa3

Scott Of The Antarctic: my composition

Robert Falcon Scott was an explorer who led an expedition to the South Pole. The film tells of his expedition with motorised snow sledges, ponies and dogs; the feeling that they could master the elements. This first 'theme' I have used in my composition. To make the beginning of the piece sound jolly, happy and determined.

To do this I used an adventurous melody, with a steady tempo. I created an upbeat rhythm on the snare drums which also can count for the sound of the ponies hooves trotting up and down the slopes. I have created a feeling of unawareness of any doubt and negativity. An ascending modal scale works well for the beginning of my piece to create an atmosphere and a sequence of notes which I develop into a countermelody for the strings and percussion and various woodwind. The percussion repeats a 4 bar rhythm all the way through the first theme. This demonstrated Scott's desperation for a glorious victory and to raise the flag in the North Pole.

Then the warm strings are introduced to a 4 bar ascending modal scale which they then play and repeat. I alter the tune and increase the tempo. To join the warm strings, comes the flute. Now, since the flute can become a high pitched instrument, I use the flute to play my simple tune yet an octave higher and add an appoggiatura onto each note.

The trumpet can sound triumphant and glorious when it is used to play a melodic ascending scale; so I have incorporated the trumpet into this 'theme' and it plays the tune in a tonal, muted like manner. As this theme draws to an end, I use the use of one by one, taking away the triumphant timbres e.g. the trumpet and adding more mournful and creature like sounding instruments. Firstly, I take away the trumpets glorious tune and add in a synthesizing whale sound. The flute still plays in the background, yet in a more haunting manner. The strings become colder and play into an ascending minor scale. I do this because the second theme introduced is mournful and sorrowful, displaying the sheer bleakness of the icy slopes of the North Pole.

Scott and his team soon run into problems: the motors break down and will not work in such low temperatures. The morale of the team descends. I incorporate this issue into my composition and use themes based on chromatic scales. I use the power of the chromatic in my piece because they can display reluctance and little hope for Scott and his team. The strings automatically start playing a short theme based on chromatics. This makes the piece sound eery and gives the piece an

unawareness of what is going to happen next. This is important to use because soon after the motors break down, the ponies have to be shot before reaching 83°30'S and the dog teams have to be sent back.

The constant rhythm of the snare drum is interrupted by a tempo change from 4/4 to 5/4. 5/4 is a powerful time signature and I use it to compliment a jerky, upbeat feel to the piece. The warm strings are replaced by an oboe playing a very mellow, haunting melody which fits into the flute playing dramatic dynamics from loud to soft on long, drawn out, random notes. This is very effective because in the film Scott and his team have a feeling of 'where shall we go next?' The randomness of the notes suits this theme.

As Scott and his team finally reach the North Pole they are bitterly disappointed because a team from Norway beat them to the flag almost a month ago. The strings are added to the piece and play a slightly more mellow theme as the oboe is subtracted from its haunting melody. The flute copies the warm strings' theme and plays the theme 4 semitones higher. This theme becomes particularly prominent because it was evident at the beginning of the piece too.

On their way back the weather became much worse. It was taking them longer than anticipated and food and fuel were getting low. One of the group died and another and another until gradually they all die on the way back. This atmosphere is created in my music by using a theme based on a minor descending scale. The warm strings play a descending A minor scale whilst the oboe plays its relative major: C. the flute carries on playing random sharp/flat notes to reiterate the sheer wilderness of the North Pole.

As the piece draws to an end, the time signature changes yet again to 2/4 time. The percussion play a 2/4 style allegro march to resemble the bravery of the men that risked their lives to reach the North Pole. The warm strings play the ascending modal scale that was personified in the first theme. The flute plays the same modal scale an octave higher and the oboe joins in with the flute, yet playing a descending G major scale. All the instruments finish off with a grand finale and Scott was hailed as a hero for his courage and patriotism and his widow was awarded the knighthood he would have received.